



**ASBESTOS DISEASES**  
**Foundation of Australia Inc.**  
**Helpline: 1800 006 196**  
**[www.adfa.org.au](http://www.adfa.org.au)**



**Supporting victims**

**Informing communities**

**Campaigning for change**

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**Asbestos Diseases Foundation**  
**Of Australia Inc.**





## Supporting victims, families & carers

Belonging to an **adfa** support group is like belonging to a family. Support groups reduce isolation, empower individuals and restore hope.

The diagnosis of an asbestos related disease can be devastating. You may feel disbelief, confusion or fear that you are suffering alone. *You are not alone.*

We care. **adfa** support groups are for victims, families and carers and those left behind....

### Contact Us:

For help getting medical advice

*For help getting legal advice – You may be eligible for compensation and /or a pension.*

For advice on where to obtain information about safety procedures including personal protective masks, respirators and asbestos removal.

*For support groups in your area*

For advice if you are worried about asbestos in your home or at work.

*Information about asbestos-related diseases.*

### Central Coast Asbestos Diseases Support Group

4th Wednesday of every month—1pm to 3pm

Ourimbah Bowling Club

6-22 Pacific Highway, Ourimbah NSW

Contact: Maree Stokes 0419 418 190

### Newcastle & Hunter Asbestos Disease Society (NHADS)

Last Friday of the month—12:00 noon

Trades Hall Council Newcastle

Contact: Peter Frost 0408 682 111 or 0427 002 442

Thank you for your interest in the Asbestos Diseases Foundation of Australia (**adfa**).

Our purpose is to represent the needs and the interests of asbestos disease victims and their Families in NSW through:

- Building a support network for those victims and their families needing assistance.
- Establishment of an on-going information exchange to be used to highlight to the community, the government and the business community the nature and extent of asbestos diseases suffering in NSW.
- Provision of assistance in referral of victims and their families for appropriate medical and legal advice.
- Organisation of a lobby group to continue pressing governments to initiate urgently needed changes to existing laws and regulations regarding safe industrial practice, workers compensation issues and asbestos management programs for residential, commercial and industrial properties.

Should you be attending a specialist, you need to ensure that the doctor has a good understanding of asbestos diseases. If you are in any doubt, discuss your concerns with your GP or contact **adfa** for advice.

**adfa** can also advise you where to go for legal advice.

We would like to take this opportunity to invite you to our Support Group meetings, which are held in Granville, Gosford and Newcastle.

Membership of **adfa** is open to all victims of asbestos diseases as well as their families and any other interested individuals. The annual membership fee is \$25 and donations are always welcome. Organisations with an interest in asbestos, such as trade unions and asbestos companies are invited to affiliate to **adfa**. The annual fee is \$60.

Should you require any further information, please contact us by phone, fax or email.

Yours sincerely,

Barry Robson  
President

Eileen Day  
Secretary

Maree Stokes  
Vice-President

Helen Davis  
Treasurer

Paul Garrett  
Public Officer



## **Asbestos in your Home**

Mention the word 'asbestos' to a homeowner and watch them recoil in horror. How much do you know about this potentially lethal household product?

### **What is asbestos used for in the home?**

A great many asbestos containing materials were used in residential buildings because of the special qualities that make this product suitable for specific uses:

#### ***Insulation Materials***

Asbestos, which is resistant to both heat and cold, was added to insulating materials such as textiles, papers and shingles used:

- In ceilings, roofs and walls;
- In household appliances, in furnaces and in pipe coverings;
- On walls and ceilings exposed to the heat of a stove or furnace.

#### ***Floor Coverings***

It was added to vinyl tiles and used as backing for vinyl sheet flooring, asbestos strengthens floor coverings, making them more resistant to humidity, as well as scratches and scuffmarks.

#### ***Household Appliances***

Asbestos was used for thermal insulation in the heat shields and filler of various household appliances: toasters; irons; deep-fryers; slow-cookers; dishwashers; refrigerators; ovens, range hoods, clothes dryers etc.

### **Is the presence of Asbestos in the home something to Worry About?**

Scientific and medical research has revealed that excessive exposure to inhaled asbestos dust can be dangerous to health. It should be noted, however, that the risks are generally related to exposure during handling of asbestos fibre in **work** environments.

