

Title:

Mesothelioma - History, Hazards and Dietary Advice

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1006

Summary:

A brief summary of the history of asbestos and the hazards of mesothelioma. I also include a brief summary of the dietary advice associated with the disease.

Keywords:

mesothelioma, lung mesothelioma, peritoneal mesothelioma, asbestos, asbestosis

Article Body:

History of asbestos.

There are four main types of asbestos; Amosite (brown fibers), Anthophyllite (gray fibers), white Christie, and blue Crocidolite. Chrysotile has curly fibers while the other three have rod like fibers. These fibers fragment into dust quite readily and waft into the air. They can adhere to skin or clothing and are easily swallowed or inhaled.

Half a century ago, asbestos was hailed by many as a miracle product. They said nearly anything could be made from this mineral. It as used as an additive to reinforce mortar and plastics. Asbestos fibers can also be separated into fine threads that do not conduct electricity and are unaffected by heat or chemicals.

Use of asbestos drastically increased during World War II. Shipbuilding incorporated asbestos extensively in freighters and support vessels to insulate boilers, steam pipes and hot water pipes. Asbestos became the miracle construction material as it was readily obtained, processed, and transported. After WWII cars used asbestos in brake shoes and clutch pads. Asbestos found its way into residential and industrial building materials, water supply, sewage materials, ceiling and floor tiles, and vermiculite garden materials to name a few products.

In the 1970's, following the discoveries of the health dangers of asbestos dust inhalation, the U.S Consumer Product Safety Commission prohibited the use of asbestos in several products that could liberate asbestos fibers into the environment during use. Regulations governing the use of asbestos and public concern since 1970 have created a significant drop in the use of asbestos in the

United States. The same pattern has been seen in most of the developed world.

In 1989 all new uses of asbestos were banned by the Environmental Protection Agency while any old uses before that year were still allowed. The EPA suggested that schools inspect for damaged asbestos and eliminate any exposure or enclose it in protective barriers. Vermiculite, widely used in horticulture, became a concern of the EPA . They recommended outdoor use, limiting the amount of dust used, and keeping vermiculite damp.

Health hazards

Asbestos may create serious health hazards such as coughing, lung damage, shortness of breath, and lung cancer. Most people do not become sick in the early stages of contact but usually need continued exposure. This often means on jobs such as mining, milling, manufacturing asbestos products, and the building construction industry. Firemen, demolition and destruction workers, drywall removers, and anyone else involved in trades that involve destruction of buildings, ships, and automobiles are also exposed to the hazards of asbestos.

Over a number of years continual exposure to asbestos can cause very serious health problems, such as mesothelioma. Mesothelioma is a rare type of carcinoma of the membrane that lines numerous cavities of the body, including the lungs, abdomen and heart, and has been associated with exposure to asbestos dust. In mesothelioma, the cells of the mesothelioma metastasize and damage adjacent organs and tissues.

Mesothelioma may not develop for a long period of time, often as long as twenty-five or thirty-five years before full blown symptoms appear. Not all workers who have been exposed will develop diseases, but workers who have been exposed to it may bring fibers on their clothing, hair, shoes, and skin home to their families. To circumvent this risk, most industries require workers to bathe and change their clothing before they leave work.

Dietary advice for Mesothelioma patients

Doctors and nutritionists may recommend a special cancer diet because many mesothelioma patients tend to lose their appetites due to worry over their condition. Also, those who are undergoing treatment may choose not to eat because of the unpleasant side effects they may experience. Chemotherapy and some medications may cause an imbalance of nutrients that must be corrected in order to keep the body as strong as possible and to keep the patient from losing an excessive amount of weight. Other side effects of mesothelioma treatment can include nausea, vomiting, constipation, dry mouth and a change in the sense of

smell or taste.

In our childhood we were all told to eat our vegetables. Forcing down cabbage and sprouts was supposed to make us bigger and stronger. Well, so it is for mesothelioma patients. Diet is often an overlooked subject for cancer patients, but eating the right nutritional foods for strength and energy is just as important as taking the proper medication.

Mesothelioma patients undergoing treatment must follow a special cancer diet devised by their nutritionists. The details of every patient's mesothelioma diet will vary. Some patients will need to incorporate more fat into their diets, while others may need more protein. Cancer diets involve eating the correct amounts of protein and calories as well as drinking the right amount of water to keep the ailing body replenished and energized. The body needs plenty of nourishment when it is going through chemotherapy or even when the patient is taking certain medications.

It is important that patients devise a cancer diet under the guidance of their doctor and nutritionist to ensure that they obtain the proper amount of nutrients to improve their quality of life.

Protein is important for any cancer patient because it helps repair tissue damaged by surgery, chemotherapy, or radiation. Protein also helps maintain a strong and healthy immune system, lowering a mesothelioma patient's risk of infection after aggressive cancer treatments. The National Cancer Institute recommends increasing protein in a cancer diet with cheese, milk, ice cream, yoghurt, eggs, nuts, peanut butter, meats and fish.

Fats are an essential part of the cancer diet because they supply the body with the necessary energy it needs while undergoing treatment. The amount of fats a cancer diet should consist of is dependent on a mesothelioma patient's age and body size. The National Cancer Institute recommends increasing caloric intake with such foods as butter, milk, cheese, honey, sugar, granola and dried fruits.

Water is another essential component of the cancer diet. Without a significant amount of water, the body will dehydrate. It is important that anyone undergoing cancer treatment drink sufficient water to keep their bodies hydrated and replenished.