

FILE NAME: Talc (TALC)

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Phone Number
301-494-3775

May 10, 1972

Dr. Albert Fritsch
Center for Science in the Public Interest
1346 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Fritsch:

I was referred to you by Ken Lassen. I am interested in research on the adverse effects on health of asbestos and talc, in particular carcinogenesis. Ken said that your center performs action-oriented investigations and you might be working on these topics now.

As far as I know, no one has yet demonstrated, that non-occupational, environmental exposures to talc carry an excess risk of developing cancer. (This has been done for asbestos, and the government has begun to effect restrictions on its use.) However, the striking chemical similarity between talc and asbestos, the occurrence of greater than trace amounts of tremolite asbestos in talcum powders, and the knowledge that occupational exposure to talc carries an excess risk of lung cancer - are very disturbing, in view of the widespread use of talc in infant and cosmetic powders, perfumed vaginal sprays, etc. My correspondence with FDA indicates that they are doing a minimal job (analyzing talcs for asbestos) about regulating both asbestos and talc in consumer goods. I would like to know of ways to get them "interested."

In my spare hours here, I have reviewed some of the literature on cervical cancer epidemiology. I also understand that some, but not all, prophylactics are dusted with talc in processing and packaging. Dr. Abraham Lilienfeld at the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene has an interest in talc also, and I hope to work out some kind of study with him soon.

Please let me know your interest and activities in the subjects of asbestos and talc. I would be glad to come down and see you if you think it worthwhile.

My best wishes in your work.

Sincerely,

Barry Castleman
Technical Services Section
Division of Air Pollution and
Industrial Hygiene
Bureau of Environmental Services

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