Asbestos fibres are not harmful unless released into the air. But the asbestos used in building materials and household appliance parts today is literally locked-in in solid matter, which effectively prevents fibres from being released into the air.

The installation of asbestos based products and materials therefore presents practically no risk. The only general precaution would be to make sure that the products and materials are not damaged during handling.

Conversely, asbestos based materials already in your home are best left alone, to avoid releasing asbestos fibres. There is no risk involved, as long as the material is neither crumbly nor damaged.

**Examples of Asbestos Products include, but may not be limited to, the following types of products:**

- Acoustical products;
- Acoustical products, including spray and tiles;
- Adhesives and cements;
- Air cell;
- Asbestos cloth or textiles
- Asbestos-containing sprays;
- Asbestos fibre or pellets (raw or processed);
- Asbestos linings and asbestos paint;
- Asbestos paper;
- Asbestos protective clothing;
- Asbestos rope, tile and sundries;
- Automotive truck, off-highway vehicular and marine products (brake linings, pads and shoes, brake blocks, clutch materials, transmission components, gasket materials, shock absorbers);
- Caulking compounds and coatings;
- Ceiling panels, tiles and related sundries;
- Cement products (cement or mortar, board, flooring, panel pipe, flat and corrugated sheet, siding, shingles, stucco);
- Ceramic or paint fillers;
- Commercial and industrial machines or components (brake linings, clutch facings, thermal insulation, transmission components, gaskets);
- De-tackifying/de-moulding agents;
- Drywall joint treatment products (joint compound, joint cement, joint treatment, joint sealant, caulking compounds);
- Fireproofing;
- Gasket, sheet packing and moulded products;
- Gypsum products (including fire retarded gypsum board lath, finishing and taping compounds);
- Insulating tape;
- 85% Magnesia;
- Mastic and coating and sealing products;
- Millboard and mineral wood board;
- Paint products (including roof coating and floor coating);
- Phenolic or plastic resins;
- Plaster and plaster products;
- Plumbing joint sealant;
- Refractory products, such as clays, cements, shapes and block (used to build insulated or seal structures subjected to high heat such as boilers, furnaces and kilns);
- Resilient floor covering products (tile, sheet backings and sundries);
- Roofing products (cements, coatings, felts, decking, flashing, paints, shingles);
- Siding, spackling compound;
- Thermal insulation products (pipe insulation, pipe covering, pipe wrap, cement, block insulation, sprays and sundries).

# Suggestions for safely handling of asbestos

## Introduction

- If you plan to remove, repair or otherwise handle asbestos in your home or during your work, you need to be fully aware of the dangers.
- This means you should take proper steps to protect yourself, your family, workmates and neighbours from being exposed to the tiny asbestos fibres that can be released into the air.
- If these fibres are inhaled or swallowed, they can cause **Mesothelioma** (which is an aggressive form of cancer), Asbestosis, Lung Cancer or other lung diseases. Even short exposure to asbestos fibres may lead to an asbestos related disease.
- Don't start working with any asbestos material unless you are absolutely certain about what you should do for protection.
- If you are unsure whether there is asbestos contained in the materials, call in an expert.
- Remember, you **can't tell** if it's asbestos by just looking at it!
- If you have no option but to work with asbestos, there is advice on the precautions you need to take on the WorkCover website: [www.workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au), or call the general WorkCover number: 13 10 50

**The following are recommendations that adfa advises you to follow. However, adfa is not in a position to absolutely guarantee they will fully protect you, as we are not aware of your particular working conditions or individual circumstances.**

- Wear a disposable coverall or old clothes, head covering and gloves.
- Wear a disposable half face particulate respirator, or a half face filter respirator, fitted with a dust particulate cartridge which is appropriate for asbestos. The type you use should comply with the Australian and New Zealand standard: **ASNZS 1716 (P2)**.
- You need to ensure that the mask gives a good tight seal.
- If you have a beard or even long sideburns, or wear glasses, you may need more specialist advice (See **ASNZS 1715**, for guidance on the selection and use of respirators).
- Work in a well-ventilated area.
- Don't work outside on a windy day as the fibres will be carried and could affect many others in the surrounding area. Be mindful of your neighbours.
- Lay heavy duty builder's plastic drop sheets, 200um thick, around the site to catch debris.
- Wet the asbestos surface to reduce the risk of fine particles of dust in the air.
- However, don't hose it with a high pressure hose. **It is illegal** to water blast asbestos cement, and you can be fined under the OH&S Act for doing so.



