



## Silent Spring Institute Cape Cod Breast Cancer and Environment Study

Since 1994, Silent Spring Institute has been conducting the Cape Cod Breast Cancer and Environment Study, an investigation of breast cancer incidence on Cape Cod, MA. Growing out of a commitment by activists and legislators to bring rigorous scientific methods to the search for environmental links to breast cancer rates among Cape Cod women, the Institute's Cape Study has become a national model for environmental health studies.

Outcomes from this study have advanced our understanding of the environmental dynamics influencing the long-term health of Cape women and have provided the international community of public health researchers with new tools useful to studies of hormone-related diseases. Institute scientists have

BREAST CANCER incidence  
is 20% higher on Cape Cod than  
elsewhere in Massachusetts

- Created a comprehensive source of information on the Cape environment. Using an integrated database known as a geographic information system (GIS), Cape Study researchers developed the first GIS capable of assessing how Cape environmental factors might be associated with increased breast cancer incidence.
- Interviewed 2,100 Cape women with and without breast cancer and gathered data on recognized risk factors, health histories, various habits and activities, and places of residence on the Cape for the past 40 years.
- Developed scientific methods to test air, dust, and other environmental samples for estrogen mimics and other compounds that may be linked to breast cancer risk.
- Tested in-home air and dust from residences of 120 study participants and established the presence of phthalates, alkylphenols, and other hormonally active compounds that may affect health.
- Identified estrogenic activity in Cape groundwater, the source of drinking water for Cape residents.

DUST AND AIR samples from homes of 120 Cape Study participants contained phthalates, hormonally active compounds used in plastics, cosmetics, and other personal care products

Silent Spring Institute is named in recognition of Rachel Carson's pioneering book that describes the environmental effects of pesticides.

*Certainly for the generations yet unborn,  
prevention is the imperative.*

—Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*

Silent Spring Institute thanks the women who have participated in the Cape Study. We appreciate their strength and their generosity.

*Please visit us at [www.silentspring.org](http://www.silentspring.org)*