A microscopic view of asbestos fibers, showing a dense, fibrous structure with varying shades of green and brown. The fibers are oriented in different directions, creating a complex, layered appearance. A semi-transparent dark green triangle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title and subtitle.

# MESOTHELIOMA AND ASBESTOS

A GUIDEBOOK FOR FAMILIES AFFECTED BY  
ASBESTOS-RELATED ILLNESSES



Galier DeRobertis & Waxman



# LEGAL HELP FOR FAMILIES SUFFERING FROM MESOTHELIOMA

For over 35 years, Galiher DeRobertis & Waxman has successfully represented families suffering from mesothelioma, and has the team that can successfully handle these complex cases. Each member of the firm has developed a unique understanding of the medical and legal issues surrounding mesothelioma. As a result, we have extensive resources and experience related to all issues involved in these cases, including asbestos products, job sites, industry knowledge, asbestos hazards, and mesothelioma diagnosis and treatment, to name just a few.

Our team approach will lead to the most favorable outcome of your case. For a free legal consultation, or if you have any questions, call us any time locally at 808-597-1400 or toll free at 1-888-597-1441.

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This free Mesothelioma and Asbestos Guidebook is not designed to and does not provide medical advice, legal advice, professional diagnosis, opinion, treatment or services to you or to any other individual. This free Guide provides general information for educational purposes only.

# ABOUT THIS GUIDEBOOK

BY THE ATTORNEYS AT  
GALIHHER DEROBERTIS & WAXMAN

The attorneys at Galihher DeRobertis & Waxman have spent their careers representing mesothelioma victims and their families against the corporations that failed to warn them about asbestos.

We at the firm wrote this Mesothelioma and Asbestos Guidebook for several reasons: above all, because we truly care about and want to help people suffering from asbestos-related illnesses. Our extensive experience in this area has given us considerable knowledge of the many complicated issues surrounding the subject, and we see it as our duty to help raise awareness.

We are not medical doctors and this is not medical advice. Please speak with your personal doctor about all your options if you have been diagnosed with malignant mesothelioma.

It can be difficult for sufferers of asbestos-related illnesses to contemplate their legal rights. An experienced mesothelioma attorney can explain the process to you, evaluate your case, and pursue a legal claim on your behalf while you and your loved ones focus on obtaining medical treatment.

If you or someone you love has been diagnosed with mesothelioma or an asbestos-related disease, you may be entitled to bring a lawsuit against manufacturers, suppliers and installers of asbestos-containing products and equipment which caused or contributed to their illness. It has been known for decades in industry that breathing asbestos dust was hazardous to a worker's health. These hazards were hidden by these companies, causing millions of people to be exposed to this hazardous dust. Unfortunately, some of those who were exposed have developed mesothelioma. We hope that this guide can be helpful.