- **It is illegal** to use any power tools to saw, grind or break up any asbestos materials as too much fine dust is generated. If necessary, use hand tools, but remain careful with all tasks while you work.
- Try not to break up the asbestos sheets as you dismantle them.
- Place any sheets of asbestos carefully on the ground onto a layer or preferably two of the builders plastic (heavy duty polythene—200um thick) — **don't drop them!**
- Rather than sweep up any dust with a broom, dampen it down and mop it with a wet mop.
- Preferably, vacuum the working area with a specially designed vacuum cleaner—**NOT** your household one. It must have a **HEPA** (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filter, and be designed for collection of asbestos fibres, complying with **ASNZS Standard 3544**.
- Carefully double wrap in the strong builders' plastic any discarded asbestos materials. Label it clearly, for example: **"Caution Asbestos. Do not open or damage bag. Do not inhale dust."**
- After you have finished work, put your contaminated clothes or coverall into strong double plastic bags (200um thick) and label clearly: **"Asbestos contaminated clothing"** for correct disposal.
- **Never** place any asbestos contaminated materials in your household waste bins, and do not just **dump it anywhere!**
- Contact your local Council for information on the nearest approved asbestos landfill tip, or if the amount is large (a truckload or more) call the **Department of Environment & Heritage on 131 555 (local calls) or 9995 5000 (outside NSW)** for advice on correct disposal. Ideally, you should have checked this out before you start the work.
- When you have finished, wash your hands thoroughly, and remove your coveralls for disposal, place into a strong double plastic bag, and last remove your mask and place into the bag with the clothing, then as soon as possible, take a shower.

**If you are in any doubt about any part of this information, and want more help, please seek advice *before you start the job.***

**Contact either your local Council, or WorkCover on 13 10 50, if you are being paid to do this work, or adfa on 1800 006 196.**





## **WHAT IS ASBESTOS?**

Asbestos is a mineral which has been widely mined and processed throughout the world.

It is a natural fibre that comes in three basic forms: **white (chrysotile)**, **blue (crocidolite)** and **brown (amosite)**.



## **WHY WAS ASBESTOS USEFUL?**

Asbestos was useful because it would:

- Withstand fire and heat, corrosion and decay
- Resist many chemicals
- Combine a high tensile strength with softness and flexibility
- It was a good adhesive

## **WHAT HAS ASBESTOS BEEN USED FOR?**

The main uses of asbestos have been:

- Insulation material such as pipe lagging
- Asbestos-cement fibro products
- Building insulation materials and fire-proofing



Spraying asbestos mix insulation on a structural steel work.

Asbestos has been used in more than 3,000 products, including fibro sheets, insulation, fire proofing, lagging for pipes, boilers, etc, corrugated roofing and walling, flat sheet wall lining, compressed flooring and partitioning, downpipes and guttering, electrical switchboards, tile cements, caulking and spackling compounds, asbestos/ vinyl floor tiles, in paints and sealants, in textiles such as felts and theatre curtains, in gaskets and in friction products like brake linings and clutches and for ironing blankets and simmering pads for the top of stoves.

## **ASBESTOS IS EVERYWHERE!**

Thousands of Australian workshops and homes have been built with asbestos-fibro roofs, floors and walls. Public buildings, hospitals, schools, libraries, office blocks and factories have asbestos in insulation, air conditioners and ceilings.

***One in every three houses in Australia built before 1985 will have asbestos in them.***

**There is no known "safe" level of exposure to asbestos.**

**There is no cure, except preventing exposure in the first place.**



# **WARNING!**

## **ASBESTOS KILLS**

### **THE SILENT KILLER**

Asbestos is a mineral rock mined from the earth. It is composed of strong fibres which are long and silky in appearance.

When it is processed into manufactured products, many very small fibres are created. The tiny fibres of asbestos are needle-like in shape. The fibres most likely to damage health may be less than 5 microns in diameter. A micron is *one thousandth of a millimetre!*

It is these deadly, invisible particles that kill.

