



# Aliso Canyon Disaster Health Research Study

## What is a Health Study?

In 2020, the LA County Department of Public Health will be launching the Aliso Canyon Disaster Health Research Study. A health study has the potential to answer important questions a community may have about how public health is impacted by environmental health hazards or exposures. In the case of Aliso Canyon, many would like to know whether or not the Aliso Canyon blowout increased incidences of health conditions in the community. Under the guidance of a Scientific Oversight Committee and with input from a Community Advisory Group, we will begin identifying key questions about the effects of the disaster and conducting research that may help uncover the answers.

But what exactly is a health study, and what can it accomplish? Specifically, it is a scientific inquiry designed to address specific research questions related to health outcomes. It is a rigorous, systematic and objective process of exploration and measurement that can measure the association between specific exposures and health outcomes.

For example, research questions may ask:

- Is there an association between chemical exposures from the Aliso Canyon blowout and health outcomes in the affected communities?
- Are health outcomes in the Aliso Canyon community associated to the chemicals emanating from the Aliso Canyon facility?
- Is exposure "x" associated with an increased risk of health conditions "y" in population "z" during time period "zz"?

### What can a health study accomplish?

- A Health Study can help determine whether or not specific exposures are associated with specific health conditions.
- It studies how exposures may lead to health conditions.
- It studies the health of populations by measuring the incidence and prevalence of health conditions.
- It identifies groups that may be at increased risk of health conditions from specific exposures.



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### What is a Health Study?

#### What can different health studies look like?

- It can study a population over a period of time or at one specific point of time.
- It can study acute or chronic health effects.
- It can study past, current, or future health effects.
- Investigators can collect their own data or use existing data sets.
- It can involve direct measurement or it may need statistical modeling to determine possible outcomes of an experiment that cannot be conducted in the real world.
- It can involve study participants or can use population data.

#### What are some of the challenges a health study may have in identifying associations between exposure and health conditions?

- Difficult to quantify the amount of exposure
- Lengthy time period between the initial exposure and incidences or occurrences of health conditions
- Populations change as people move in and out of the community
- Competing health risks which may contribute to incidences or occurrences of health conditions.

#### What are some of the benefits of a health study?

- It can provide valuable information identifying associations between exposure and health conditions
- It can serve as a tool to educate people about environmental health concerns
- It creates opportunity for community members to get involved
- It can help protect public health for future generations

For the Aliso Canyon Health Research Study, a Scientific Oversight Committee will lend its expertise to provide guidance on the Study's focus and priorities. Once researchers are selected for the Health Study, a key first step will be identifying the specific research questions that the Health Study will address. For more information on health studies, please visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/healthresearch/hrs.htm>.