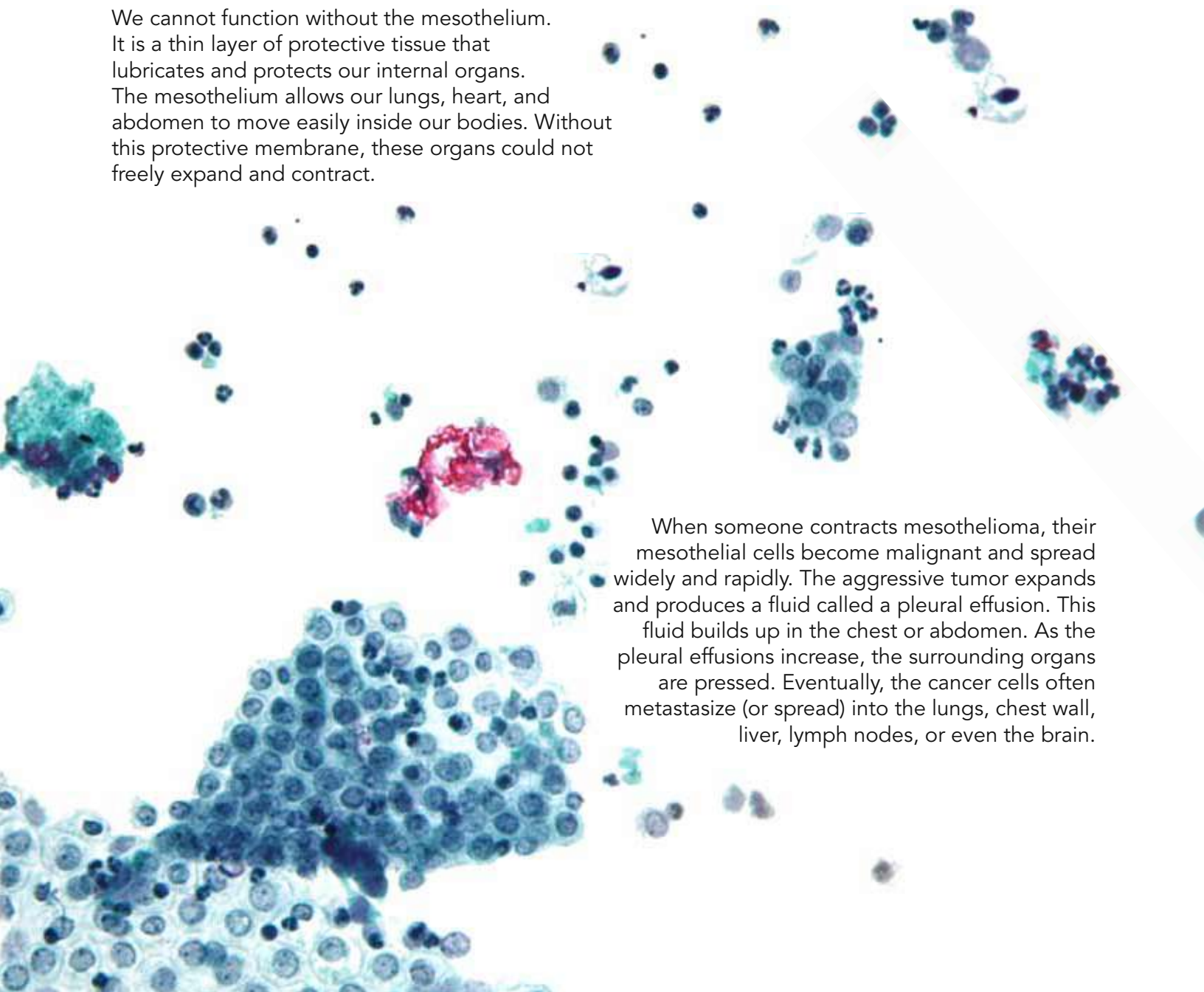
L. Richard DeRobertis

Ilana K. Waxman

# UNDERSTANDING MESOTHELIOMA

Malignant mesothelioma is one of the rarest and most aggressive cancers. All persons who suffer from malignant mesothelioma have been exposed to asbestos. It is a devastating disease that attacks the mesothelium, which is the critical membrane that protects the lungs, heart, and abdomen.

We cannot function without the mesothelium. It is a thin layer of protective tissue that lubricates and protects our internal organs. The mesothelium allows our lungs, heart, and abdomen to move easily inside our bodies. Without this protective membrane, these organs could not freely expand and contract.

A microscopic view of mesothelioma cells, showing a large cluster of blue-stained cells in the bottom left and several smaller clusters of cells scattered across the white background. One cluster in the center is stained pink.

When someone contracts mesothelioma, their mesothelial cells become malignant and spread widely and rapidly. The aggressive tumor expands and produces a fluid called a pleural effusion. This fluid builds up in the chest or abdomen. As the pleural effusions increase, the surrounding organs are pressed. Eventually, the cancer cells often metastasize (or spread) into the lungs, chest wall, liver, lymph nodes, or even the brain.

## HOW COMMON IS THIS TYPE OF CANCER?

It is estimated that 2,500 to 3,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with mesothelioma annually. Tragically, despite wide-ranging medical research, there is no cure. Fortunately, the number of treatment options has steadily increased. A patient's prognosis can be significantly improved when the cancer is uncovered early and treated effectively. Cancer researchers are working hard to develop innovative therapies that aspire to dramatically improve outcomes for future mesothelioma patients.

## HOW IS MESOTHELIOMA DIAGNOSED?

Mesothelioma is not easy to diagnose. Unlike other forms of cancer, there are no early symptoms. Consequently, those who have been exposed to asbestos should schedule regular checkups with a qualified physician. Mesothelioma's symptoms are often similar to the symptoms of other diseases. These symptoms commonly include shortness of breath, pain in the chest or abdomen, or a persistent cough.