Asbestos fibres can become airborne because they are very fine. Once in the air, the fibres are easily inhaled or swallowed.

If they are inhaled, they can cause mesothelioma, asbestosis, lung cancer and pleural diseases.

Swallowed fibres can cause abdominal mesothelioma.

There is currently no known cure for asbestos caused diseases.

### **ASBESTOS DEATHS IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

New South Wales has the highest rate of asbestos disease in Australia as a result of manufacturing, building, construction and refinery processes that have occurred in the State over many years.

Between 120 and 150 people a year in New South Wales are diagnosed with mesothelioma and hundreds more with other asbestos related conditions, including lung cancer.

The numbers have been rising every year over the past ten years.

### **NO KNOWN SAFE LEVEL OF EXPOSURE**

Any amount of asbestos exposure is too much.

Even single, short exposure to low levels of airborne fibres may result in asbestos related disease.

Owners and renovators of fibro homes have developed mesothelioma, so have wives who shook out asbestos workers' overalls before washing them and their children who were playing nearby.

**The Asbestos Diseases Foundation of Australia recommends that**

**NO exposure to asbestos should be allowed....**

## **Asbestos Chronology—The Warnings**

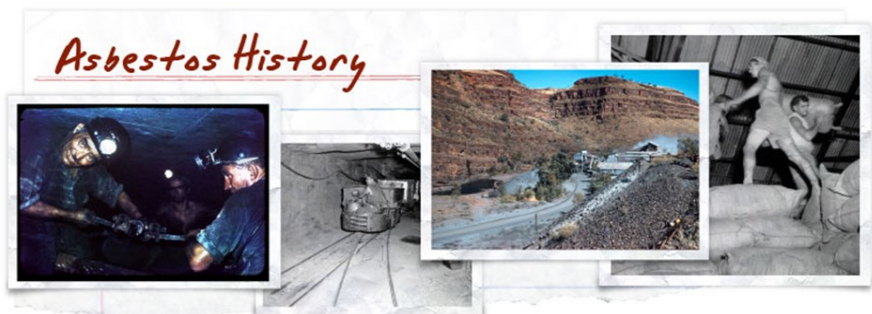
- First Century AD: Roman historian Pliny notes that slaves wearing cloth sicken and die. He describes the use of respirators made from animal bladders.
- 1898: British Factory safety inspectors express concerns about the “*evil effects*” of asbestos dust.
- 1906: British Parliamentary Commission confirms first cases of asbestos deaths in factories, recommends better ventilation and other safety measures.
- 1911: Royal Commission into working conditions in gold mines in Australia reveals widespread lung disease. Ventilation laws introduced.
- 1918: Prudential Insurance Company in US produces an actuarial study showing premature death in the asbestos industry. Other companies begin increasing premiums and refusing insurance.
- 1926: First successful claim for compensation by a sick asbestos worker to the Massachusetts Industrial Accidents Board. Over the following three years several hundred further claims filed.
- 1927: **Asbestos** given its name.
- 1929: Johns Manville Corporation, the world's largest asbestos miner/manufacturer served with 11 writs by asbestos victims. Claims settled out of court with secrecy order.
- Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in the US finds that half the men working at Johns Manville plants for more than three years develop lung disease.
- 1930: British Home Office Survey finds widespread asbestos disease in UK factories.
- 1935: Inspector of Factories and Shops in Western Australia reports on the effect of asbestos dust on the lungs of workers in the James Hardie Factory in Perth.
- 1936: Lang Hancock ‘discovers’ the Wittenoom blue asbestos (crocidolite) deposits and later begins pick and shovel mining.
- 1938: CSR Limited send Senior Executive, MG King to the US, Canada, South Africa and Europe to study asbestos mining and manufacture.
- It is the start of regular contact between CSR and John Manville, including further overseas trips between 1947 and 1952.
- US adopt a “*safe*” dust limit of 176 particles of asbestos per cubic centimetre in the workplace.

German researchers identify six cancer deaths among asbestos textile works. Later animal studies confirm asbestos dust kills mice.

