

Fast Facts

Mesothelioma

- Aggressive and deadly form of cancer
- Appears in the thin layer of tissue that covers most of the internal organs (mesothelium)
 - Primary risk factor is exposure to asbestos
- Asbestos is a mineral naturally found in the environment. It's made up of fibers that are strong and resistant to heat, which makes it very useful for a variety of things. The problem with it occurs when it's broken up, which creates dust. When this dust is inhaled or swallowed, the fibers get inside your lungs or stomach and irritate the mesothelium
 - Most people don't develop mesothelioma even after they've been exposed
 - A slow process (can take 20-60 years to appear after your exposure)
- Majority of people who are exposed work in a field where it's used frequently, like asbestos miners, electricians, plumbers, pipefitters, insulators, shipyard workers, demolition workers, brake mechanics, home remodelers and some military personnel
- Other risk factors include living with someone who works with asbestos because the fibers can be on their clothing and skin when they come home from work, having a family history of mesothelioma or having radiation therapy to the chest
 - Can show up anywhere in the body
- Most common are the lungs (pleura mesothelioma), abdomen (peritoneal mesothelioma), heart (pericardial mesothelioma) and testicles (mesothelioma of tunica vaginalis)
 - Last two are very rare

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<p><i>Pleural:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Chest pain -Coughing that's painful -Shortness of breath -Unusual lumps under the skin on the chest -Difficulty swallowing -Pain caused by pressure on the nerves/spinal cord -Unexplained weight loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Dependent on the stage/location of it and individual health <p><i>Early Stages:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Surgery -Chemotherapy -Radiation therapy -Immunotherapy <p><i>Late Stages:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Often comfort measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reduce exposure to asbestos <p>If you work with asbestos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Follow all safety precautions, like wearing protective equipment or showering/changing clothes before going on lunch or going home <p>Asbestos in your home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Consult with experts who are trained to detect and remove it
<p><i>Peritoneal:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Abdominal pain/swelling -Nausea -Unexplained weight loss 	<p><i>Alternative Medicine:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Supplemental oxygen -Practicing certain breathing or relaxation procedures -Acupuncture -Pointing a fan at their face 	
<p><i>Pericardial:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Chest pain -Breathing difficulty 	<p><i>Coping:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learn as much as you can about it -Have a good support network of family/friends -Join a support group 	
<p><i>Mesothelioma of tunica vaginalis:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Mass on a testicle -Swelling to the testicle 		

	-Plan ahead in the event you become unable to make decisions for yourself (ex. advanced directive).	
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