

# **MESOTHELIOMA CAUSED BY ASBESTOS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

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For decades, the general public has been warned that exposure to asbestos can lead to forms of cancer.

Asbestos is a type of mineral with thin microscopic fibers. It is mined from the earth. Asbestos fibers are resistant to heat, fire, and chemicals and do not conduct electricity, so they're widely used in construction, auto making, boiler construction, and other heavy industries. At one time, asbestos was commonly included in insulation for both private homes and public buildings.

If products containing asbestos are disturbed—for instance, when tearing down houses and buildings—the tiny fibers are released into the air. And when those fibers are inhaled or swallowed by workers, they can become trapped in the lungs and remain there for a long time. Over time, these fibers can accumulate and lead to serious health issues like mesothelioma and lung cancer.

Not only are the workers at risk for mesothelioma, but so are their families, because asbestos fibers can be brought into the home on clothing, skin, and hair.

Asbestos has been used as a fire retardant and insulation material for many, many years. Once asbestos was finally classified as a carcinogen (a substance that can cause cancer), the Environmental Protection Agency and the Consumer Product Safety Commission imposed strict regulations on its use in commercial and industrial products.

Many of the companies producing asbestos products were very aware of the asbestos hazards, yet the companies continued to expose workers and laborers to the harmful asbestos fibers. People who worked directly with asbestos included workers in refineries, steel mills, power mills, automotive production facilities, and large construction sites.

In 1973, work places began reducing asbestos exposure for their employees. But it was not until the 1980s when asbestos was banned completely due to its health concerns.

## Mesothelioma

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Malignant mesothelioma is a rare form of lung cancer that is caused by exposure to asbestos. It forms on the thin protective tissue that covers the lungs and abdomen.

About 3,000 to 4,000 persons are diagnosed with mesothelioma each year. More than 70 percent of those persons diagnosed with mesothelioma were exposed to asbestos while working.

Asbestos use in the U.S. has dropped dramatically in recent years. But persons who were exposed to asbestos back in the 1970s and 1980s are now showing symptoms of mesothelioma because it takes 15 to 30 years to develop symptoms of the deadly disease.

## Do You Need an Attorney?

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If you or someone you know became ill with mesothelioma after exposure to asbestos, he should consider contacting an attorney.

At Hupy and Abraham, S.C., we pride ourselves on being honest and straightforward with our clients and potential clients. It doesn't benefit anyone to pursue litigation when a case isn't strong.

When manufacturers use an inferior product, they should be held responsible for it. And, if that product was not tested adequately, they should also be held responsible. It's also very important to secure evidence that the manufacturers knew about the product's serious risks, but did not share the information with the public or warn consumers.

The single best way to know if you need an attorney is to speak with one. Share the details of your case, bring any evidence you have, and simply tell your story. A lawyer from Hupy and Abraham, S.C. will respond to the sensitive story with the concern and compassion that you are entitled to receive. Our attorneys will examine your possible case, answer your questions, and let you know your legal options.

## Getting Compensation for Mesothelioma Caused by Asbestos

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Why should you file a lawsuit after getting mesothelioma because of exposure to asbestos? A serious diagnosis and medical issue can result in enormous losses, both financial and otherwise. If someone else, such as a manufacturer, is responsible for your health condition, they are also responsible for the costs your health condition incurs.

Specifically, you may be entitled to the following types of damages if you, or a member of your family, has been harmed by mesothelioma or other lung disease after exposure to asbestos:

- **Economic damages.** These damages include the actual money lost by defective products. Economic damages include medical costs, lost wages, lost future income, and lost earning power.
- **Non-economic damages.** A serious medical condition caused by a defective product can greatly affect your life, your abilities, and your happiness. A liable manufacturer may owe you compensation for any pain and suffering, mental anguish, permanent disabilities, loss of companionship, loss of consortium, or lowered quality of life.
- **Punitive damages.** If a company has been grossly negligent or if it is determined that the company has committed an egregious wrong, it may be asked to pay their victims more money as a punishment and as a deterrent. The amount received for punitive damages varies widely.

In short, damages are meant to accomplish two major goals: to compensate the victims and their families for what they have lost, and to prevent similar incidents from happening in the future. By filing a lawsuit, you are not only making sure that you receive what you are lawfully owed, you are also making sure that others don't suffer in the way that you have.

## What Should You Do If You Have Been Harmed by Talc?

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When you suffer an injury in a traffic accident that is someone else's fault, the steps you take to get better and pursue compensation are relatively straightforward. If you believe that you have been harmed by a potentially dangerous situation, the path to justice can be much less clear.