- 1939: Western Australian Commissioner of Public Health and Chief Inspector of Factories find respiratory disorders among James Hardie workers.
- 1940: Hancock begins mining at Wittenoom. Plant opens in 1943 and CSR takes over in 1948.
- 1943: Saranac Laboratory in New York confirms the link between asbestos and cancer. John Manville suppresses the report.
- A report on an asbestos mill at Zeehan in Tasmania (owned and operated by a CSR subsidiary) says that asbestos dust is a health hazard, and discusses methods of eliminating it.
- 1944: First warning of asbestos dust at Wittenoom—the WA Assistant State Mining Engineer reports on the dangers of dust being generated. Mines Inspector Adams reports on the “*dust menace*” at Wittenoom and discusses the need to reduce dust levels.
- 1946: Known asbestos death toll reaches 235 in Britain, 16 in France and 30 in Italy.
- The first case of asbestosis at Wittenoom occurred, although it was not conclusively diagnosed until much later.
- Mines Department Inspector Adams describes dust conditions at Wittenoom as “*terrific*”.
- 1948: Dr. Eric Saint tells Wittenoom mine management that asbestos is extremely dangerous, and that men exposed would contract chest disease inside six months. He writes to the Public Health Department in Perth that the mine will produce the greatest crop of asbestosis the world as ever seen.
- Over the following three years, dust levels at the mine and mills are regularly monitored at six to eight times “*safe*” levels. Further warnings are given to the mine management. No improvement in conditions is noted.
- 1950: WA Commissioner for Public Health report to his Minister that “*Asbestos dust, if inhaled, constitutes a very grave risk and is, if anything, worse than silicosis*”.
- State Mining Engineer reports insufficient attention to safety regulations and ventilation at Wittenoom.
- 1951: WA has adopted a “*safe*” dust limit of 176 particles per cc. Wittenoom readings continually off the scale at 1000 particles. Mines and Health Department take no action apart from issuing further warnings.
- Commissioner for Public Health writes to the Under Secretary for Mines that “*The hazard from asbestos is considerable greater than that from silica...we have reason to believe that attention to this aspect of mining operations at Wittenoom has been inadequate in the past*”.

- 1954: Mines Inspector Ibbotson describes conditions at Wittenoom as a “disgrace”. The following year he threatens to close the mine.
- 1955: Dr. Richard Doll in UK produces the most comprehensive survey to date linking asbestos dust to lung disease.
- 1959: WA Health Department Official Dr. James McNulty discovers six cases of lung damages among Wittenoom workers. He warns the mine manager, and writes the first of a series of warnings.
- 1960: Wagner paper published a “new” disease, mesothelioma (fatal cancer of the lining of the lungs) discovered among people exposed to asbestos in South Africa.
- Annual report of WA Commissioner for Public Health says working at Wittenoom is thirty times more dangerous than other mining.
- 1961: Britain cuts maximum exposure level of asbestos in the workplace from 175 to 5 particles per cubic centimetre.
- First case of mesothelioma detected among ex-Wittenoom workers. Man dies.
- 1961-1965: More than 100 cases of lung disease among Wittenoom workers and ex-workers—more than for all other mines in Western Australia.
- 1965: Local council warned that the tonnes of asbestos tailings being spread around Wittenoom could even threaten tourists.
- 1966: Commonwealth Health Department is highly critical of dust at the mine and the mill. CSR closes the mine two weeks later.
- 1970: Building unions at workplaces across Australia commences industrial action to ban the use of asbestos. Without unions there would be no ban on asbestos importation and exportation.
- 1973: Wittenoom toll reaches 175. 27 men now known to have died.
- 1974: **FIRST PUBLIC WARNING** of the dangers of blue asbestos. Bulletin Magazine cover story, “*Is This Killer in Your Home?*”
- 1977: Cornelius Maas becomes the first mesothelioma victim to sue the CSR subsidiary that ran the mine. He dies before the case gets to court.
- 1979– 1981: Union members take strike action about health and safety—including the carcinogenic impact of working with Coke Ovens in Wollongong and the asbestos in Melbourne’s Blue Harris Trains.
- 1988: First victories in court for Wittenoom mesothelioma victims. Judge rules CSR acted with “*continuing, conscious and contumelious*” disregard for it’s workers’ safety.

