

Understanding Mesothelioma & Asbestos Exposure: A Guide for Patients and Families

This guide is provided by Oslund Udo Little, a law firm committed to supporting individuals and families affected by mesothelioma and asbestos exposure. We created this resource to answer common questions, simplify complex information, and offer guidance during a difficult time. Our goal is to help you understand your options and move forward with clarity and confidence, knowing you are not alone.

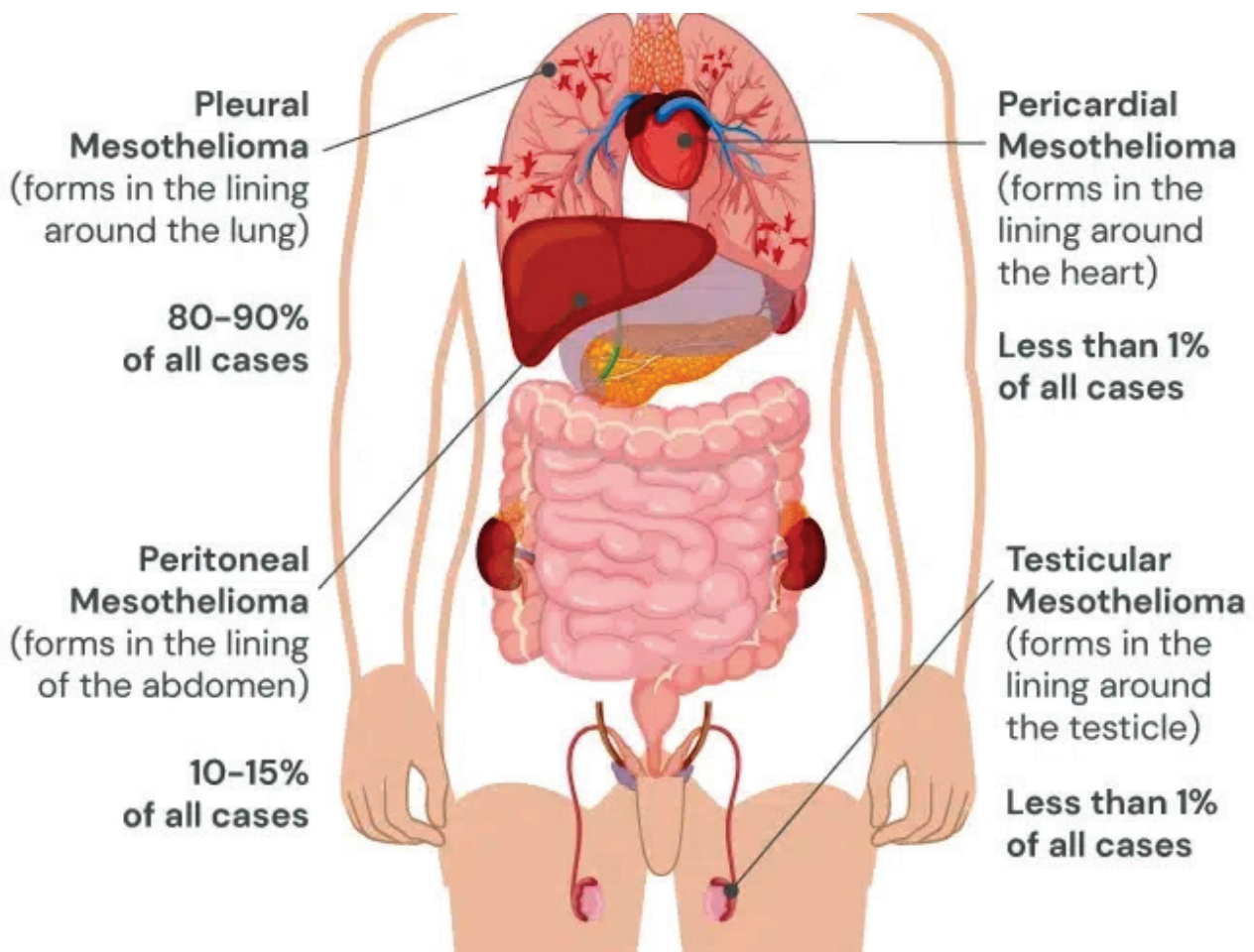


What is Mesothelioma?

