



Asbestos Health Concerns

Asbestos fibers are small and easy to inhale. They can stay in your lungs for a long time.

Exposure to asbestos has been linked to lung cancer and other diseases such as asbestosis. Detailed information about cancer and other diseases related to asbestos is covered in the accompanying “[Asbestos and Health: Frequently Asked Questions](#)” fact sheet from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

While any level of asbestos exposure creates a risk, these diseases typically result from regular exposure to high levels over a period of years. Symptoms may not develop until 10 to 20 years or longer after exposure, so it is important to have regular medical checkups and talk to your doctor about your exposure history.

Recommended Steps After Potential Asbestos Exposure

Residents with potential asbestos exposure related to improper renovation activities should obtain a medical evaluation from their doctor or a clinic that specializes in environmental medicine. This evaluation will document the current state of health and create a baseline for comparison with future health changes.

A medical evaluation may consist of a:

- physical exam and medical history
- chest X-ray
- pulmonary function test, and
- other tests and diagnostic procedures your doctor recommends

Ask your doctor how often follow up tests are needed.

In addition to a baseline medical evaluation and regular medical checkups, residents should:

- Quit smoking. Smoking can cause more damage to your lungs.
- Stay up-to-date on recommended vaccinations for flu, COVID-19, and pneumonia. These vaccines lower the risk of lung infections.

To Contact an Expert in Environmental Medicine (for both adults and children)

Region 5 Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (PEHSU) University of Illinois at Chicago, Great Lakes Center for Reproductive and Children’s Environmental Health

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