- 1989: Wittenoom tolls tops 500. National Health and Medical Research Council predicts the final toll will be 2,000.
- 1998: ADFA played a major role in winning changes to NSW Laws regarding dust diseases which benefitted our members. The laws were a first for Australia.
- 2001: Unions continue their efforts to make James Hardie accountable for its failure to acknowledge the damage to workers' health and obligations to compensate workers affected by asbestos-related disease. James Hardie establishes the Medical Research and Compensation Foundation.
- 2004: Asbestos finally banned in workplaces after a long-running union campaign and work with asbestos victims to make manufacturer James Hardie pay compensation.
- 2005: James Hardie and the NSW Government sign historic agreement, providing \$4.5 billion dollars in funding for Australia's asbestos victims.
- 2008: Department of Environment and Conservation subsequently classified Wittenoom as a contaminated site under the Contaminated Sites Act 2003 on 28 January 2008.
- 2009: ABC Journalist Matt Peacock's Book *"Killer Company—James Hardie Exposed"* is released.
- 2010: NSW asbestos victims to get Federal compensation in form of loan so that asbestos victims & families continue to be compensated.
- 2011: Insidious danger in the wake of deluge from Cyclone Yasi in QLD. Hazard alert for thousands of workers cleaning up debris of fibro homes.
- 2012: High court of Australia has found seven Directors of the James Hardie group breached duties by approving of misleading statements released to the stock exchange.
- ABC broadcast *"Devil's Dust"*, a documentary on asbestos-related diseases, following the investigative journalist Matt Peacock.



■ Exposure to asbestos is not an automatic death sentence. Many factors determine health effects and how severe they will be.

**Factors include:** How many fibers entered the body • How long the exposure  
• If the material was inhaled or consumed in food or drink.

Fibers enter the body through the nose and mouth by inhalation or from drinking.

**Pleural membrane**

When scar tissue forms in the pleural membrane, the tissue is unable to expand and contract. Breathing can become painful or impossible.

**Esophagus**

Cancer can develop from swallowing asbestos fibers

**Heart**

Blood flow to the lungs can be impaired and cause the heart to enlarge or fail.

**Larynx**

Right lung

Left lung

**Bronchia**

**Bronchia**

**Alveoli**

**Alveoli**

**Diaphragm**

**Abdomen**

**Stomach**

**Intestines**

Swallowed asbestos fibers build up and may cause cancer

Asbestos fibers in the alveoli can cause cancer and prevent exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide between the lungs and red blood cells.

Blood vessels

**Alveoli**

Asbestos fibers

Asbestos is unique, not only in interaction with the body, but also with its interaction with society. It was not confined to the workplace, but was rather spread throughout the Australian Community.

Asbestos causes no symptoms during inhalation and no appreciable disease in most individuals until decades have passed. Thus its warning properties are poor, and this has facilitated both high and widespread exposures to asbestos fibers.

Asbestos is persistent in the human body, both literally and through induction of characteristic pattern of scarring in the lungs and especially the pleura.

Asbestos is a potent cause of a rare tumor, mesothelioma in the public health terms the numbers will increase and will not peak until the year 2020.

Although we have almost ceased to introduce new asbestos into our lives, we have not removed the asbestos cement building materials, it was used in over 3,000 products, which are widely spread throughout the community; this represents a cause for a special public issue to remove decaying asbestos products now contaminating the environment.

The central core of any asbestos controlled program is the accuracy of measurement of airborne asbestos fibers suggests that vigorous review of much of our current knowledge, concepts and conclusions are now warranted.

Confusion as to “what to do” by our public health authorities seems to assure that the asbestos health problems will continue well into the new century despite more than half a century of attempted mitigation and hopeful attempts at control of this extreme health hazard.

*These little fibres—a fraction of a millimetre wide—threaten a whole new generation of Australians.*

*Close-up of amianthus—describes any of the fine silky varieties of asbestos fibres.*





# The Threat to Health

The tiny fibres of white, blue and brown asbestos are needle-like in shape. It is not the chemical composition of the fibres, but their *shape and size* which causes health problems.

The fibres most likely to damage health may be less than 5 microns in diameter.

A micron is *one thousandth of a millimetre!*

It is the release of these fibres from the asbestos containing products that creates a serious health hazard. Once in the air the fibres can be easily inhaled or swallowed.

