

Asbestosis

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Background

Asbestosis is a process of diffuse interstitial fibrosis of the lung due to exposure to asbestos dust.^[1, 2] Asbestos is the name given to a group of naturally occurring minerals that are resistant to heat and corrosion; these include mineral fibers such as chrysotile, amosite, and crocidolite, among others. Chrysotile is by far the most common type of asbestos fiber produced in the world, and it accounts for virtually all commercial use of asbestos in the United States.

Exposure to asbestos occurs through inhalation of fibers in air in the working environment, ambient air in the vicinity of factories handling asbestos, or indoor air in housing and buildings containing asbestos materials. Heavy exposures to asbestos can occur in the construction or shipping industries, particularly during the removal of asbestos materials for renovation, repairs, or demolition. Workers are also likely to be exposed during the manufacture and use of asbestos products (eg, textiles, floor tiles, friction products, insulation [pipes], other building materials), as well as during automotive brake and clutch repair work. Asbestos stopped being manufactured in US materials since the 1970s.