Due to the rarity of mesothelioma, most doctors have very little or extremely limited experience with the disease. Therefore, if you have an occupational history of asbestos exposure, it is critical to schedule regular physical examinations in order to monitor the efficient functioning of your lungs and abdomen. It is also paramount that you immediately visit a doctor when you experience any of the symptoms of mesothelioma.

## WHAT ARE THE TREATMENT OPTIONS?

Surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation are the most common mesothelioma treatment options. Oncologists employ these treatment options to relieve symptoms and improve the patient's quality of life.

Once a diagnosis of mesothelioma is confirmed, your physician will likely order further tests to determine the stage or extent of the disease. This enables your treatment team to formulate the proper course of treatment.

# BE WATCHFUL

## THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS COULD BE SIGNS OF PLEURAL MESOTHELIOMA



Shortness of breath



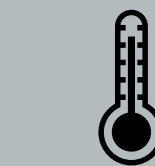
Persistent dry cough



Chest pains



Difficulty swallowing



Fever or night sweats



Blood in the sputum



Prolonged hoarseness



Unexpected weight loss

If you know that you or anyone in your household has been exposed to asbestos, you should make sure that person informs their doctor.

# WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

**A VERY POTENT CANCER CAUSING AGENT, MANY HAWAI‘I RESIDENTS HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO THIS HAZARDOUS MATERIAL BECAUSE OF ITS WIDESPREAD USE IN NAVY SHIPS, CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS, AND THOUSANDS OF OTHER PRODUCTS.**



Asbestos itself is a naturally-occurring mineral with some very special physical properties. It is made up of bundles of thin flexible fibers, which are highly resistant to heat and chemicals. Asbestos fibers are very strong, have low electrical conductivity and are flexible enough to be woven. These properties made asbestos extremely useful in a wide range of products and applications. Asbestos was used in an incredible variety of products to provide heat, electrical and sound insulation, as an inexpensive binder, for protection against acids and as filter media.

Historical use of asbestos reaches back to at least ancient Greece and probably much earlier, but most of it was used in the last century. By the 1950s and 1960s, asbestos was in extremely widespread use. At the peak of asbestos use in the United States, there were literally thousands of asbestos products.

Asbestos fibers were woven into various textiles for fireproofing and insulation. It was combined with

other material such as cement, plastics and resins as a binder or filler material to add strength, thermal protection and electrical resistance. Many gaskets and packing material contained asbestos, especially for use in high pressure or temperature pumps and valves. Asbestos was used in most major industries including shipyards, power plants, oil refineries, steel mills, automobile factories, railroads, airplane manufacturing, paper mills, foundries, etc.

## MILLIONS EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS

Throughout the 20th century, asbestos was used in numerous products and locations in Hawai‘i, from U.S. Navy vessels to home appliances. As a result, thousands of Hawai‘i residents have been exposed to this hazardous material. Navy seamen, shipyard workers, boilermakers, electricians, insulators, and construction workers often had heavy occupational exposure to asbestos.



Asbestos is found in six naturally occurring silicate minerals, all of which contain it as fibrous crystals. Large-scale mining began in the late 19th century, although health issues related to asbestos exposure were recorded in records dating back as early as ancient Rome.

However, there are many other ways that Hawai'i residents may have been exposed to toxic asbestos dust. Bystander exposure, household exposure and environmental exposure can all cause asbestos-related diseases such as mesothelioma, lung cancer and asbestosis.

#### **MANY UNAWARE THEY'VE BEEN EXPOSED**

Many people are unaware that they have been exposed to asbestos. You cannot necessarily tell that a product contains asbestos just by looking at it. Common products such as thermal insulation, fireproofing, sound insulation, textile, gasket, packing, drywall, joint compound, electrical insulation and friction products usually contained asbestos, until at least the 1970s. The asbestos content ranged from less than one percent to as high as 100 percent and potential exposure existed during all phases of the production, transportation, storage, installation, removal and disposal of these products. Residential construction and home renovation used many asbestos-containing products including textured ceilings, drywall, floor and ceiling tiles, siding and roofing. Damage, deterioration and replacement of these materials can still lead to possible exposure if the asbestos fibers are released into the air.

