

## Asbestos and Mesothelioma: A Younger Generation Now at Risk

(ARA) - Everyone knows the dangers of asbestos. What was once commonplace in factories and the construction industry has caused a slew of health problems to those who have been exposed. Mesothelioma is a type of cancer caused by this exposure, and it's not just people who worked directly with asbestos who now need to be concerned.

The word "mesothelioma" comes from the "mesothelium," which is a thin lining that covers many of the body's internal organs. Mesothelioma occurs when malignant, cancerous cells develop in this lining. Mesothelioma can occur even if you've had extremely low levels of asbestos exposure.

What was once just a worry for those involved in industries where asbestos was used has now become a concern for their spouses and children. So-called "paraoccupational" mesothelioma is a risk for anyone with a family member who has worked in an asbestos-using industry. That means the daily hug from dad after he got home from work or a wife simply washing her husband's work clothes can be enough exposure to cause health problems.

The latency period of mesothelioma is typically 30 to 40 years. That means you could have breathed in asbestos fibers brought home by a friend or family member as long ago as the 1950s and 1960s and only now be experiencing symptoms.

In a major study, doctors from the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City reported on the affects of asbestos exposure to the families of men who manufactured asbestos insulation. None of these family members had direct contact with asbestos, but 35 percent had asbestos-related health problems, including mesothelioma.

If you think you have been exposed to asbestos fibers directly or indirectly, your first responsibility is to your health. Symptoms include lung problems such as dry cough and shortness of breath; stomach problems such as nausea, loss of appetite and bloating; and heart problems causing chest pain. The symptoms of mesothelioma are often confused with other, less serious illnesses, so you should visit your doctor for an official diagnosis.

Your second responsibility if you are diagnosed with mesothelioma is to make sure you get the ongoing care you need. For years, manufacturers of asbestos containing products have been held legally responsible for what those substances have done to workers with prolonged exposure. Today, they are also being held to the same responsibility for the families and friends of those workers.

For more information about mesothelioma, a list of 37 industries in which asbestos was commonly found, and how to deal with the disease, visit [www.secondarysickness.info](http://www.secondarysickness.info) or call (888) 255-2956.

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