## **Asbestosis** (through inhalation of fibres)

When lodged in the lungs a fibre may cause a scar which continues to grow, even though there may not be any further exposure to asbestos.

The scars do not allow oxygen to pass through to the blood, and therefore people with asbestosis have difficulty in breathing.

Eventually asbestosis leads to a *painful death*.

This may take about 10 to 20 years to occur after initial exposure. Asbestosis usually develops as shortness of breath, coughing, phlegm, leading to lung infections and finally heart failure.

Smoking increases the risk of death from asbestosis. There is no treatment for the disease.

## **Lung Cancer** (through inhalation of fibres)

In this case, asbestos fibres enter the cells of the lung tissue ultimately causing a cancer.

Cancers are uncontrolled cell growths. The lung cancer may take about 20 to 25 years to develop and is *nearly always fatal*.

Of all the asbestos diseases, lung cancer is the greatest killer of people who have had *low levels of exposure* to asbestos. Smoking increases the risk of death by lung cancer.

## **Mesothelioma** (through inhalation or swallowing of fibres)

This is a cancer that is so far only known to be caused by asbestos. Some inhaled fibres can penetrate the lung walls and cause cancer in the lining of the lung (pleura).

Some fibres that are swallowed may also penetrate the stomach or bowels and cause cancer of the lining of the abdomen (peritoneum).

Both the pleural and peritoneal cancers are called mesotheliomas. These cancers can take between 30 to 40 years, after initial exposure to asbestos, to develop.

People with mesothelioma rarely live longer than 12-18 months after it has been diagnosed. These cancers have no relation to smoking..

*There is **NO CURE**..*

## **Gastrointestinal Cancers** (through swallowing of fibres)

These are cancers of the stomach, bowels or rectum. They are cancers which are 2 or 3 times more common in asbestos workers than the general population. They may occur 20 to 40 years after initial exposure, and have no relationship to smoking. There may be some chance of survival if surgery is performed early.

## **Other Cancers**

It is increasingly believed that asbestos is associated with cancers of the larynx and bronchus, and of organs such as the ovaries and kidneys.

## **No Safe Level of Exposure**

There is no "safe" level of exposure to asbestos. A single short exposure to low levels of airborne fibres may result in an asbestos related disease.

## **Medical Screenings**

A regular medical screening of workers who have been exposed to asbestos, *does not protect* against the health effects of asbestos, but is very important.

### **The purpose of the screening is to:**

- Pick up the symptoms of diseases early
- Assess if any medical treatment is possible
- Prevent the possibility of further exposure to yourself or other workers
- Advise against smoking
- Discuss health effects
- Develop work histories and evidence for compensations

*There is no cure, except preventing exposure in the first place.....*

# WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

Asbestos is a mineral rock extracted from the earth. The mineral is extremely fibrous and is highly resistant to corrosion, heat and fire. The fibres are very strong, and long and silky in appearance. But the mining, milling and processing of asbestos into manufactured products creates many very small fibres. It is these fibres, many of which can only be seen with a powerful microscope, that have long been recognised as a serious health hazard.

## COMMERCIALLY USED ASBESTOS TYPES

There are three types of asbestos that have been used in a wide range of common products.

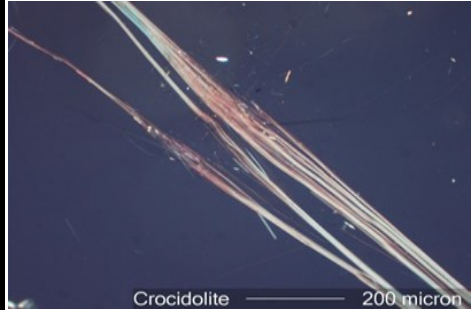
Chrysotile: or **White** asbestos

Crocidolite: or **Blue** asbestos

Amosite: or **Brown** or **Grey** asbestos

In Australia about 85% of the asbestos used has been **Chrysotile**, and about 15% has been **Crocidolite** and **Amosite**.

