

## Some Truths About Asbestos Lung Mesothelioma

There are various types of mesothelioma but asbestos lung mesothelioma is an asbestos-induced cancer of the mesothelium of the lung, more familiarly known as the pleura, which is the external lining of the lung.

Many of the major organs of the body have a mesothelium, that of the heart being called the pericardium and of the heart the peritoneum. However, it is with the pleura that we are concerned here, and the symptoms of asbestos lung mesothelioma are what you would expect: coughing, discomfort in the chest cavity and eventual pain.

Before we come to possible treatments and palliative care, let's have a look at what causes it and why we are still seeing new cases today after asbestos was banned for construction use in the 1970s.

Asbestos comes in several forms, the most dangerous thought to be crocidolite, commonly known as blue asbestos. This form of asbestos is in a highly fibrous form, and it is the inhalation and ingestion of these fibers that cause the problem. They tend to remain in the body for a considerable period of time and it can take up to 40 – 45 years before the symptoms of mesothelioma begin to appear, though some people contract it in their 30s.

To complicate the situation, it is not only asbestos that causes the symptoms, but any fibrous silicate, which it is why some compensation cases are not as cut and dry as they could be. To add to this complication, smoking adds to the possibility of cancer and it is argued that many patients would not have contracted mesothelioma had they not smoked.

This is not only an argument made by solicitors in court, but has been established by statistics. It is pretty certain that smokers have a greater tendency of contracting asbestos lung mesothelioma than non-smokers, since attorneys for the employers have used this as a reason for having the otherwise high compensation significantly reduced.

There is a popular misconception that mesothelioma is caused by asbestos, but it is just a misconception. Lung cancer is mesothelioma, and in the USA 80% of mesothelioma cases are caused by smoking. That is an indisputable fact. In order to prove the intervention of asbestos in a case, therefore, not only would the patients have to prove that they had worked with asbestos, but also not to have smoked. Had they smoked, then the award could be greatly reduced.

The term "asbestos lung mesothelioma" is therefore a correct one because that form of the disease to which we are referring is caused by asbestos, and not smoking, is of the pleura of the lung and not of the pericardium or peritoneum, and is mesothelioma.

Its treatment is largely palliative, or intended to ease suffering, because the prognosis is fairly grim. Only about 20% of cases live to 5 years after diagnosis, with most surviving only one year, though much depends on how far the condition had developed by the time it was diagnosed. Chemotherapy and radiation treatment are used, but not successfully, and various degrees of surgery are also used. Removal of the affected lung, pericardium and half the diaphragm is the most major of these, and even that only extends life to a maximum of around five years from diagnosis.

There are new treatments being tested, but all treatment is expensive, and a good attorney is likely necessary to secure the compensation to pay for these. Ultimately hospice care will be required and again compensation money should be kept back for this. Ultimately, in spite of all the treatment given, it is palliative care that will make the last days of the patient bearable, as will the help and support of the family, and this is what compensation can fund.

## About the Author

More information on this disease can be obtained from Pete's webpage [Asbestos Lung Mesothelioma](#) where more detail is given of possible treatment.

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