

Dieldrin in Guam's Drinking Water

What Is Dieldrin?

Dieldrin is a synthetic pesticide historically used for termite and pest control in and around housing developments. It was banned in the U.S. in 1987. Dieldrin builds up in the body over time and is classified by the U.S. EPA as a probable human carcinogen. Children are especially vulnerable.

How Long Have They Known?

Year	What Happened
1987	Dieldrin banned in the United States.
2008-2023	Dieldrin detected in Guam wells at elevated levels, but no action taken.
2012	U.S. EPA finds dieldrin in at least 80 Guam wells with several at elevated levels. Sends official "Findings of Significant Deficiencies" to both GWA and GEPA.
Mar. 2023	U.S. EPA again alerts GEPA and GWA about dieldrin levels. GEPA begins developing health advisories and initially considers notifying residents at levels as low as 0.002 ppb
Nov. 2024	GEPA adopts interim health advisory level.
Aug. 2025	GEPA's interim advisory level (IAL) goes into effect.
Sept. 2025	GWA notifies 1,112 Yigo households: "Do Not Drink Without Treatment."

Your Claim

Important: \$500,000 is a legal ceiling, not a promise. Under the Government Claims Act, the maximum amount that can be sought per claim is \$500,000, but that does not mean anyone will receive that amount. Any recovery depends on what can be proven, including (1) exposure/connection to the affected water system, (2) legally compensable harm, and (3) the amount of damages supported by records and evidence. For many residents, the most realistic remedies may be safe-water measures, reimbursements for expenses, and a defined medical monitoring program, rather than large cash payments.

You don't need to be sick today to have a valid claim. Exposure may support a claim, especially for expenses, risk-based monitoring, and other measurable impacts, but damages still must be proven. However, some potential health effects may take years to develop, which is why you should preserve the full scope of potential impacts.

Claims are filed per person, not per household. Every individual in your family who was exposed may file a separate claim. **You also do not need to be currently affected.** If you previously lived in an affected area and were exposed to contaminated water, you may still have a valid claim.

Filing now protects your rights. Limiting your claim to out-of-pocket costs leaves potential remedies on the table such as defined screening/monitoring program (eligibility rules + clinical protocol + budget) supported by expert guidance.

Past Expenses	Future Concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bottled water purchasesWater filters (purchase & installation)Water delivery servicesMedical visits or tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Long-term medical monitoringCancer screeningsTreatment for liver or nerve damageOngoing water filtration costs

The Bigger Picture

On Guam, the pattern has been: find the problem, fix the pipe, move on. Nobody gets made whole. Dieldrin is a hazardous chemical, and if the source is tied to a responsible party, including potentially federal sources, GovGuam may have legal and political pathways to pursue investigation and cleanup costs and to seek negotiated public-health measures such as a defined screening/monitoring program as part of a broader resolution.