Some do-it-yourself home remodeling projects have inadvertently exposed household members to asbestos. Some appliances such as furnaces, toasters, irons, ovens, hair dryers or miscellaneous items such as toys, artificial snow and pot holders may also contribute to household exposures.

#### **EPIDEMIC OF ASBESTOS-RELATED CANCERS**

Tragically, this widespread use of asbestos has led to an epidemic of cancer and other asbestos related diseases among Navy Veterans, Pearl Harbor shipyard workers, insulators, and other industrial workers and their families. Although asbestos was phased out of most products by the late 1980's, it was never banned. There are still asbestos materials in many older homes, public buildings, schools, and some older Navy vessels. Thus, people today can still be exposed to toxic asbestos products that were manufactured decades ago.

If you have been exposed to asbestos on the job, at home or in your neighborhood, you may be at an elevated risk for mesothelioma. You should consult your primary care physician about your history of asbestos exposure to determine whether you should be screened for possible asbestos disease.

# U.S. NAVY VETERANS AND SHIPYARD WORKERS AT RISK



The construction, repair, and maintenance of Navy vessels routinely exposed shipyard workers to asbestos. Huge amounts of asbestos had been used in the construction of ships, and shipyard workers were not told of the known hazards of breathing in asbestos. This exposure put shipyard workers and seamen at risk of developing asbestos-related diseases like mesothelioma.



## SHIPYARD WORKERS EXPOSED DURING CONSTRUCTION OF NAVY SHIPS

Shipyard workers were exposed to asbestos in various ways. At the time of constructing ships, workers manipulated asbestos insulation products by cutting, shaping, mixing and sawing them. Workers were also exposed to specific asbestos-containing products, such as felt, block, pipe covering, thread, gaskets, block, tape, cement, and packing. Workers used these products to insulate pipes and machinery located throughout vessels.

## EXPOSURE ALSO OCCURRED OFF THE BOAT IN SHIPYARD SHOPS

Some work in shipyards was done in shops near where the ships were repaired. Equipment and valves were often transported to the shops for overhaul and repair. This equipment often had asbestos insulation still attached that needed to be removed to allow for the needed repairs. Workers had to replace asbestos gaskets and packing, too. This process was repeated when the parts and equipment were reinstalled into vessels. Thus, the process of overhauling ships created continual exposure to asbestos dust.

## ASBESTOS DUST GENERATED DURING



**LITERALLY TONS OF ASBESTOS** insulating materials were used on all classes of U.S. Navy vessels—ranging from asbestos pads, felt and cloth to asbestos pipe covering and cement to asbestos gaskets and packing. Until the 1980s, a Navy ship's machinery and piping was covered with asbestos insulation from stem to stern.

Throughout the life of the ship, these asbestos materials would be removed and replaced dozens or hundreds of times. Each time, great numbers of toxic asbestos fibers would be released into the surrounding air. Shipyard workers involved in the construction, repair, and overhaul of Navy ships were exposed

to the asbestos dust released from these materials. Likewise, Navy seamen of all ranks were exposed to the asbestos dust as they operated and maintained these vessels at sea and in port. These ships were their jobsites as well as places they called home while at sea and on duty.

Thus, U.S. Navy Veterans are at a particularly high risk of contracting mesothelioma because they served on ships that had huge amounts of asbestos insulating products on them. Veterans who have an asbestos-related condition need to be aware of their rights to file a lawsuit and a claim with the Veterans Administration (VA) related to their service related injury.



## ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

Asbestos dust was also generated through routine repair and maintenance of these Navy ships. Ship repairs often required manipulation and removal of asbestos-containing insulation affixed to pipes, valves and machinery. The repair and overhaul of equipment (such as propulsion equipment) also generated asbestos dust when workers repaired, disassembled, maintained, replaced and transported such equipment.

## WE HAVE REPRESENTED HUNDREDS OF SHIPYARD WORKERS

The Galiher Law Firm has represented hundreds of shipyard workers from Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and other shipyards throughout the United States. These hard-working individuals had significant amounts of asbestos exposure through their daily work. Our law firm has proudly helped these individuals and their families receive the compensation they deserve from the negligence of asbestos companies.

