

mesothelioma

adsaTM



asbestos diseases society of australia inc.

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MESOTHELIOMA HAND BOOK

In our experience, mesothelioma patients visiting our office say that having reliable information about the condition and a plan to manage the disease, reduces stress for themselves and their carers. Frustrated by the lack of adequate information in medical publications, British palliative physician Dr Helen Clayson conducted extensive research and interviews with patients and carers to develop the Mesothelioma Hand Book. In 2015, our CEO approached Dr Clayson for permission to develop a uniquely Australian version of the book.

The ADSA Mesothelioma Hand Book is written with the intention of providing straightforward and comprehensive information for patients, carers and health professionals. It is based on considerable experience in the medical and nursing care of sufferers from mesothelioma and in the support of their relatives. Dr Clayson's research suggests that people with mesothelioma and their family carers want specific types and quantities of information.

Each reprint of the ADSA Hand Book is updated to reflect any changes in current treatments and research.

A sample of the hand book is available on our website www.asbestosdiseases.org.au

To obtain a full copy of the book (available to mesothelioma patients), as well as other products to assist patients and their carers, please call (08) 9344 4077 or email us at info@asbestosdiseases.org.au to make an appointment.



WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

Asbestos is a natural fibre that was commercially used in more than 3000 products. Australia was one of the highest users, with approximately one third of all homes built using asbestos products. The use of asbestos was phased out of building products throughout the 1980s and completely banned in 2003.

WA has the highest incidence of mesothelioma cancer in the world per capita, owing to the high penetration of asbestos products contaminating our built and natural environment. This is due to CSR's Wittenoom asbestos mine in the Pilbara, and James Hardie's manufacturing operations in Perth. While workers and their families were most at risk of contracting an asbestos related disease in the past, community exposure presents the highest risk today. More commonly, mesothelioma cases are now being attributed to asbestos exposure from 'do-it-yourself' (DIY) activities in the home.

ADSA has seen a considerable increase in the number of cases of mesothelioma, particularly those exposed as children. These cases are described as the fourth wave, affecting a third generation of sufferers - wives and children of mine workers, farmers, tradespeople and DIY handymen.

Progression of Asbestos Diseases from the 1900s

WAVE	WHO IS AT RISK
1st	Asbestos mining industry workers (early 1900s)
2nd	Asbestos manufacturing industry workers
3rd	Construction / tradespeople and their families (ongoing)
4th	Community, due to decaying asbestos products in our built environment – schools, offices, homes, recreation centres, holiday homes (ongoing)
5th	Workers / community, as a result of unsafe asbestos removal (ongoing)

ASBESTOS-RELATED DISEASES

Asbestos fibres that are breathed and in accumulate in the lungs where, over many years, they cause inflammation and other long-term changes that can eventually lead to **mesothelioma cancer**. Mesothelioma develops very slowly - usually 20 to 50 years between initial exposure to asbestos and the onset of symptoms - but can then progress quickly.

In addition, people who both smoke and are exposed to asbestos have a very high risk of **lung cancer** due to the multiplicative effect of the cancer risk by these two factors in combination.

Asbestos causes other illnesses such as **asbestosis**, which is a slowly progressive fibrosis or scarring affecting the lung tissue. It also gives rise to pleural thickening which may extend around and constrict the lungs, causing difficulty with breathing and less seriously, causes pleural plaques which appear on chest x-rays as scarring on the pleura.

WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS?

People who may have been exposed to asbestos typically suffer persistent coughs or ongoing respiratory illness. Warning signs include shortness of breath, cough, chest or abdominal pains and rapid weight loss, as well as blood in saliva and mucus coughed up from the respiratory tract.

If you think you may have been exposed to asbestos or silica dust and are suffering a persistent cough or ongoing respiratory illness, please contact ADSA's onsite screening service.

For a screening appointment, call (08) 9344 4077.



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The Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia (ADSA) is Australia's leading health and advocacy association assisting persons affected by **mesothelioma - asbestosis - silicosis - lung cancer**. The organisation has played a crucial role in helping Australians affected by asbestos-related diseases since 1979.

Our Purpose is to save lives, and Our Values underpin all that we do:

JUSTICE - To ensure access to fair and just compensation, in line with the rest of Australia

EQUALITY - To ensure equitable access to up-to-date medical treatment

PROTECTION - To prevent the community and future generations from exposure to asbestos

INNOVATION - To develop lifesaving treatments through properly funded medical trials

LEGACY - To remember the sufferers and their families

ADSA was founded in 1979 to assist dying workers and their families in their fight for recognition of their asbestos caused diseases, justice and a cure. Furthermore, founders Robert and Rose Marie Vojakovic with the ADSA Committee, saw that asbestos diseases sufferers and their families needed ongoing support medically, socially and emotionally, and so they founded the Asbestos Diseases Advisory Service (ADAS) in 1984. This important service continues today providing screening services, and ongoing medical, emotional and legal support.

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OUR SERVICES

Since 1979, ADSA has been helping thousands of Australians and their loved ones access independent advice and assistance for asbestos-related issues, including:

- providing specialist assistance for victims and professional support for their families in the management of asbestos-related diseases
- fundraising for lifesaving medical research, to find a cure for malignant mesothelioma and lung cancer
- promoting research into early diagnosis and treatment of asbestos-related diseases
- providing medico-legal counselling and assistance with Workers' Compensation and Common Law damages claims
- raising awareness of the dangers associated with asbestos in the community and providing information on safety measures

The Advisory Service also provides:

- assisting with screenings for asbestos-related diseases, which includes low dose CT scans and breathing tests
- medical and legal support
- counselling and support groups
- industrial and environmental hygiene information

For assistance and additional information please call (08) 9344 4077 or 1800 646 690 or email us at info@asbestosdiseases.org.au

For more information, visit www.asbestosdiseases.org.au

HOW TO SUPPORT THE ADSA

Public support and donations have enabled the ADSA to support sufferers, families and carers, as well as fund life-saving programs, medical research and to lobby Government for an asbestos-free environment. All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

