



# Asbestos Awareness

Asbestos is a naturally occurring rock made of tiny fibers. The three most common types are Chrysotile, Amosite, and Crocidolite. Because of its fiber strength and heat resistance, asbestos has been used in a variety of building construction materials for insulation and as a fire retardant. Asbestos has also been used in a wide range of manufactured goods, mostly in building materials (roofing shingles, ceiling and floor tiles, paper products, and asbestos cement products), friction products (automobile clutch, brake, and transmission parts), heat-resistant fabrics, packaging, gaskets, and coatings.

## Where Asbestos May be Found

- **Insulation** (Pipe, boiler, corrugated air-cell, breaching, and block insulation; HVAC duct insulation; sprayed-in insulation; blown-in insulation; thermal paper products; electrical wiring insulation)
- **Fireproofing/Acoustical Texture Products** (includes acoustical plaster, decorative plaster, textured paint or coatings, fire blankets, fire curtains, fire doors)
- **Textile and Cloth Products** (includes blankets, protective cloth coverings, garments, asbestos gloves, threads, cords, yarns, braids)
- **Spackling, Patching & Taping Compounds** (includes caulking, putties, joint compounds, adhesives, tapes, thermal taping compounds)
- **Gaskets and Packings** (includes high temperature gaskets, packings for industrial products, high pressure packing, asbestos packing reinforced with steel or copper wire)
- **Asbestos-cement Pipe and Sheet Material**
- **Tiles, Wallboard, Siding and Roofing** (includes roofing shingles, roofing felt, base flashing, cement wall-board, cement siding, ceiling tiles and lay-in panels, asphalt floor tile, vinyl floor tile, vinyl sheet flooring, flooring backing, vinyl wall coverings)
- **Friction Materials** (automotive and railroad brakes and clutches)
- **Vermiculite** (used in some horticultural potting mixes, brake pads, acoustic tiles, insulation)
- **Laboratory hoods and table tops**

## Health Effects from Exposure to Asbestos

Exposure to asbestos increases your risk of developing lung disease. That risk is made worse by smoking. In general, the greater the exposure to asbestos, the greater the chance of developing harmful health effects. Disease symptoms may take many years to develop following exposure.

After a doctor suspects an asbestos-related health condition, he or she can use a number of tools to help make the actual diagnosis. Some of these tools are physical examination, chest x-ray and pulmonary function tests. Your doctor may also refer you to a specialist who treats diseases caused by asbestos.

Three of the major health effects associated with asbestos exposure are:

- lung cancer
- mesothelioma, a rare form of cancer that is found in the thin lining of the lung, chest and the abdomen and heart
- asbestosis, a serious progressive, long-term, non-cancer disease of the lungs