

WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

Asbestos is a natural fibre and the following forms of asbestos are commercially used - Chrysotile (white asbestos), Crocidolite (blue asbestos) and Amosite (brown asbestos).

The Commercial Properties of Asbestos

- withstands heat, corrosion and decay
- resists many chemicals
- combines a high tensile strength with softness and flexibility
- can be combined in a matrix
- is a good adhesive

These and other properties make asbestos both extremely useful but also extremely dangerous!

HOW WAS ASBESTOS USED?

Asbestos was used in more than 3000 products. Examples of some products you may encounter:

- Sprayed asbestos for fire protection, heat and sound insulation
- Lagging for pipes, boilers etc
- Asbestos cement (A/C) products
- Corrugated roofing and fences
- Flat sheets, wall lining and eaves
- Compressed flooring and partitioning
- Downpipes and guttering
- Water pipes
- Moulded products
- Asbestos containing insulation boards
- Marine board, fire doors, mill board, fire rating board, electrical switch boards, cement tiles, caulking and spackling compounds and asbestos/vinyl floor tiles
- Brake linings
- Carpet underlay

HOW TO SUPPORT THE ADSA

Public support and donations are very welcome so that the Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia can continue to support sufferers, families/carers, life-saving programs, medical research and lobby Government for an asbestos free environment.

All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible

Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia Inc

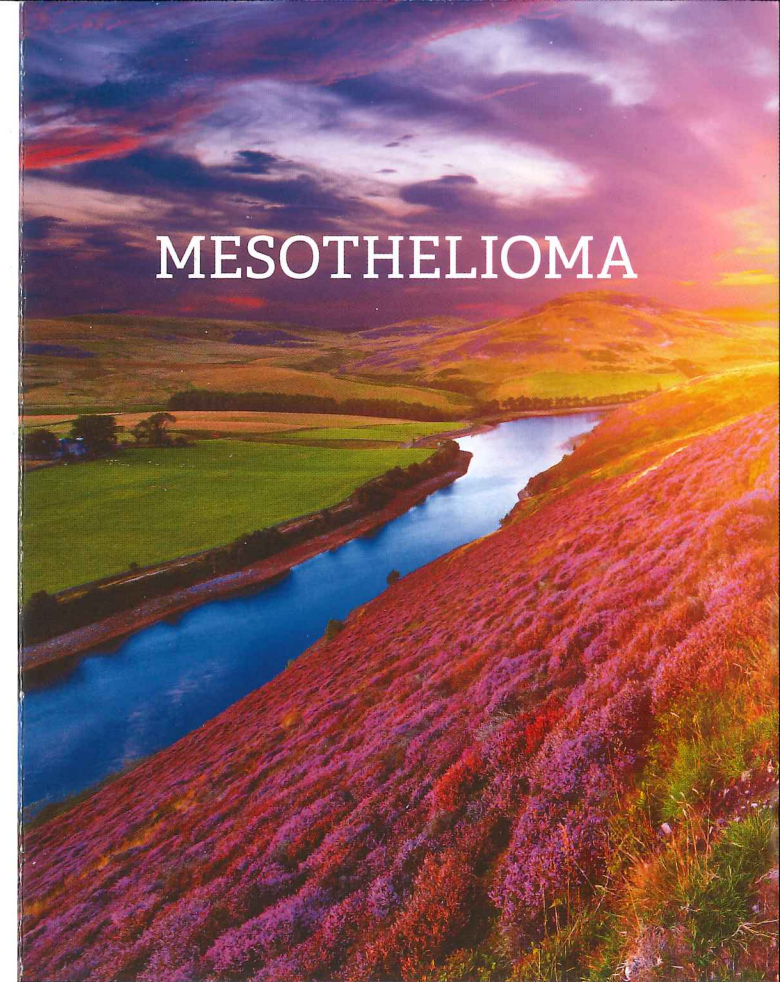
PO Box 1394 Osborne Park WA 6916
219 Main St Osborne Park WA 6017

