

## **Vapour from microwave popcorn being studied; possible link to lung disease**

*From The Associated Press - Connie Farrow*

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is studying the chemicals released in the air when a bag of microwave popcorn is popped or opened. Exposure to vapours from butter flavouring in microwave popcorn has been linked to a rare lung disease contracted by factory workers in Missouri, Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska, The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has said it suspects the chemical diacetyl caused the illnesses.

However, health officials insist people who microwave popcorn and eat it at home are not in danger. In the first direct study of chemicals contained in the popular snack form, the EPA is examining the type from microwave popcorn bags. Further research would be needed to determine any health effects of those chemicals and whether consumers are at risk, said Jacky Rosati, a scientist involved in the study, which is being conducted at the EPA's Indoor Environment Management Branch at Research Triangle Park, N.C., "Once we know what chemicals are and the amounts, somebody else can look at the health effects," Rosati said Wednesday. About 50 brands, batches and flavors of microwave popcorn from buttery to sugary sweet kettle corn are being tested, she said.