

Asbestos.com Resource Guide for Mesothelioma End-of-Life Planning



"Our goal is to spread the word about Mesothelioma, a rare cancer that affects protective membranes surrounding lungs, heart and abdominal cavity, mainly caused by asbestos exposure. We provide free informational books, packets, and a Patient Advocacy program that works 1-on-1 with individuals to help them find local doctors, treatment centers, and support groups.

Discussing end-of-life wishes isn't always easy. People may avoid these conversations because they don't want to burden their loved ones. Though it can be difficult, it's important to be open about sharing your EOL wishes with your family so you can enjoy your final years peacefully.

Outlining your wishes is crucial for you and your loved ones if you are living with a terminal illness such as Mesothelioma. To help ease the stress and burden of planning, our resource guide covers all the essential end-of-life documents you need to ensure your wishes are fulfilled."

<https://www.asbestos.com/support/end-of-life-documents/>

What is Mesothelioma?

Mesothelioma is characterized by malignant tumors that develop in the mesothelium, a layer of protective tissue that covers several organs.

The four types of mesotheliomas are identified by the location where tumors develop: Pleural mesothelioma (lungs), peritoneal Mesothelioma (abdomen), pericardial Mesothelioma (heart), and Mesothelioma of the tunica vaginalis (testes).

Mesothelioma is a rare and aggressive cancer. Treatments are available to extend life expectancy and improve quality of life, but there is no cure.

Key Facts About Mesothelioma

- **The primary cause of Mesothelioma is asbestos exposure.**
- **Mesothelioma has a long latency period, taking 20-50 years to develop into cancer.**
- **Symptoms of malignant Mesothelioma are treatable, but the cancer is incurable.**
- **Mesothelioma has an average prognosis of 12 – 21 months.**
- **Approximately 3,000 mesothelioma cases are diagnosed yearly.**
- **The average age of diagnosis is 65 or older.**
- **People working directly with the asbestos mineral or products containing asbestos are most at risk.**
- **Asbestos in the workplace, homes, schools, military structures, and naval ships also leads to dangerous exposure.**
- **The military used asbestos from the 1930s to the 1980s, so many veterans are at a significantly higher risk of developing an asbestos-related disease.**

Mesothelioma Treatment Options

According to the latest study in the American Society of Clinical Oncology, mesothelioma cancer is treated with conventional therapies such as surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation. Emerging cancer treatments, including immunotherapy, are also available for some patients. Though not every patient is eligible for each type of mesothelioma cancer treatment, **most patients can benefit from palliative care to help manage symptoms.**

What Is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a natural mineral that has been mined and used for centuries. The mineral increases durability and heat and chemical resistance when added to products. Long considered a "miracle" mineral, asbestos has been used in thousands of products, including insulation, siding, other construction materials, car brakes, and many other products. **At the height of its use, asbestos was used in more than 3,000 consumer products.**

When asbestos materials are disturbed or damaged, asbestos fibers can release into the air and cause dangerous exposure. **When people inhale or ingest the microscopic fibers, it can lead to serious health problems, such as Mesothelioma.** <https://www.maacenter.org/asbestos/>

Military Exposure:

"The widespread use of asbestos in the military during the 1930s through the 1980s put many United States service men and women at risk of developing an asbestos-related disease, like Mesothelioma; this is particularly true for navy veterans and shipyard workers. Most navy vessels before 1980 were built with hundreds of asbestos-containing products, such as asbestos fireproofing, insulation or lagging on pipes and around boilers, and gaskets and valve packing. Many veterans are at a significantly higher risk of developing an asbestos-related disease."

How Do You Remove Asbestos in Your Home or Elsewhere?

Asbestos remediation is complicated, time-consuming, and expensive. See this post by Bob Villa on the methods and cost of removal. <https://www.bobvila.com/articles/asbestos-removal-cost/>

Asbestos Today

This "miracle" mineral was used in many products and applications in the USA until it was discovered to cause cancer in 1970. However, a British medical journal reported the dangers of asbestos-caused cancer as early as 1924. Due to its heat-resistant properties, asbestos was widely used in the U.S. from the 1930s through the 1980's but especially during WW2. Surprisingly, numerous efforts to ban it in the U.S. have failed, and it is still being used. Asbestos was found in Playskool crayons as recently as 2018. "More than 50 nations have banned asbestos, but the U.S. still permits its citizens to be exposed to a substance known to cause illness and death."

The Asbestos Nation Moto: **STILL LEGAL STILL EVERYWHERE**

<http://www.asbestosnation.org/facts/why-isnt-asbestos-banned-in-the-united-states/>

Article from WebMD: *Asbestos Exposure: The Brief History You Probably Didn't Know*

<https://www.webmd.com/connect-to-care/asbestos/asbestos-exposure-brief-history>

Various websites contributed to the research and writing of this article:

- **Asbestos.com:** <https://www.asbestos.com/>
- **The Mesothelioma + Asbestos Awareness Center:** <https://www.maacenter.org/asbestos/>
- **EWG Action Fund /// ASBESTOS NATION:** <http://www.asbestosnation.org/about/>
- **The Veterans Asbestos Alliance:** <https://www.veteransasbestosalliance.org/>
- **Bob Vila Home Advice:** <https://www.bobvila.com>

Advance Care Planning Support: <https://www.asbestos.com/support/end-of-life-documents/>

Photo Credit: Sunshine Coast Hospice: <https://coasthospice.com/>

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