



GUIDE TO MESOTHELIOMA

What is Mesothelioma?

Mesothelioma is a **cancer** of the **lining of the lungs**, and associated almost exclusively with **exposure to asbestos**. Just one fibre is enough to cause the disease.

A **long 'lag time'** between exposure to asbestos and the **development of mesothelioma** can apply, varying from a **minimum** of about **10 years** upwards, the **average** interval falling in the order of **30 to 40 years**.

Cases of **mesothelioma** in the UK **appear** most prominently in those individuals who previously worked in **ship building, construction** and **railway engineering** (which used significant amounts of asbestos) and **asbestos product manufacturing** industries.

Mesothelioma-assist helpline: 0800 804 6674. www.mesothelioma-assist.co.uk

Who, Where, When and How

Government statistics show that the **areas** with the **highest** mesothelioma incidences in the UK include:

- West Dumbartonshire
- Barrow-in-Furness
- Plymouth
- Portsmouth, and
- South Tyneside

www.simpsonmillar.co.uk
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This is due to the **association** and **past exposure** to asbestos in **ship building**. Other areas with high overall rates generally associated with past asbestos exposure are those **close** to or containing **railway engineering** sites, including:

- Eastleigh
- Crewe
- Nantwich
- as well as factories that made asbestos products, such as Barking, Dagenham and Newham

An increasing proportion of cases include **diagnosis** of **individuals** who may have had **less intense exposure** such as the **building industry** (carpenters, electricians, demolition workers etc) and people who have worked in buildings where the use of or disruption of asbestos materials occurs.

This area now represents the **majority of new cases**, therefore, a large number of people who are at **risk** of the disease may be **unaware** of their **exposure to asbestos**.

Mesothelioma can also **affect family members** who have come into **contact** with **asbestos fibres** eg handling of **clothing worn at work**. This is known as secondary exposure and is becoming a common cause of mesothelioma in individuals.

Men are considered at a **higher risk** of for mesothelioma due to the direct exposure from the **at-risk occupations**, although it is believed that the 15% of **female** cases are for the most part due to secondary, passive exposure eg by **washing the clothing** of their husbands or close relatives who worked in asbestos industries.



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