Mesothelioma is a type of cancer usually caused when a person inhales microscopic fibers of asbestos. These fibers become lodged in the mesothelium, the protective membrane that lines internal organs. This causes cancerous cells to build up and form masses within the mesothelium, often developing into painful and potentially deadly tumors.

There are three primary types of mesothelioma: pleural, peritoneal, and pericardial. Pleural mesothelioma, the most common type, impacts the pleura, the membrane covering the lungs. Peritoneal mesothelioma affects the peritoneum, which lines the abdominal wall and organs. Pericardial mesothelioma damages the pericardium, which covers the heart.

A few thousand patients are diagnosed with mesothelioma in the United States each year. The disease is very serious and often fatal, and it's critical to pursue immediate treatment after receiving a mesothelioma diagnosis. Acting quickly can help you preserve your health and your ability to seek financial compensation.



What Are the Causes and Risk Factors for Mesothelioma in the Pacific Northwest?

Asbestos exposure is the only confirmed cause of mesothelioma. Roughly 70% to 80% of patients report a history of asbestos exposure. Most patients are 65 or older, and the condition is rare in people under 45.



Gender and age are also risk factors. The majority of mesothelioma patients are male, although women are also impacted by the disease.



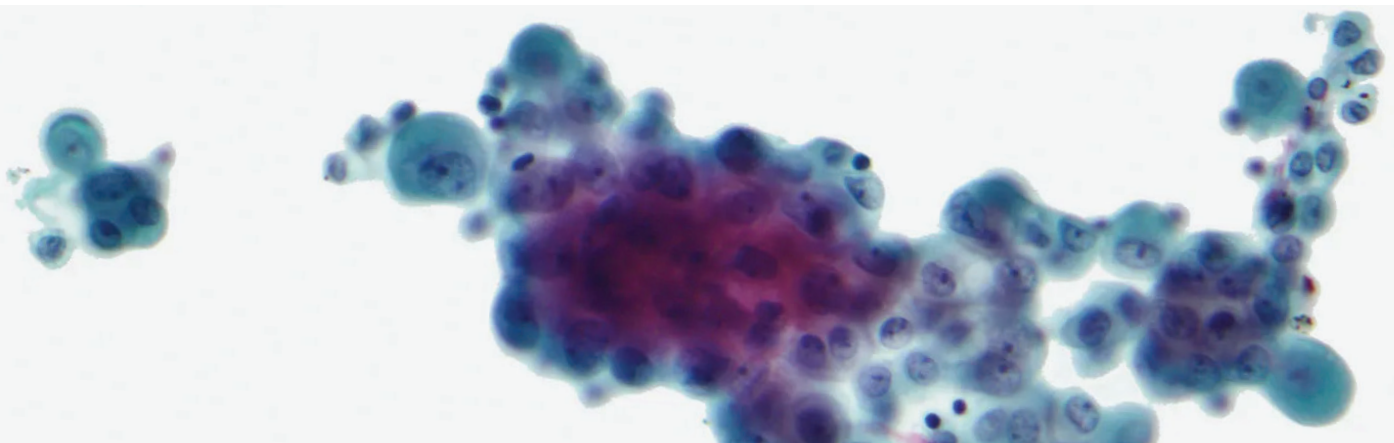
Occupations with high levels of asbestos contact, such as shipyard work, construction, oil refining, and paper milling, are common in the Pacific Northwest.



Veterans have also been exposed to mesothelioma on military bases in Oregon and Washington.

These factors mean residents are more likely overall to interact with products manufactured with asbestos or suffer secondary exposure by handling clothes and other belongings contaminated with asbestos.

There is no “safe” level of asbestos exposure. Even low-level exposure can place you at risk of developing mesothelioma.



Symptoms of Mesothelioma

Symptoms of mesothelioma vary depending on the specific diagnosis.

Many symptoms of mesothelioma can be misdiagnosed due to their frequent occurrences in other conditions. Fever, cough, sudden weight loss, fatigue, night sweats, and malaise can all be attributed to more common disorders.

