

<http://www.Sureteam.co.uk>



Sureteam UK's free e-book on Asbestos, the history, the dangers,  
asbestos testing & removal.

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## The History of Asbestos

Asbestos is an extremely old material, its uses date back as early as **2500BC** where it was found in Russia, Finland & Sweden in pieces of prehistoric shards. The word Asbestos comes from the Greek word 'inextinguishable'. The Greeks first put asbestos to use around the same time as the Romans in **300BC** mainly used for textile objects such as shrouds, napkins & tablecloths. The Greeks and Romans not only noted that Asbestos was Fire resistant & Acid resistant but also that it had '**harmful biological effects**' after a priest noticed a sickness in the lungs of the slaves who wove asbestos into clothes.

There is no note of asbestos use in the middle ages, and it did not become popular in England until the **1700's** and with the beginning of the industrial revolution in the **1800's** many entrepreneurs saw this 'miracle material' as a way to get rich. Hence the beginning of commercial use asbestos in the UK. Railroad engineers began to use asbestos in insulation for the steam engines of the time. Shipyards followed shortly after, shipyard workers were then the most effected by asbestos related illnesses, especially with the coming of the war when ships needed to be repaired.

At the turn on the **1900's** researchers began to notice a suspicious amount of young deaths in asbestos mining towns. The first diagnosis for asbestosis was made in **1924**. Following this a study of asbestos workers was done to find that over **25%** of them had an asbestos related illness. Laws were then passed in **1931** to increase ventilation in asbestos workplaces. By the end of the **1930's** there were studies undertaken linking asbestos to certain lung cancers.

The emergence of Silicosis led to workers bringing a **£300million** lawsuit against their employers, this served as a warning to asbestos companies however they tried to cover up the health effects of asbestos for profits sake. At this time, the industry that gave asbestos its biggest boost was the building industry, because asbestos was fire proof it could be used as insulation for homes and offices, and soon became the most popular type of wall insulation including in **schools and theatres** as it doubled up as soundproofing material as well. Throughout **1940 – 1970** an estimated **3,000** products made use of asbestos' unique properties.

After this time the health warning put an end to much of the industry and after many regulations and bans were passed the final ban on asbestos came in **1999**. A mere 2399 years after the Romans noted the harmful effects it caused.

## Dangers

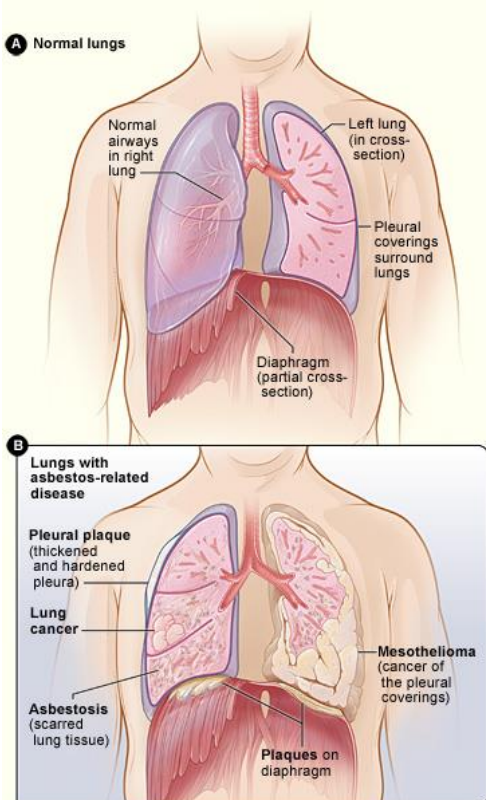
Asbestos still kills over **5000** people each year – this is more than the amount of people killed on the roads each year. **20** tradesman each **week** die from previous exposure to asbestos. Any building that was built before the year **2000** could still contain asbestos, when the asbestos is disturbed it gives off tiny fibres which can then be inhaled, asbestos related diseases take a very long time to develop however once diagnosed it is often too late to do anything.

The most common asbestos related illnesses are:

**Mesothelioma** – This is a cancer in the lungs which effects the lining of the lungs and the lining of the lower digestive tract. This illness is almost solely related to asbestos and at time of diagnosis can rarely be treated. Linked with this is also asbestos related lung cancer which has very similar properties to lung cancer caused by smoking. There were a reported **2535** deaths caused by Mesothelioma in 2012.

**Asbestosis** – Was the first asbestos related disease ever diagnosed. It is a serious scarring condition of the lung, which occurs by being exposed to asbestos for many years. It can be fatal in severe cases, minor cases cause progressive shortness of breath. Asbestos caused a reported **464** deaths in 2012, and **900** new cases of the disease in 2013.

**Pleural Thickening** - This is where the lung's lining thickens and swells, if the condition gets worse the lung can be squeezed causing shortness of breath and discomfort in the chest. There were **430** new cases of this illness in 2013.



The problem with Asbestos nowadays is people are uneducated on what it looks like & where they are likely to find it. Most people assume that the effects aren't going to happen until they are old, this is true in some cases but the symptoms can crop up a lot sooner. Asbestos is fairly harmless until it is disturbed and then the dangerous fibres are released into the air, if you're planning a renovation on your house and it was built before 2000, book an asbestos survey first.

## Testing & Removal

If you are responsible for a property you are responsible deciding whether any asbestos might be and making the right action plan to safely remove it – important things to remember whilst testing for asbestos:

✦ Asbestos is only dangerous if disturbed, as the fibres will start to circulate the room



✦ If unsure, presume that that material contains asbestos



✦ You don't need to remove the asbestos yourself – call a specialist

Remember if the building was built after 2000 it is unlikely to contain any asbestos. However it's always best to be safe, call in a friend for a second opinion and have a look round the property for any asbestos hotspots, if you think you might have found an area, call in an asbestos surveyor.

[/www.gov.uk/asbestos-in-home](http://www.gov.uk/asbestos-in-home)



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## Asbestos in your home

Get information about asbestos and its disposal from your local council.

Enter your postcode (UK only)

[Find](#)

### What you need to know

- Available in England and Wales only

Last updated: 12 November 2014

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Services and information

If the asbestos surveyor finds asbestos, they will bring in specialist equipment to remove it: full body suits, masks etc.

Before doing any work which may disturb asbestos you need to get expert help. GOV.UK offer an asbestos removal service, simply provide your postcode and they will inform you of your council's procedure for the removal of asbestos and also a list of recycling plants which can safely dispose of asbestos for you

Thanks for taking the time to read my e-book. I hope it was informative and you enjoyed reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

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