



# Asbestos and Your Health

## Davidson Depot Site 2019

Exposure to asbestos has the potential to harm your health. The health effects of contact with any hazardous substance depend on how much, for how long and the way in which you are exposed. The effects also depend on personal factors such as family history, overall health, and lifestyle.

### What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral made up of thin, heat resistant, strong, flexible and very durable fibers which was used widely in industry from the early 1900's to the 1970's.

### How might I be exposed to asbestos?

- Community members who worked at The Carolina Asbestos Company located at the Davidson Depot and manufactured asbestos shingles from the 1930s until about 1960 may have been exposed to asbestos.
- Asbestos fibers may be released into the air by the disturbance of asbestos-containing material during product manufacturing, demolition work, building or home maintenance, repair, remodeling or when soil containing asbestos fibers are disturbed during yardwork or recreational activities.
- People living near the Davidson Mill may be exposed to asbestos in the air if soil was/is disturbed and buried asbestos is released.
- Exposure would occur only when the asbestos-containing material is disturbed in some way to release asbestos fibers into the air.

### How can asbestos affect my health?

Exposure to asbestos can cause respiratory diseases, often decades after exposure. The three most common asbestos-related diseases are asbestosis, lung cancer, and mesothelioma.

Asbestosis is a buildup of scar tissue in the lungs, causes a stiffening of the lungs and difficulty breathing.

Lung cancer can be caused by a variety of factors, including genetics and other environmental exposures. Asbestos exposure increases your chance of getting lung cancer 5 times more than the average person. Asbestos exposure plus smoking increases your chance of getting lung cancer 53 times more than the average person.

Mesothelioma is a cancerous tumor in the lining of the chest and abdomen.

## How can I limit my exposure to asbestos?

- Cover up possible sources of asbestos in your home or yard.
- Prevent dirt and dust from entering your home – remove shoes before entering, wipe pets with a damp cloth.
- Clean surfaces in your home regularly with a wet wipe or mop.
- Materials containing asbestos that are not disturbed or deteriorated do not pose a health risk and should be left alone.

## What should I do if I think I have been exposed to asbestos?

- Avoid further exposure.
- Contact your doctor for a physical exam. Your doctor may recommend a chest x-ray to look for evidence of exposure.
- Get an annual flu shot and pneumococcal vaccine.
- Quit smoking.

## Additional Information

Contact N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, Health Assessment, Consultation and Education (HACE) program at (919) 707-5900 for additional information.

## Local Resources

- **Ada Jenkins Center:** Provide medical and dental care to residents in Davidson, Cornelius and Huntersville. Eligibility is based on income. Phone: 704-896-0471 Address: 212 Gamble St, Davidson, NC 28036
- **Lake Norman Community Health Clinic:** Provide comprehensive medical services to uninsured and medically indigent residents of Mecklenburg County. Phone: (704) 316-6611 Address: 14230 Hunters Road, Huntersville, NC 28078
- **Camino Community Center:** Provide primary medical care, mental health services, and health education for uninsured residents. Phone: 704-596-5606 Address: 133 Stetson Drive, Charlotte, NC 28262
- **Charlotte Community Health Clinic:** Provide medical care to uninsured Mecklenburg County residents. Phone: 704-316-6561 Address: 8401 Medical Plaza Dr

## References

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). ToxFAQs for Asbestos. Accessed on December 4th 2019 from <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tf.asp?id=29&tid=4>

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Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). Asbestos in Your Environment: What You Can Do to Limit Exposure. Accessed on December 4th 2019 from: [https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/asbestos/additional\\_resources.html](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/asbestos/additional_resources.html)



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