

## Is there asbestos in your home?

- ◆ **Evaluate appliances and other consumer products** by examining the label or the invoices to obtain the product name, model number, and year of manufacture. If this information is available, the manufacturer can supply information about asbestos content.
- ◆ **Evaluate building materials.** A professional asbestos manager may be hired. This person can inspect your home to determine whether asbestos is present and give advice on its proper management.
- ◆ **Test for asbestos.** State and local health departments as well as regional EPA offices have lists of individuals and laboratories certified to analyze a home for asbestos and test samples for the presence of asbestos.



### More Information:

<http://www2.epa.gov/asbestos>

<http://www2.epa.gov/asbestos/protect-your-family>

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## Asbestos: Protect Your Family



**Environmental Stewardship  
Department**

## What is asbestos?

Asbestos is the name given to a group of minerals that occur naturally in the environment as bundles of long, thin, strong fibers. These mineral fibers are resistant to heat, fire, and chemicals and do not conduct electricity. For these reasons, asbestos has been used widely in many industries.

## Where was asbestos used?

Before 1980, asbestos was added to many building materials including floor tiles, ceiling tiles, insulation on pipes and ducts, acoustical and decorative coatings, and roofing materials. These building materials are presumed to contain asbestos if installed before 1980, until testing proves otherwise.



**Microscopic  
asbestos fibers**

## What are the health risks of asbestos exposure?

Asbestos is hazardous when inhaled. If products containing asbestos are disturbed, tiny asbestos fibers are released into the air. When asbestos fibers are breathed in, they may get trapped in the lungs and remain there. Over time, these fibers can accumulate and cause lung scarring and inflammation, which can affect breathing and lead to serious health problems.

Chronic exposure to asbestos may increase the risk of lung cancer, mesothelioma, and nonmalignant lung and pleural disorders.

## Signs of Asbestos-related Disease

- ◆ Shortness of breath, wheezing, or hoarseness
- ◆ A persistent cough that gets worse over time
- ◆ Blood in the sputum (fluid) coughed up from the lungs
- ◆ Pain or tightening in the chest
- ◆ Difficulty swallowing
- ◆ Swelling of the neck or face
- ◆ Loss of appetite
- ◆ Weight loss
- ◆ Fatigue or anemia



## Asbestos Removal

- ◆ Improper removal of asbestos may cause serious contamination by dispersing fibers throughout the area.
- ◆ Any asbestos removal in a home must be performed by properly accredited and certified contractors. A listing of certified contractors in your area may be obtained from state or local health departments or from the regional office of the Environmental Protection Agency. Many contractors who advertise themselves as asbestos experts have not been trained properly. Only contractors who have been certified by the EPA or by a state-approved training school should be hired. The contractor should provide written proof of up-to-date certification.
- ◆ Children should not be permitted to play in areas where there are materials containing asbestos.