

SECONDARY ASBESTOS EXPOSURE

Myths

VS.

Facts

Myth 1:

Only people who worked directly with asbestos are at risk.



Fact:

Anyone exposed to asbestos fibers can develop mesothelioma. This includes family members of workers who brought fibers home on clothing, skin, hair, or equipment.

Myth 2:

Only older men get mesothelioma.



Fact:

While older men historically had higher rates due to workplace exposure patterns, mesothelioma can affect anyone who has been exposed to asbestos, women and younger people included.

Myth 3:

Short-term or brief asbestos exposure doesn't matter.



Fact:

There is no known safe level of asbestos exposure. Even brief contact with asbestos fibers can contribute to mesothelioma decades later.

Myth 4:

Mesothelioma only affects the lungs.



Fact:

Mesothelioma can develop in multiple parts of the body where asbestos fibers lodge, including:

- Plural: The lining of the lungs
- Peritoneal: The lining of the stomach
- Pericardial: The membrane surrounding the heart
- Testicular: The membrane surrounding the testicles

Myth 5:

If asbestos exposure doesn't make you sick right away, you're safe.



Fact:

Mesothelioma has a long latency period. Symptoms often don't show up until decades after exposure.

Myth 6:

Mesothelioma and asbestos-related diseases are the same thing.



Fact:

Mesothelioma is a specific cancer caused by asbestos, but asbestos exposure can also lead to other serious conditions like asbestosis, lung cancer, pleural plaques, and other diseases.

Myth 7:

Asbestos is completely banned in the United States.



Fact:

There is still *no complete nationwide* ban on all types of asbestos in the U.S. Although its use is restricted, products containing asbestos can still legally exist, meaning some exposure risk remains.

Why This Matters for Secondary Exposure

Many victims of secondary exposure may not know they ever encountered asbestos until they're diagnosed with mesothelioma or a similar disease. Being near a loved one who worked with or around asbestos creates a real risk of developing fatal illnesses, and simple acts like washing their work clothes may have significantly worsened your level of exposure. Educating yourself and your family with accurate information can help with early awareness, symptom recognition, and proactive health monitoring.