# WHAT CAUSES MESOTHELIOMA?



Almost all cases of malignant mesothelioma in Hawai'i are caused by exposure to asbestos. When you inhale the dust created by any asbestos product, tiny fibers become lodged in your lung tissue. Once in the body, these fibers act as a powerful carcinogen.

**DOCTORS DO NOT FULLY** understand the mechanism by which asbestos causes mesothelioma. However, we know that the asbestos fibers damage the tissue and cause inflammation. Researchers believe that the asbestos may also cause genetic changes in the mesothelial cells. Over time, these genetic mutations can become malignant and turn into cancer.

Most people who are diagnosed with mesothelioma have a history of occupational exposure, meaning that they were exposed to deadly asbestos fibers on the job. Mesothelioma is particularly prevalent among former shipyard workers from Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, U.S. Navy veterans, construction workers who helped build Ala Moana shopping center and Waikiki high rises, boilermakers, and other tradesmen who were heavily exposed to asbestos at work.

However, even very brief or low levels of asbestos exposure can cause mesothelioma. There is no known safe level of exposure to asbestos.

## SECOND-HAND EXPOSURE IS ALSO A RISK

It is well-documented that the wives and children of men who worked with asbestos can get mesothelioma from the asbestos that was carried home on the worker's clothes. This is commonly known as household exposure. Our firm has represented the wives of Pearl Harbor workers and sugar mill workers who were exposed to asbestos when they did their husbands' laundry. People can also get mesothelioma through bystander exposure, often while working on a jobsite where other workers are using asbestos products.

## IDENTIFYING PAST EXPOSURE TO ASBESTOS

Exposures may also be occult—either unknown or entirely forgotten. People do not always know when they are being exposed to asbestos. Asbestos is found in many, many products and is encountered in many different situations, not all of them traditional work environments. For example, asbestos was commonly used in floor tiles, paper, asphalt felts, and textiles—and of course exposure can occur to bystanders around construction sites and renovations, in homes and buildings, and in neighborhoods.

Because of the long latency period, most mesothelioma victims are in their 50s, 60s or 70s. However, some may be as young as 30 or 40. These younger mesothelioma victims often grew up with a family member who worked with asbestos. In many cases, the people who get mesothelioma in their 30s and 40s were exposed to asbestos as children from the dust that their fathers brought home on their hair and clothes.

Sometimes it is difficult to identify the exact source of the asbestos exposure due to mesothelioma's long latency period. People usually get mesothelioma between 10 and 40 years after their first exposure to asbestos. It is often difficult for people to remember the details of their asbestos exposure after so many years have passed.

With more than 35 years of experience, the Galiher firm has extensive information about the use of asbestos at Pearl Harbor and other Hawai'i jobsites, and we can help you identify the products you worked with.



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# HEALTH HAZARDS OF ASBESTOS

Medical and scientific studies have confirmed the hazardous impact of asbestos on human life. To date, millions of persons have been exposed to asbestos due to the prevalent use of this carcinogen in common materials and products. The latency period for asbestos-related diseases is long—commonly between 20-50 years. Research has proven that asbestos causes asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma. Unfortunately, there is no known cure for mesothelioma.



## NO LEVEL OF EXPOSURE IS SAFE

There is no “safe level” or dosage of asbestos. Due to the enactment of federal safety regulations, exposure to asbestos in the workplace is now heavily regulated and has reduced the risk of asbestos exposure. Unfortunately, many workers, including Navy seamen, electricians, mechanics, construction workers, and shipyard workers, to name just a few, were exposed before these regulations went into effect.



## EXPOSURE OFTEN GOES UNDETECTED

Because asbestos fibers are microscopic, millions of fibers can be airborne but not be visible. Due to the latency period, workers often learn of their exposure many years after the fact.



## ASBESTOS CAUSES MANY DISEASES

There are various asbestos-related diseases. The most significant is mesothelioma, an aggressive cancer that attacks the lining of the lungs. Asbestos fibers that have been inhaled penetrate the lungs and related organs, causing symptoms such as shortness of breath, inflammation and irritation. Other diseases include those caused by asbestos include asbestosis (inflammation and scarring of the lung), pleural plaques (scarring outside of the lung lining), pleural disease (more significant scars, causes lung disease), and lung cancer.



