

*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."

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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.