

# What is Mesothelioma?

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[large]Asbestos induced lung cancer is known as Mesothelioma.[/large] It is a dangerous disease that, while rare, is troublesome for several reasons. For one thing, the initial symptoms of mesothelioma are ones that can usually be associated with other, less threatening problems, including asthma, old age, and being out of shape.

Because of this, while only 3000 cases of mesothelioma are diagnosed every year, it is held that quite a few fatal cases of seemingly harmless lung ailments were in fact misdiagnosed cases of mesothelioma. The initial cause of mesothelioma is the introduction of minute fibers of asbestos into a person's lungs through inhalation. Asbestos is a fibrous, fire retardant material that was commonly used in the past several decades for fire proofing purposes. The fibrous nature of the material causes it to fragment into small slivers that are easily airborne and almost invisible to the naked eye.

The Mesothelial layer is a fluid-producing layer of cells, which surrounds the chest cavity, abdominal cavity, the cavity around the heart and the outer layer of internal organs. The lubricating fluid produced by the cell helps the organs it surrounds to move about easily. The fluid, for example, aids the lungs to contract and expand with ease. Mesothelium is the tissue formed by these cells and is known differently, depending on the organ it facilitates. Pleura is the mesothelium of the chest, Peritoneum is the tissue in the abdomen and the heart surrounding mesothelium is known as Pericardium. Mesothelioma Cancer occurs when the mesothelium is primarily affected by inhaling asbestos particles.

The cells in the Mesothelium start dividing without control and affecting close tissues leading to Mesothelioma cancer. These cells are usually malignant and spread to other parts of the body. The initial start of the cancer begins from the Pleura and then spreads further. Malignant pleural mesothelioma is the cancerous growth in the pleura and the most common of all types of Mesothelioma .

Asbestos was commonly used in various industries due to its fire-resistant qualities. It was also known as the Magic Mineral due to its cheap and easy availability. For years it was used on construction sites, insulation industries, ship yards, textile industries, cement manufacturing plants, industrial products, piping industry, brake linings etc. But just as all good things have a flaw, asbestos was found to be carcinogenic.

If inhaled, these dust particles could reach the Mesothelium and interfere with its cell production and damage the lining, resulting in Pleural Mesothelioma . Tiny asbestos particles can also be swallowed reaching the abdomen and causing Peritoneal mesothelioma , whereas those causing Pericardial Mesothelioma on reaching the heart cavity are rare in nature. Mesothelioma could also be contracted by being in touch with asbestos fibers that stick to clothes of people working in Asbestos using industries.

Mesothelioma is a rare kind of cancer with short survival chances due to its long latency period. It may take approximately 20 to 40 years for the cancer to develop and another 5-10 years for the symptoms to be clearly visible. The rarity of the disease is such that not many people have heard its name till the time they or their relatives or friends have been diagnosed with the same. Thus diagnosis of Mesothelioma is common between people in their sixties and seventies and more so in men. However, the causes of Mesothelioma in women and children is not clearly known.

[color=#ff0000][large]Learn how to prevent and survive mesothelioma cancer.[/large][color]

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