Website: www.asbestosdiseases.org.au
Email: info@asbestosdiseases.org.au

Free call: 1 800 646 690
Telephone: 08 9344 4077
Facsimile: 08 9345 0422



over 35 years of asbestos awareness
& public health advocacy



MESOTHELIOMA

assistance for mesothelioma
patients, their families & carers



THE ASBESTOS DISEASES SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA IS A CARING, CHARITABLE ORGANISATION WHICH HAS FOR OVER 35 YEARS PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY

- Professional and specialist assistance to those who develop asbestos related diseases and assistance and support to their families with management of the diseases.
- Promoting research into early diagnosis and treatment of asbestos related diseases.
- Fundraising for asbestos research to find a cure for malignant Mesothelioma and lung cancer.
- 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.

For assistance and additional information please call **(08) 9344 4077** or **1 800 646 690** or you can email us at info@asbestosdiseases.org.au
For more info visit asbestosdiseases.org.au

MESOTHELIOMA HAND BOOK

Patients with Mesothelioma say that having reliable information about the condition and receiving good care at home from family members alongside health professionals, can make a huge difference to their experience of the illness. As the diagnosis of Mesothelioma usually comes as a shock, we at the ADSA wanted to ensure that those affected by this illness are not alone. So with this in mind a Mesothelioma Hand Book has been developed in collaboration with people who have Mesothelioma, family members and healthcare professionals involved in their care and members of asbestos victim support groups.

The Mesothelioma Hand Book is written with the intention of providing straightforward and comprehensive information. The information provided is based on considerable experience in the medical and nursing care of sufferers from mesothelioma and in the support of their relatives. The research shows that people with Mesothelioma and their family carers want different types and quantities of information. Some people with Mesothelioma might feel that they receive sufficient information from their doctors, but family carers as 'partners in care', should have access to as much information as they want, as well as the patient.

MESOTHELIOMA

Mesothelioma is a cancer affecting the mesothelial membranes; these are thin filmy layers of lubricating tissue that enable internal organs to glide smoothly against each other as the body moves. The pleural membrane (pleura) tightly surrounds each lung and a second layer lines the inside of the chest wall; the pleura produce a small amount of lubricating pleural fluid that keeps the lungs mobile inside the chest during breathing. In the abdomen the peritoneum is the membrane that surrounds the intestines and other abdominal organs; it also lines the abdominal cavity and produces a small amount of peritoneal fluid to keep the organs smoothly mobile. Similarly, the pericardium is the lubricating membrane that surrounds the heart. Mesothelioma of the pleural membrane is the most common form; it occurs less often in the peritoneum and occasionally affects the pericardium. Very rarely Mesothelioma develops in the membrane surrounding the testicles. Mesothelioma is almost invariably caused by exposure to asbestos fibres and in the majority of cases this exposure occurs in the workplace. In some cases asbestos exposure affects family members due to asbestos fibres being carried into the home on work-clothes.

HISTORY OF ASBESTOS IN AUSTRALIA

Australia was one of the highest users per capita in the world of asbestos products until the mid 1980s. By the mid 1980s, approximately 1/3 of all homes built in Australia contained asbestos products. Asbestos continued to be mined in Australia until 1983. Between 1930 and 1983, about 1.5 million tonnes of all forms of asbestos was imported into Australia. Occupations that may increase your risk of exposure include construction and demolition workers, painters, electricians, miners, shipyard workers, asbestos transporters and railway carriage builders and defence forces. More commonly Mesothelioma cases in Australia are now being attributed to asbestos exposure from "do it yourself" (DIY) activities in houses constructed using asbestos-containing materials. Asbestos fibres that are breathed in accumulate in the lungs where, over many years, they cause inflammation and other long-term changes that can eventually lead to cancer (Mesothelioma) developing in the pleura. In addition, people who both smoke and are exposed to asbestos have a very high risk of lung cancer (called asbestos-related lung cancer) due to the multiplying 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 but do not usually create any serious problems. Asbestosis, pleural thickening and pleural plaques are not cancers. Mesothelioma develops very slowly - usually 20 to 50 years between initial exposure to asbestos and the onset of symptoms, but can then progress quickly.