



The Dangers of Asbestos in Your Home

Asbestos has been classified as a substance that causes cancer by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).

Asbestos has been mined and used commercially in North America since the late 1800s and used in many industries. For example, the construction industry has used it for strengthening cement and plastics and insulation, roofing, fireproofing, and sound absorption.

Generally, you cannot tell if a material contains asbestos just by looking at it. If you're unsure, it's best to treat the material as though it does and avoid disturbing it. If you're planning a remodel or have deteriorating building materials, like drywall or insulation, consider having a trained professional inspect your home for asbestos-containing materials.

Improper removal may increase your exposure to asbestos fibers. 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 for a long time. Over time, these fibers can accumulate and cause scarring and inflammation, which can affect breathing and lead to serious health problems.

If you think there may be asbestos in your home, don't panic. Asbestos-containing materials that aren't damaged or disturbed are not likely to pose a health risk. If asbestos-containing material is in good condition, the best approach is usually to leave it undisturbed.

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