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*Traffic cop at the intersection of money and sports*

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# NBC News Looks Into Possible Link Between Artificial Turf And Cancer

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NBC's Nightly News aired scathing reports Wednesday and Thursday suggesting that artificial turf may cause cancer.

Two nights ago, the broadcast (<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/investigations/how-safe-artificial-turf-your-child-plays-n220166>) focused on Amy Griffin, associate head coach for the [University of Washington's](http://www.forbes.com/colleges/university-of-washington-seattle-campus/) (<http://www.forbes.com/colleges/university-of-washington-seattle-campus/>) women's soccer team. Griffin, in her words, has discovered "a stream of kids" that have played on artificial turf and soon gotten cancer. Griffin has compiled a list of 38 American soccer players—34 of them goalies—who have been diagnosed with cancer. At least a dozen played in [Washington](http://www.forbes.com/washington/) (<http://www.forbes.com/washington/>), but the geographic spread is nationwide. Blood cancers like lymphoma and leukemia dominate the list.

"During the past two decades, there have been more than 60 technical studies and reports that review the health effects of crumb rubber as it pertains to toxicities from inhalation, ingestion and dermal contact, as well as cancer,"

the Synthetic Turf Council, an industry group, said Thursday in a statement responding to the initial NBC News report (<http://www.sys-con.com/node/3207673>).



Lower Field of NCHS new artificial turf field (Photo credit: Wikipedia)

But on the same day, representative Frank Pallone (D.-N.J.) sent a letter (<http://pallone.house.gov/press-release/pallone-calls-study-potential-health-risks-posed-artificial-turf>) to the acting director of the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry asking for an official study on what effects exposure to the chemicals in crumb rubber turf fields might have on athletes. The ATSDR is part of the Department of Health (<http://www.forbes.com/health/>) and Human Services.

Then last night's show (<http://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/does-artificial-turf-present-health-risk-n222531>) includes an interview with a former soccer player who now has cancer. She said during the interview that after playing on the artificial turf she would "have little black dots (from the crumb rubber) in her ears and nose." The segment also included the battle going on in my town, Glen Rock, New Jersey, where over the summer the town council voted to replace our grass field with an artificial turf field (<http://glenrocknj.net/downloads/news/Faber%20Field%20Final%20Presentation%20%281%29.pdf>) until concerned residents got enough signatures to force a referendum. The council, aware of the NBC report, is still pushing for the field. We vote November 4.

At a town council work session meeting (<http://vimeo.com/108488100>.) this week, council member Joan Orseck responded to one person's concern about the first NBC artificial turf segment by saying (at about the 33 minute mark of video), "for every study you see or find out that says this, you find another study that says the opposite." In other words, no conclusive evidence either way.

Stay tuned.



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