

Mesothelioma Cancer Information

Author: Administrator

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What is Mesothelioma?

Mesothelioma is a rare disease caused as a result of malignant cancerous cells lining the patient's body cavities such as chest, abdominal region or the area surrounding the heart. It is typically associated with exposure to asbestos which has been documented in as many as 70-80% of all mesothelioma cases. This disease is very difficult to assess consistently due to the great variability in time before diagnosis and the rate of progression of malignant mesothelioma.

Even insignificant exposure to asbestos (commonly reported in such work environments as asbestos mills, mines, shipping yards, some older Navy ships or patients' homes) is known to result in mesothelioma, which in many cases does not occur for decades after initial exposure to this cancer-causing substance. In the recent years as many as 2000-3000 cases of have been diagnosed per year. It is also known that family members of workers exposed to asbestos can contract this disease through exposure to the worker's clothing. Smoking greatly increases the risk of contracting this disease.

Mesothelioma, this is a deadly disease that has been in the spotlight for the last decade. Sad but true, the number of under-regulation usage in years past still shows that we are paying for it today. It can be safely said that almost everyone in the world has been exposed to asbestos at one point in their life. Because of the unique nature of the disease, even those who have suffered only small exposure are at risk of contracting the disease. In effect, virtually everyone has some risk of contracting Mesothelioma.

But while this sort of statement is true, it is also open ended and up for debate. While it is certainly true that individuals who have been exposed to small amounts of asbestos for relatively short periods of time have contracted the disease, this is a rarity in most cases. In fact, the vast majority of Mesothelioma cases involve individuals who were exposed to airborne asbestos fibers for an extended period of time.

Who can be at risk for Mesothelioma?

Most research shows that the industries most in danger of prolonged exposure and thus of contraction are shipbuilding trades, asbestos mining and milling, textile work, insulation work, and brake repair personnel workers. There are, however, some other similar factors which can affect the likelihood of contracting this disease. Among these is exposure to radiation. There have been causes in which individuals who were exposed to radiation have subsequently displayed signs of and contracted mesothelioma. However, the studies to attempt to verify this correlation have not proven out this claim in a strong way.

Another more certain and proven cause of the disease was the taking of the Polio vaccines. Some batches of this vaccine were contaminated with Simian Virus 40 which has been detected in a host of rare cancers including Mesothelioma. Some individuals who have been exposed to long periods and high quantities of asbestos have not contracted the disease. As a result, doctors have concluded that genetics play a major role in determining whether or not patients contract the disease. Unfortunately, the gene variability which offers some resistance to the disease also means that some are particularly vulnerable to asbestos exposure.

If you or someone you know has been diagnosed with mesothelioma, remember that time matters. The faster you consult your doctor and get professional care the better your chances will be of dealing with this

dangerous cancer. There are three traditional methods of fighting cancerous mesothelioma: surgery, chemotherapy drugs and radiation therapy. Please contact your doctor as soon as possible to get more information.

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