

My name is Joanna McNeill I am 38 years old a mother of 2 girls, and I am living with silicosis. I worked in administration at a quarry beginning in 2013, stationed about 90 meters from the crushing plant. During those years, I typically worked 40-50 hours a week until 2016, when I had my first child. After a brief return, I went on maternity leave again and eventually came back to work in 2019. During a routine medical check that year, something abnormal showed up in my lungs. Further tests, including a biopsy, led to a silicosis diagnosis.

This diagnosis has changed my life in ways I never anticipated, it is a progressive disease and affects all parts of your body as your lungs play such a vital role in the human anatomy . It has affected not only my health but also my children's lives. I've been hospitalised multiple times, unsure if I would make it out. My mental health has declined to the point where I sometimes wish I wouldn't wake up. Silica dust is deadly—you cannot minimise the risk. It's the invisible particles that are the most dangerous, and having a nursery just meters from a quarry endangers the fragile, developing lungs of children. You're handing them a death sentence. This quarry's location needs urgent reconsideration.