Mesothelioma also has a latency period that can be decades long, meaning the disease may not appear for many years after the asbestos exposure occurred. Early treatment is critical to protect your health.

If you have a history of asbestos exposure and begin experiencing potential symptoms of mesothelioma, talk to your doctor immediately about getting tested.

Symptoms	Pleural Mesothelioma	Peritoneal Mesothelioma	Pericardial Mesothelioma
Shortness of breath	✓	✓	✓
Chest pain	✓		✓
Mass on the chest wall or surface of the chest	✓		
Abdominal/belly pain		✓	
Irregular heartbeat or murmur			✓

Symptoms	Pleural Mesothelioma	Peritoneal Mesothelioma	Pericardial Mesothelioma
Irregular heartbeat or murmur			✓
Face and arm swelling	✓		
Abdominal swelling		✓	
Difficulty swallowing (dysphagia)	✓		
Nausea and vomiting		✓	
Diarrhea or constipation		✓	
Red blood cell or blood pressure abnormalities		✓	✓
Blood clots	✓	✓	✓
Fatigue	✓	✓	✓
Sudden weight loss	✓	✓	✓
Loss of appetite		✓	
Chronic cough	✓		

How Mesothelioma Is Diagnosed?

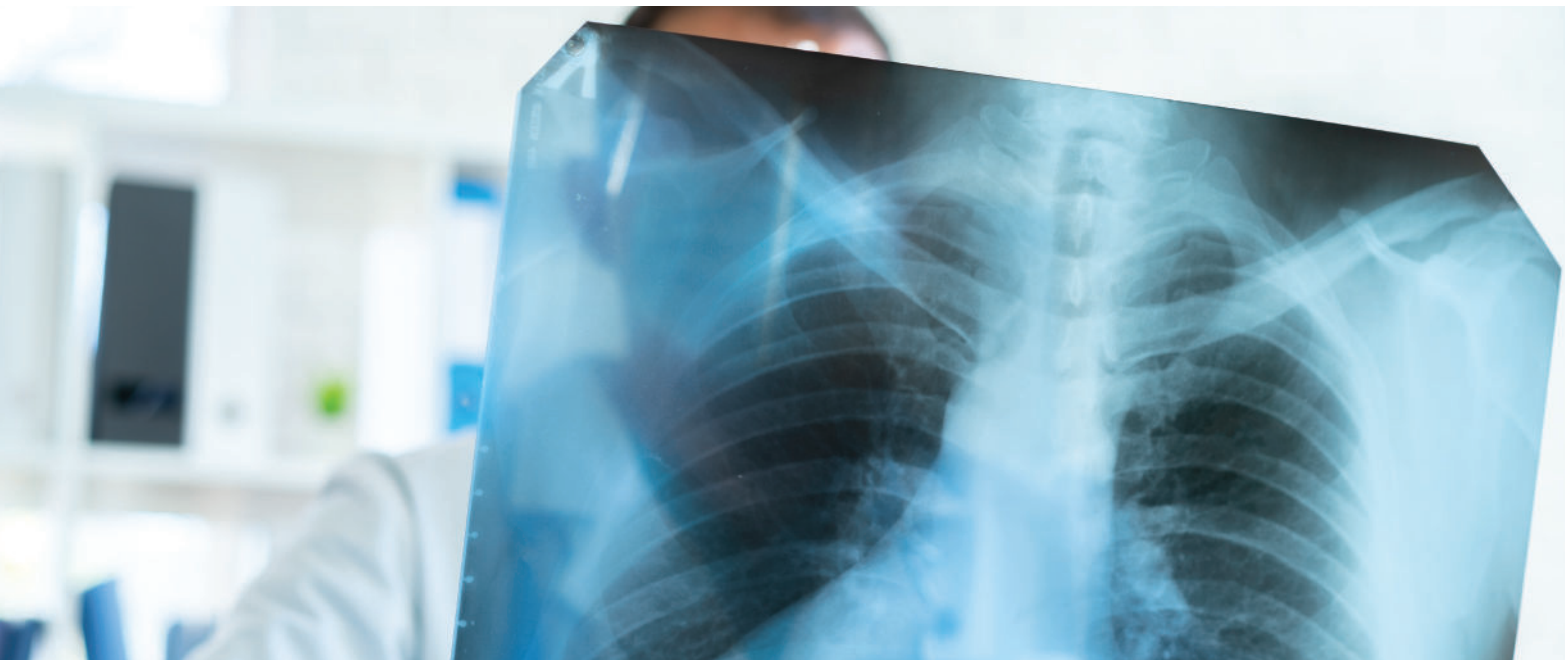
Common diagnostic methods used to test for mesothelioma include:

- Imaging tests like MRIs, CT scans, X-rays, and PET scans
- Biopsy procedures
- Analysis of pleural or abdominal fluid
- Lung function testing
- Blood tests

Mesothelioma progression has three stages related to the location of the cancer and the possibility of removal:

- Imaging tests like MRIs, CT scans, X-rays, and PET scans
- Biopsy procedures
- Analysis of pleural or abdominal fluid
- Lung function testing
- Blood tests

Early diagnosis is key to improving survival rates and efficacy of treatment. If you suspect you may have mesothelioma, talk to your doctor about diagnostic testing.



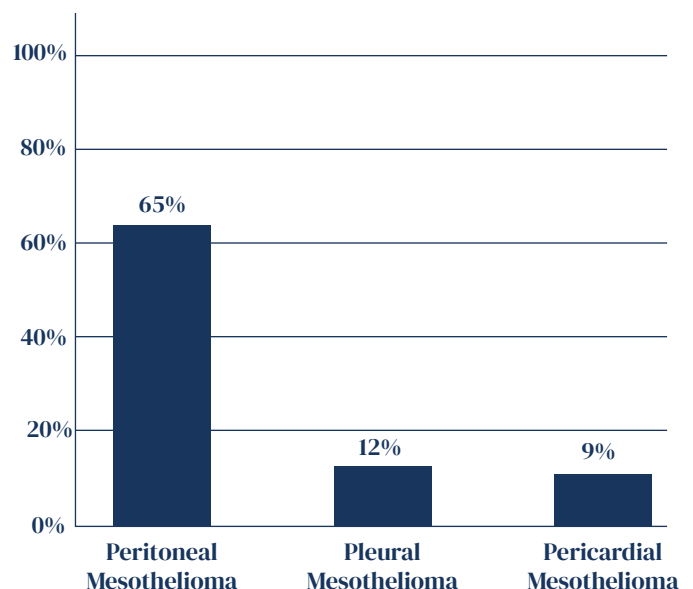
Mesothelioma Prognosis and Survival Rates

Mesothelioma is an aggressive cancer with a high fatality rate. Prognoses for patients vary depending on the type of mesothelioma, the stage of cancer at diagnosis, and other potentially complicating factors such as age and general health.

Survival rates for mesothelioma are generally assessed on a five-year timeline. These statistics measure how likely a person is to survive for five years after diagnosis. Five-year survival rates vary depending on the type of disease.

