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Du Pont Reassigns 50 Women Workers In Chemical Case

Substance, Produced by 3M,
Was Linked During Tests
To Birth Defects in Rats

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter

WILMINGTON—Du Pont Co. said it reassigned about 50 women at its Parkersburg, W.Va., plant after learning that a chemical they have been working with might cause birth defects. The women all are of child-bearing age.

The substance, known as FC-143, is a compound used in making resins, film products and coatings. Its manufacturer, Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Co., warned Du Pont in late March that tests had shown the compound causes birth defects in rats.

"We don't know the significance of this study, but it was felt this was the prudent course of action," said Du Pont's corporate medical director, Dr. Bruce W. Karrh.

The chemical, ammonium perfluorooctanoate, is used at other Du Pont plants. But Dr. Karrh said exposure was considered high enough to warrant removing women workers only at the West Virginia facility and at a plant in Circleville, Ohio, where one woman was reassigned.

Dr. Karrh said FC-143 has been used by the company "for some period of time."