The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), commonly known as Superfund, was established by Congress in 1980, and is administered and implemented by the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA is responsible for locating the most hazardous sites nationwide, determining the parties responsible for the pollution, and financing the clean-up of sites when responsible parties are unable to do so, using money from the Superfund Trust.

In 1986, the Superfund Research Program (SRP), administered by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, was established by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act, to seek solutions to the complex health and environmental issues associated with the nation’s hazardous waste sites. The SRP is a coordinated effort with EPA and relies on a network of university grants supporting research to protect human health and the environment. Dartmouth has one of the longest running Superfund Research Programs in the country.

The Superfund Research Program's Primary Goals Are:
* acquiring a better understanding of the human and ecological risks of hazardous substances; and
* advancing the development of new technologies for the cleanup of contaminated sites.
ARSENIC

What’s in Your Water?
During the last 15 years our program has collaborated with various government agencies and non-profit organizations to identify the adverse health effects of arsenic and played a key role in EPA’s decision to reduce the public drinking water standard to 10 parts per billion in 2001. But recent studies have shown that 1 in 5 private wells in NH have arsenic levels that are higher than EPA standards, and private well owners are not required to comply with EPA requirements for public water supplies.

Our research translation team has produced the 10 minute video, In Small Doses: Arsenic (www.insmalldoses.org) to encourage private well owners to test their wells, and is continuing to work with state and federal agencies to inform and educate stakeholders about the importance of testing private well water and purchasing arsenic removal systems as needed.

What’s in Your Rice?
For several years, our scientists have been examining the uptake, transport and storage of arsenic in plants like rice, with the intent to learn how to make our food crops safer for human consumption.

MERCURY

Something’s Fishy
A known neurotoxin, mercury ranks third on EPA's list of contaminants affecting human health. Fifty states have issued fish consumption advisories regarding mercury contamination. Our aim is to conduct research and inform the public on the factors (both natural and manmade) that enhance or diminish the amounts of mercury and methylmercury present in the environment.

In addition, we are identifying the ways in which mercury travels through food webs and eventually winds up being consumed by humans.