

## Mesothelioma Cancer

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Mesothelioma is a malignant tumor that develops in the mesothelial lining that covers surrounding organs and body cavities. The mesothelium (composed of mesothelial cells) is the film that lines three of the body's cavities, and depending on what cavity it lines it is given a specific name: the thoracic cavity (pleura), abdominal cavity (peritoneum), and the pericardial sac (pericardium).

Mesothelioma is a malignant tumor that can develop in the mesothelium of the thoracic cavity in the lungs.

The mesothelium that covers the internal organs is called the visceral mesothelium, while the lining that covers the body wall is called parietal mesothelium.

Mesothelium tissue also surrounds the major internal organs and covers the internal reproductive organs in women.

Mesothelioma is a malignant tumor of this mesothelium, in which cells of the mesothelium become abnormal and divide uncontrollably and invade adjacent tissues and organs. A lot of cases of mesothelioma develop in the thoracic cavity (pleura) or the abdominal cavity (peritoneum).

Approximately 2,000 to 3,000 cases of mesothelioma are diagnosed each year in the United States, about 3 percent of all cancer diagnoses. This cancer occurs more frequently in men than in women, about four times as often. All forms of mesothelioma, except for epithelioid mesothelioma, are consistently fatal. The prognosis for mesothelioma is consistently poor and a lot of studies show an average survival of less than one year, but the prognosis absolutely depends on how early it is diagnosed and aggressively it is treated.

Causes of Mesothelioma Mesothelioma is acquired by asbestos exposure. Asbestos is a naturally-occurring mineral substance that was widely used in the twentieth century in a number of different industries. Popular because of its durability, fire resistance, and other properties, it was consistently used in the production of several thousand different products, up until the time that asbestos warnings were issued in the mid-1970s. It is estimated that more than 90 percent of mesothelioma cases are related to asbestos exposure.

The exact way in which asbestos causes mesothelioma is not fully understood by doctors and researchers accept put forward different hypotheses. What is apparent, however, is that any exposure to asbestos can be dangerous and may contribute to the development of asbestos-related diseases later in life.