While all harmful situations are different, there are a few things that everyone should do if they believe they are the victim of a harmful situation:

- **Get the medical assistance that you need.** Nothing is more important than your health. If you believe a situation is causing you health problems, illnesses, or adverse events, you should report your symptoms to a medical professional immediately and voice your concern that your health condition may be tied to that product. Not only will getting medical assistance considerably improve your chances of recovery and remission, it will also document your health issues in the event that you would like to file a lawsuit.
- **Don't hesitate to get a second opinion.** We can't state this enough: your health is the most precious thing that you have. If your doctor isn't convinced that the situation is affecting your health, or if your doctor isn't taking your health concerns seriously, seek a second opinion.
- **Be compliant.** It is difficult to get compensation for illnesses and medical costs if you don't follow treatment plans and doctors' orders. It's also difficult to get well if you aren't listening to your treating medical professionals.
- **Keep notes and records.** Take notes when you visit the doctor. Get copies of your medical records. Keep a diary of symptoms, illnesses and health observations. Keep track of medical expenses and other monetary losses related to your harmful situation. All of the information you collect could be important to your possible lawsuit.
- **Talk to an attorney—or two—about your case.** Far too many harmful situation victims second-guess themselves or delay telling their stories. They do not realize that many medical attorneys offer free, private consultations, or that a knowledgeable lawyer can analyze the evidence in their case and explain their legal options.

## Hiring An Attorney? Ten Questions to Ask During Your Consultation

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Even if you have decided that you want to learn more about your possible case, it can be difficult to know where to turn to, whom to trust, and who will be your optimal partner and advocate. It is important to understand that not all attorneys have specific experience with regard to situations like asbestos exposure that causes mesothelioma. In addition, it is important to understand that different attorneys offer different experiences—and at different costs. Below, we've listed ten questions that you should ask potential lawyers before agreeing to work with them on your case

- Do you have experience handling cases involving exposure to dangerous materials, such as exposure to asbestos?
- How do you conduct medical research related to cases like mine?
- Do you utilize medical experts? If so, what are their credentials?
- What do you believe are the most important aspects of this lawsuit?
- Can you share past case results with me?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of my case?
- What are my legal rights and what are my options for action?
- Who in your office will handle my case? How will I contact you during my case?
- What are your feelings on settling as opposed to going to court?
- How do you bill your clients? What can I expect to pay if I win? What can I expect to pay if I lose?

Don't forget: it's not just experience and expertise that matter. In some cases, a lawyer's personality simply won't complement yours or you may simply not work well with certain attorneys. If you don't feel comfortable with the attorney you are speaking with, or if you don't feel confident about partnering with him or her, consider talking to someone else before making your decision.

## How Hupy and Abraham, S.C., Can Help

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At Hupy and Abraham, S.C., we are dedicated to helping those who have been harmed—and we are committed to seeking justice for these victims and their families. We offer confidential, complimentary case evaluations to anyone who has been affected by mesothelioma caused by asbestos exposure. Take the first step by contacting us today and we will take care of the rest.

There are five ways of contacting us today:

- Call us toll-free at **1-800-800-5678**.
- Visit our website at **www.hupy.com**.
- Fill out the electronic quick-contact form located on our website.
- Chat in real time with a real person by using the live chat option on our website.
- Stop by one of our offices, with 11 different locations in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa.

### **About Hupy and Abraham, S.C.**

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Founded in 1969 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, personal injury law firm Hupy and Abraham, S.C. has a proven record of success with large settlements in serious cases, collecting hundreds of millions of dollars for more than 60,000 satisfied clients. The firm has a long-established reputation of providing sound legal representation to injury victims, securing fair compensation for its clients, and giving back to the community.

With 11 offices located in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa, the law firm handles personal injury cases including car accidents, motorcycle accidents, wrongful death, pharmaceutical and medical device class actions, and nursing home neglect and abuse cases.

The firm's 24 experienced attorneys are committed to going above and beyond the call of duty for their clients by tirelessly representing them to the best of their ability while being involved in the local community—from raising funds for local charities to participating in safety and accident prevention initiatives. In the past three years, the firm donated more than \$500,000 to more than 250 worthwhile causes.

Hupy and Abraham, S.C. has received top ratings from a number of national professional organizations for many years and was voted Best Personal Injury Lawyers in 2014, 2013, 2012 and 2011; voted Best Personal Injury Law Firm in 2015, 2014, 2013 and 2012 in another popular poll; and named Best Law Firm in the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel's* 2015 Top Choice Award. In 2015, the firm was named a Webby Award Honoree in the Best Law Website Category and was honored at the Legal Marketing Association's "Your Honor Awards" for best website reboot.