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50 Women Workers Shifted By Du Pont to Avoid Peril

PARKERSBURG, W. Va., April 7 (AP) — About 50 women were transferred to new jobs at a Du Pont Company plant after a preliminary study indicated that a chemical they were working with might cause birth defects, a company official said.

The chemical, known as FC-143, has been used in plastics for many years, and most has been supplied by the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company, officials said.

"We were advised that FC-143 caused birth defects in the unborn when fed by stomach tube to female rats in a laboratory experiment," said Howard Todd, manager of the plant owned by E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company.

"This was a preliminary, range-finding study designed to determine dosage limits prior to a full-scale study on FC-143's potential to cause birth defects in rats," he added.

John Bowers, superintendent of employee relations at the company's Washington Works plant near Parkersburg, said that none of the women would lose their jobs or current pay.

Additional laboratory tests are planned by 3M and Du Pont, Mr. Todd said.