

LETTER OF THE DAY

More support needed to deal with arsenic

To the Editor:

Re: Arsenic Level Lower Than Most, Study Finds — May 6.

As a resident of Falconbridge, I was pleased in a small way to hear the results of the arsenic study. This study tells us, on any given day, only three to five per cent of the people are exposed to higher arsenic levels than others in Greater Sudbury. This arsenic can come from food or the surrounding properties that we all live on.

The three per cent of the population, or 5,000 residents of Sudbury, are in the same average as other Canadians. Somehow that number does not sound safe.

What was not reported in your newspaper's article was the real-life drama of those families who recorded high readings during the arsenic spot check in 2004. They

have concerns — and many fears — about the exposure and intake of arsenic that was found in themselves and, more seriously, in their children. It was not reported how they are having trouble getting follow-up with the medical system for future testing.

After their plea for direction, no one from the Ontario Ministry of Health or the Sudbury and District Health Unit came to the microphone to offer any kind of support to those questions for those present or for the general public that were not in attendance. The study group did offer private consultation to any individual present.

Neither does the report speak to the high levels of other chemicals of concern that the Sudbury Soil Study is looking at. It does not answer the unknown multi-

combination of all the chemicals of concern when humans are exposed to or intake them. Most chemicals settle into body organs for long periods of time and some never leave.

This medical study of arsenic looks at only one of the many chemicals that are flooding our bodies through food and environmental intake, and should be the beginning of a true search of various human exposures.

We have come a long way in understanding the problems of environmental issues, but the real life drama of those three per cent need a support group of physicians, scientists, community, industry and government to get us to the next chapter in understanding and preventing human chemical intake.

Rick Grylls
Falconbridge