

Title:

Mesothelioma: The Basics

Word Count:

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Summary:

Mesothelioma is a rare form of cancer that is usually found in those previously exposed to asbestos. Legal action can be taken to get compensation for the illness and all the troubles the victim and their family must deal with.

Keywords:

Mesothelioma

Article Body:

Mesothelioma is a rare form of cancer that is usually found in those previously exposed to asbestos. Cancerous cells form in the mesothelium, which is a protective lining that covers most of the body's internal organs. These cells typically form in the lining of the lungs, abdomen, or the sac that encircles the heart.

The average life span of a person diagnosed with the disease is about 4 to 24 months from the finding. About 3,000 people in the U.S. die of mesothelioma every year. People at risk are those who have been previously exposed to asbestos dust, including former steel workers, auto mechanics, mineworkers, and military workers, among many others. Their family members may also be at risk, as the asbestos dust from clothing can travel through the air.

Mesothelioma has an extremely long latency period, which means that symptoms of the disease may not emerge until 30 to 50 years after the initial exposure to asbestos. Pleural mesothelioma, which is the most common type and affects the area around the lungs, may cause shortness of breath, chest pains, and a persistent cough, which may lead to coughing up blood. These symptoms are caused by the build up of fluid between the lining of the lung and the chest cavity. The disease may start in the chest area and spread to other areas of the body. Other symptoms of pleural mesothelioma include weight loss, severe breathing trouble, fever, difficulty swallowing, and swelling of the face and neck areas. It should be noted that some people with the disease do not experience any serious symptoms at all.

Peritoneal mesothelioma is rarer than pleural mesothelioma, and affects the

abdominal area. Symptoms of peritoneal mesothelioma include abdominal swelling and pain due to the build up of fluid in the abdominal cavity, nausea, loss of appetite, and vomiting. Breathing complications and chest pains may also be present, as well as bowel obstruction, anaemia, fever, and blood clotting.

The rarest form of the disease is pericardial mesothelioma, which first forms in the area surrounding the heart. Tumors grow in the tissues around the heart and spread from there. Chest pain, shortness of breath, constant coughing, and shivering may be symptoms of this form of mesothelioma.

Diagnosis of the disease is oftentimes difficult, due to the fact that the symptoms associated with mesothelioma are similar to those of other conditions. The symptoms of the disease become more serious as the cancerous tumors enter the later stages of development, so people who have been exposed to asbestos at any time in their lives should contact their doctor immediately. Even if a person has never been exposed directly to asbestos but is experiencing any of the above symptoms, they should inform their doctor as soon as possible, as asbestos dust and fibres may have traveled through the air from items such as clothing.

People who have been diagnosed with any form of mesothelioma should immediately contact a lawyer. Individual states have their own statutes of limitation, meaning that there is a set time limit regarding how long a patient has to act on their diagnosis. When searching for a lawyer to handle your case, be sure to find one that has prior experience with mesothelioma cases. They will have the contacts and resources to take care of your case in a timely manner. The Internet is a helpful and efficient resource for a mesothelioma lawyer search.

Patients do not have to be concerned with paying lawyers up-front, since the majority of mesothelioma lawyers work on a contingency fee basis, which means that they will not request payment of any kind unless they successfully settle your case. Lawyers will usually take a 35% cut of whatever settlement or reward the patient receives, but patients seeking compensation for their disease have nothing to lose and everything to gain in going to a lawyer for help.

The average mesothelioma-related settlement in the U.S. is \$1 million. Cases that go to trial average awards of approximately \$6 million, according to the RAND Corporation. A bill called the Fairness in Asbestos Injury Resolution Act of 2005 (FAIR Act of 2005) introduced on March 17, 2005, seeks to create set amounts of compensation for mesothelioma victims, which would depend on their symptoms.

People who have mesothelioma are able to seek large compensation amounts because

their disease is a result of a company's decision not to take sufficient measures to protect its workers from breathing in asbestos while on the job.