*All types are known to cause cancers.....*



## ASBESTOS IS EVERYWHERE

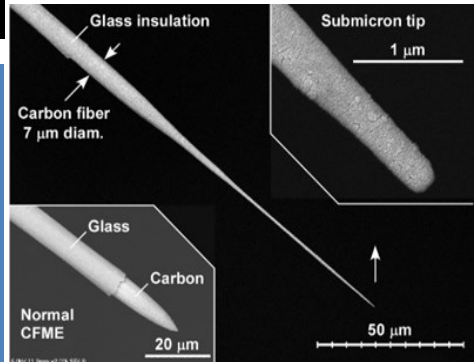
Over 3,000 uses of asbestos have been identified. Workers can be exposed to it in virtually any occupation, and most Australian homes contain asbestos in one form or another.

It has been used in asbestos-cement (fibro) sheets and pipes, for insulation around pipes and in buildings, for fire-proofing, in paints and sealants, in textiles such as felts and theatre curtains, in gaskets, and in friction products like brake linings and clutches.

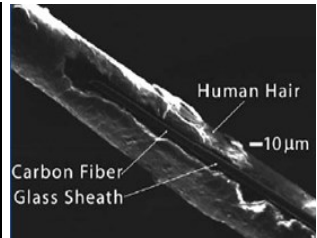
Companies like **James Hardie** have manufactured asbestos products that have resulted in thousands of workshops and homes being built with asbestos-fibro roofs and walls. Public buildings, hospitals, schools, libraries, office blocks and factories have asbestos in insulation, air conditioners and ceilings. Workplaces such as power stations are badly contaminated with asbestos.

### The main uses have been as:

- Insulation material such as pipe lagging
- Asbestos-cement fibro products
- Building insulation materials
- Sprayed on fire-proofing and decorative material (e.g. on ceilings)



A comparison of the sizes of different types of common industrial fibres (including asbestos) with a human hair...



Unless present in very high concentrations they cannot be seen with the naked eye in normal lighting conditions.....

## **10 REASONS FOR JOINING ADFA**

**You are not alone**

1.adfa gives support to members and their families. This support is provided by adfa members who are either asbestos victims or relatives of victims. We have been through the same painful experiences and can empathies with what you are going through.

2.adfa can point you in the right direction so you can get the best medical and legal advice.

3.We are among the first to know about current medical treatment and what is happening with research for a cure for asbestos-related diseases. We provide the latest information to members.

4.adfa can help find a counsellor who can help you with many of your problems.

5.adfa can introduce you to the Dust Diseases Board which may be able help you.

6.adfa has an excellent Newsletter which is sent to all members to keep in touch with what is happening in the Foundation and with coming events.

7.adfa holds monthly meetings in Granville on the 2nd Wednesday of each month where a lot of information is available. All members and friends are welcome at these meetings which are a time for talking, laughing and sharing.

8.adfa holds special events each year. Our *National Asbestos Awareness Week* in November raises awareness. Our events are very enjoyable times for making friends and doing something worthwhile.

9.adfa members who are victims of asbestos-related diseases are added to the Foundation's database. All information is kept with the strictest confidence. adfa only uses this information to lobby for a better deal for asbestos victims.

10. adfa played a major role in 1998 in winning changes to NSW laws regarding dust diseases which benefitted our members. The laws were a first for Australia. adfa continues advocacy work for our members..



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr/Prof/ Organisation (Circle One)

Name of person or Organisation (plus contact name of person at Organisation)

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone

Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Asbestos Related Disease: (if applicable) : \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP FEES:

Individuals: \$25 per annum

Organisations: \$60 per annum

Families (4 or more) \$12.50 each per annum

(with Families please fill in one Membership form for each person)

Office Use Only

Member No: \_\_\_\_\_

Receipt No: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated Entered : \_\_\_\_\_

Letter Sent: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to pay by (please circle)

**CHEQUE**

**MONEY ORDER**

**CREDIT CARD**

### CREDIT CARD DETAILS:

Mastercard

Visa

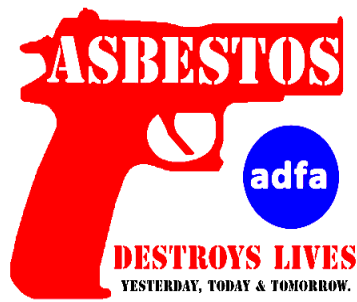
\_\_\_\_\_  
Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount to be debited to account: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Cardholder: \_\_\_\_\_



Dust Diseases  
Board

Turner  
Freeman

Lawyers Est. 1952



Australian Government

Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency