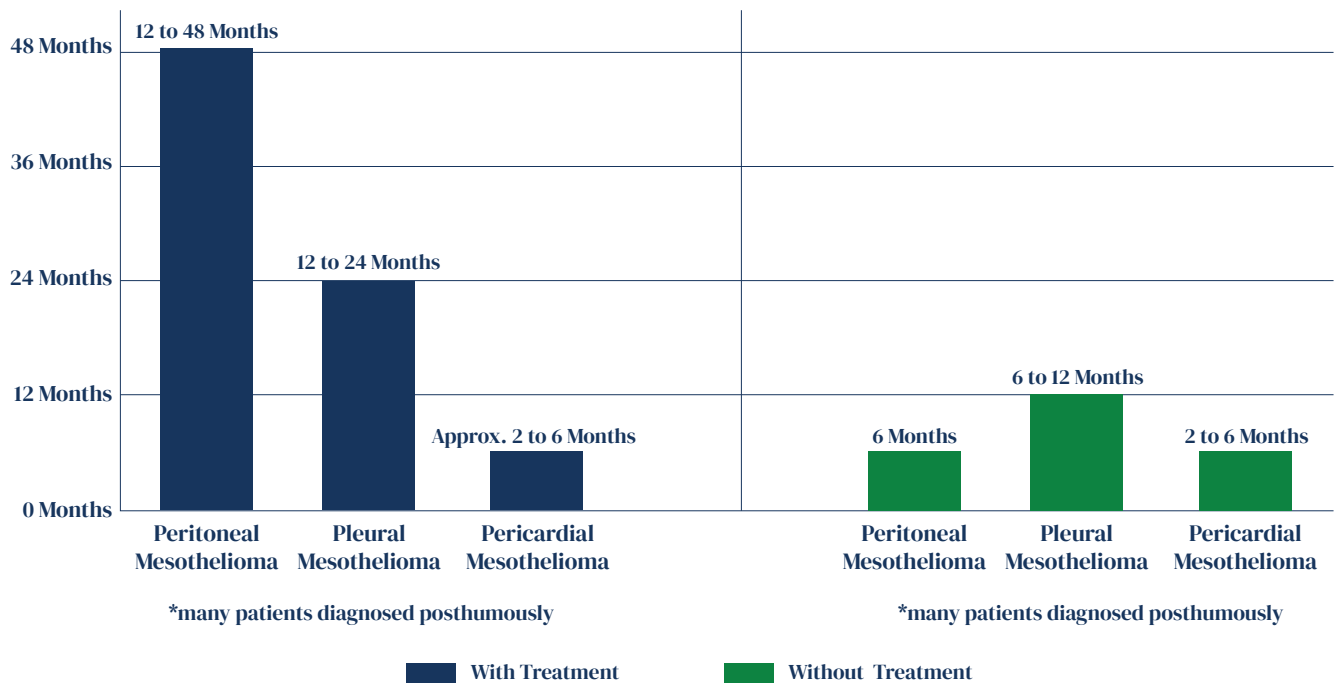
Average life expectancy after diagnosis depends on the type of mesothelioma and whether a patient seeks treatment:

Mesothelioma Five Year Survival Rates By Disease Type



Treatment Options for Mesothelioma

Mesothelioma Treatment Survival Rates



Treatments for mesothelioma generally focus on extending the patient's life and improving the quality of life as much as possible. Standard treatment options include surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and immunotherapy.

Newer treatments include targeted drug therapies in clinical trials, tumor treating fields, and immunotherapy. Some doctors and treatment centers specialize specifically in mesothelioma care. Your doctor will determine the most effective therapy for you depending on your unique medical circumstances, particularly the type of mesothelioma you have and its stage of progression.

What To Do After You or a Loved One Has Been Diagnosed?

Deciding how to move forward with a mesothelioma lawsuit can be overwhelming. Choosing a local law firm experienced in cases specific to mesothelioma and asbestos litigation in your area is essential to navigating these complicated cases. A compassionate local law firm can help you navigate one of the most challenging times of your life.

Choosing the right lawyer for your case can take the pressure and stress off of you so you can focus on your health and your family. A successful partnership with your attorney is built on mutual trust. At Oslund Udo Little we treat our clients with compassion and respect.



Understanding Asbestos: What It Is and Why It Poses Serious Health Risks

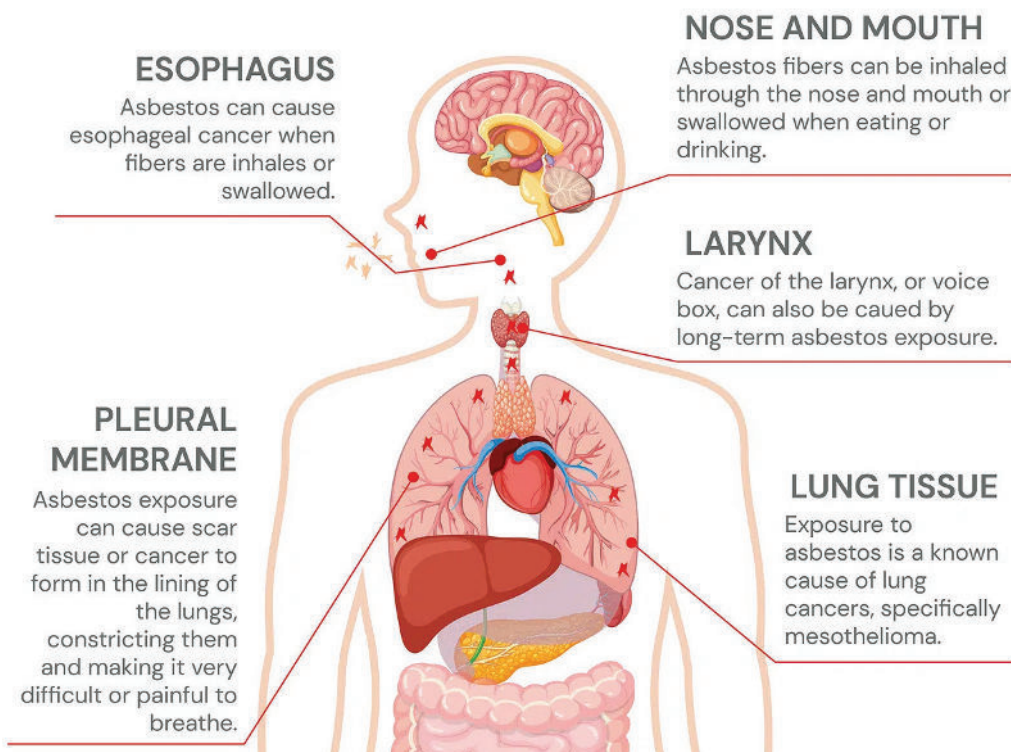
Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral known for its durability and heat-resistant properties. Because of its usefulness and affordability, it was used in countless applications throughout the 20th century by many industries, including construction, shipbuilding, the military, and manufacturing.

When undisturbed, asbestos poses little risk to humans. However, problems arise when asbestos is disturbed, crushed, agitated, or transformed from its natural state. Such actions release tiny, near-invisible asbestos fibers into the air.

Anyone within range of disturbed asbestos can inhale or ingest the microscopic fibers. The fibers become embedded in the tissue lining bodily organs, such as the lungs and abdomen, potentially causing harmful scarring and inflammation. Over time, mesothelioma or other deadly diseases can develop.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, there is no “safe” level of asbestos exposure.

The Effects of Asbestos Exposure



Occupational Asbestos Exposure

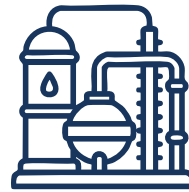
Many industries widely used asbestos throughout the 20th century. Asbestos exposure was common for workers in the following occupations in the Pacific Northwest:



**Construction
workers**



**Nuclear facility
workers**



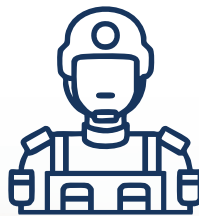
**Oil refinery
workers**



**Power plant
workers**



**Paper mill
workers**



**Military
Personnel**



**Shipyard
workers**



What Is Secondhand Asbestos Exposure?

Exposure doesn't always come from direct handling of asbestos-containing products. Some people are exposed to the fibers through secondary exposure.

In secondary exposure cases, a family member who works with asbestos products unknowingly transports the tiny fibers home on their clothing and skin. Anyone in their household may inhale the asbestos and develop an illness years later.

"Secondary or household exposure to asbestos typically occurs when Dad comes home from work still wearing his work shirt or coveralls. He walks in the door, gives his wife a hug and a kiss, plops down on the couch, and the kids come crawling over, ready to hug him.

Unfortunately, that's the kind of situation where invisible asbestos fibers can transfer to the children or the wife, and they breathe them in. Thirty, forty, or even fifty years later, the wife or one of the kids might develop mesothelioma."

– Vanessa Firnhaber Oslund, Firm Partner

What Products Contained Asbestos?

Until the 1980s, asbestos products were widely used in many industrial settings. Manufacturers incorporated it in boilers, furnaces, tanks, and even protective clothing.

