

ASBESTOS

**BREATHING ASBESTOS FIBERS IS
DANGEROUS**

UCLA Labor Occupational
Safety & Health Program
(LOSH)

(310) 794-5964



What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a mineral-based material that is used as an insulator and a barrier to corrosive chemicals. Its texture may be coarse or fine. Tiny asbestos particles, or fibers, are invisible. When inhaled, they stay in the lungs and cause health problems.



Where can you find Asbestos?

Nearly everywhere in the environment: in the home, school, and workplace.



You can be exposed to Asbestos, if:

- you work on the remodeling or demolition/destruction of a building;
- you work removing debris after a disaster;
- you work where they manufacture products containing this material, such as textiles, building materials, insulation materials, etc.

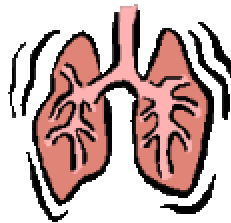
What are the symptoms and sicknesses you may experience if you have been exposed to Asbestos fibers?

(Remember that in some cases you can have the sickness without having symptoms)

Symptoms



- Difficulty breathing
- Headaches
- Coughing
- Pallor
- Weight loss
- Weakness



Sicknesses*

- *Asbestosis* (permanent scarring of the lungs)
- *Mesothelioma* (cancer of the membranes that line the lungs or abdomen)
- *Cancer* of the lung, esophagus, stomach, colon and/or rectum.

**Asbestos-related diseases can take between 10 – 15 years to discover.*

*If you have been exposed to asbestos fibers, it is important to have regular **physical examinations**.*

How can you protect yourself from Asbestos exposure?



- Wear protective clothing (gloves, full-body clothing), including face shields and vented goggles.
- Use NIOSH-approved respirators. The kind of respirator (and filter) you use will depend upon how many asbestos fibers are in the air. (Your employer must measure how many fibers are in the air). Make sure the respirator fits your face properly.
- Take a shower at work at the end of your shift.
- Never take work clothes to your home; leave them at work. Your employer is responsible for washing your work clothes.
- Do not dust or vacuum areas that contain wastes with asbestos fibers.
- Do not smoke! The combination of cigarette smoking and breathing in asbestos fibers greatly increases the possibility of your getting cancer.

