



OVARIAN CANCER – LINKED WITH EXPOSURE OF ASBESTOS TO HOUSEWIVES

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has published research which establishes a link between past asbestos exposure and later onset of ovarian cancer.

As with other asbestos cancers there is typically a long latent period between the time of exposure and onset of the disease.

Occupational asbestos exposure has historically been more common in men than women however in recent years there has been a steady increase in the numbers of female claimants seeking civil compensation as a result of asbestos disease.

For example a housewife who used to daily shake down and wash her husband's dusty work overalls may well have been exposed to a risk of inhalation of asbestos dust – particularly if her spouse worked in the construction, electrical maintenance or lagging industry.

There have even been reported incidences of children sitting on their fathers knee who inhaled dust from the dirty work overalls and went on to develop serious asbestos illness.

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Incidences of probable environmental exposure are also becoming more common for example until the 1970s the construction of houses typically involved use of a high percentage of asbestos in tiles, pipes and insulation material raising the possibility of contamination within the home.

Proving the link between asbestos exposure and onset of ovarian cancer many years later is not likely to be an easy matter since there are other causes of ovarian cancer. However the new research is a welcome first step in obtaining redress for victims.

Ovarian cancer is the fourth most common cancer in women in the UK. About 90% of women diagnosed are over the age of 45, although it can affect younger women as well. Each woman has two ovaries, one on either side of the womb. The ovaries produce eggs and female hormones making menstruation and pregnancy possible.

Ovarian cancer usually starts in the cells that cover the surface of the ovary. Tumors are formed in the egg cells, this type is known as Epithelial cancer.

Most women don't experience any symptoms in the early stages of ovarian cancer or are unaware of what the symptoms can represent.

Symptoms of Ovarian Cancer

The symptoms to be aware of are as follows:

- Loss of appetite
- Indigestion, nausea, excessive gas, bloated feeling
- Pain in the lower abdomen and lower back
- Change in bowel or bladder habits, including diarrhea and constipation
- Abnormal weight gain and abnormal vaginal bleeding

Please note that these symptoms are also common to many other conditions and in many cases do not result in the woman having cancer.

Diagnosis of Ovarian Cancer

If you have any of the above symptoms it is important to visit your GP. They will arrange for you to have any tests that are necessary. If they suspect that you have ovarian cancer they will refer you to a specialist gynecology team who can give you specialist advice. You may have a specific blood test to check the level of CA125 protein in your blood. Higher levels of this protein can indicate ovarian cancer. Referrals of this nature are governed by Department of Health guidelines.



Treatment of ovarian cancer is usually through surgery and chemotherapy. The treatment will depend on the stage and grade of the cancer. The specialist will discuss the most appropriate treatment for you.

If you or a family member have been the victim of ovarian cancer and you believe that this was or may have been caused due to past inhalation of asbestos dust there may be an entitlement to financial compensation. This will depend on medical evidence establishing the link between the asbestos exposure and cancer and also on tracing those responsible for the asbestos exposure.

If you would like to discuss the possibility of making a claim please call our friendly helpline today on 0808 129 3320.

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