Homes built before 1990 may contain asbestos. The substance used in attic insulation, older paint, and floor tiles. Interior heating and cooling systems may also include asbestos-based components.

Common consumer goods can also be a source of asbestos. One example is cosmetics containing talc, such as face powder. Talc naturally occurs near asbestos and is commonly tainted with the toxic substance. Pre-1980 kitchen appliances like ovens may also contain asbestos.



Indoor Uses of Asbestos

- Pipe Insulation
- Electrical Insulation
- Spray-on Insulation
- Boilers/Gasket Covers
- Tunnels
- Pipe Chases
- Drywall
- Floor/Ceiling Tiles
- Fire Blankets



Outdoor Uses of Asbestos

- Asbestos Bricks
- Asbestos Siding
- Roofing/Flashing Felt
- Brake/Clutch Linings

Symptoms of Asbestosis



Cough (sometimes containing blood).



Shortness of breath.



Chest pain.



Difficulty swallowing.



Swelling.



Weight loss or loss of appetite.



Fatigue.

Affected individuals may not begin to show asbestos exposure symptoms for up to 60 years. A longer latency period is more common among people with less exposure. Higher levels of asbestos exposure may lead to symptoms developing sooner.

Can You Sue for Asbestos Exposure Before You're Diagnosed With Mesothelioma or Become Ill?

You generally can't file an asbestos lawsuit before receiving a diagnosis. That's because you must show that your exposure caused harm and recoverable damages.

Your likelihood of developing mesothelioma substantially increases if:

- You have a history of working with asbestos.
- You live or lived with someone who handled the substance.

If you believe you're at risk of developing an asbestos-related disease, look for symptoms such as increased coughing or shortness of breath. Stay on top of doctor's visits, and inform your physician of your asbestos exposure history. They can monitor you for signs of illness and order additional tests if necessary.



Types of Mesothelioma Lawsuits and Available Compensation Options

Personal Injury Lawsuits

A personal injury lawsuit is filed by someone diagnosed with mesothelioma or another asbestos-related disease. These claims seek compensation for medical expenses, lost wages, pain and suffering, and other related costs associated with the illness.

Asbestos Trust Funds and VA Benefits

Some of those affected by asbestos exposure may have alternative options to filing a lawsuit. If your asbestos exposure occurred at a bankrupt company, you may be able to file an asbestos trust fund claim, which is typically a faster process. VA benefits are available to veterans with asbestos exposure.

Wrongful Death Lawsuits

A wrongful death lawsuit can be filed by the surviving spouse, children, or estate representative of someone who has died from mesothelioma. This type of claim seeks compensation for funeral costs, lost income, loss of companionship, and emotional suffering.

Why Choose Oslund Udo Little for Mesothelioma and Asbestos Claims?

At Oslund Udo Little, we have been fighting for families facing the challenges of asbestos exposure and mesothelioma in Washington and Oregon since 1995. Here are some reasons many Pacific Northwest families have turned to us for representation:

- Asbestos law is our primary practice area – we maintain a singular focus, only representing families affected by mesothelioma and asbestos exposure.
- Our attorneys have decades of experience representing asbestos-exposure clients in the Seattle and Portland areas.
- Our attorneys have recovered more than \$1 billion in verdicts and settlements for individuals and families impacted by asbestos-related diseases.
- Our award-winning attorneys have received recognition from both SuperLawyers and The National Trial Lawyers.



You're Not Alone: We Are Here to Help

Our small size has allowed us to maintain a personalized approach that larger firms can't replicate. We treat every client like family, building strong relationships and mutual respect. A small team of legal professionals serves your family to determine how mesothelioma and asbestos exposure have impacted your lives and build a strategy tailored to the unique effects of your diagnosis on you and your family.

Our firm takes a holistic approach, going beyond the courtroom to offer asbestos-exposure victims education, service, advocacy, and comprehensive support. We are more than a law firm. We are a dedicated partner in the fight for the rights, health, and well-being of our clients and community. As a local law firm, we can meet with clients in their homes and guide families through an otherwise difficult process.

Contact us today for a free case evaluation to learn about your mesothelioma compensation options. We'll work to secure justice for you and your family.