## SECOND-HAND EXPOSURE IS ALSO A DANGER

The risk of asbestos exposure is more far-reaching than persons who worked directly with asbestos products. “Bystanders” who happened to be at the worksite or in proximity to asbestos products or persons who worked with such products may have also been exposed. Spouses, children, and other family members of workers who “took home” asbestos on their clothing and equipment were also exposed.

Once exposed, all of these persons are at risk for developing asbestos-related diseases. Recent studies have shown, for example, that housewives comprise a significant number of persons who have contracted mesothelioma. Bystanders and family members who may have been exposed should monitor themselves for any symptoms of asbestos-related disease.



## CERTAIN OCCUPATIONS ARE AT HIGHER RISK

Common occupations at risk of asbestos exposure in the workplace include:

- Boilermakers
- Bricklayers
- Carpenters
- Construction workers
- Electricians
- Machinists & mechanics
- Millers
- Painters
- Pipe fitters
- Plasterers
- Power plant workers
- Sailors & shipyard workers
- Welders

# IDENTIFYING YOUR ASBESTOS EXPOSURE

**MOST PEOPLE DO NOT** realize they were exposed to asbestos until they develop an asbestos-related disease. If you believe that you worked directly with asbestos or were secondarily exposed, you should take steps to verify any exposure and ensure that you monitor your health. Because the latency period for asbestos can range from 20 – 50 years, some research may be involved in identifying the dates, places and products to which you were exposed.

You should attempt to identify the products you may have been exposed to, the companies that manufactured the products, and the places where you worked.

## ASBESTOS PRODUCTS WERE USED WIDELY

Although federal regulations now limit the risks of asbestos exposure in the worksite, many workers continued to be exposed to asbestos. Asbestos-containing products that were developed and constructed prior to the enactment of federal safety regulations still exist and are maintained, repaired and replaced by workers. Common products include gaskets and packing, friction products, electrical equipment, construction and building products, protective equipment, paints and coatings, drywall, and thermal insulation or lagging.

## OCCUPATIONS AND JOBSITES AT RISK

Common occupations where there was the risk of asbestos exposure include construction workers (i.e. electricians, carpenters, bricklayers, painters, and plasterers), auto mechanics, navy seamen and shipyard workers (boilermakers, machinists, mechanics), and power plant and foundry workers.

## THE GALIHER LAW FIRM HAS EXTENSIVE INFORMATION AND DATA

If you believe you have been exposed to asbestos and have an asbestos-related disease, it is important that you take action now. The Galiher Law Firm can assist you in identifying your potential exposures and the companies that may be responsible for your injuries. The Galiher Law Firm has over 35 years assisting

family members whose loved ones have suffer from an asbestos disease. During that time, the Galiher Law Firm has built an extensive library containing data related to the use of asbestos, occupations, job sites, and asbestos products. This database enables us to efficiently and effectively research your personal exposure history and develop your case.

## IF YOU BELIEVE YOU WERE EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS

It is imperative to let your doctor know right away if you believe you have been exposed to asbestos. Regular checkups with your doctor are always important but this is especially true for anyone who has been exposed to asbestos. We encourage you to see your doctor regularly and follow your doctor's recommendations.

## COMPANIES THAT SOLD ASBESTOS

Hundreds of companies manufactured and/or sold asbestos-containing products. They include such companies as Allied-Signal Corporation, Ford Motor Company, Westinghouse, General Electric, IBM, Crane Company, Okonite Company, Bendix Corporation, Sea-Land Service Inc., IMO Industries, Chrysler, Texaco, Eagle-Picher Industries, DAL-Tile International, Toyota, Consolidated Rail Corporation, Trane Company, Union Carbide, Ericsson Inc., Eastman Kodak, Turner Construction, Todd Shipyards, Loews Corporation, and Kaiser Gypsum, and many others.

# ALTERNATIVE REMEDIES

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Some Hawai'i patients may seek out alternative remedies to complement or supplement the conventional cancer treatments prescribed by their oncologist and medical team. These include acupuncture, massage, yoga, biofeedback, and herbal remedies. Alternative and complementary therapies can promote relaxation and help ease the pain and nausea experienced by many mesothelioma patients. They may also help to alleviate some of the unpleasant side effects of conventional cancer treatments such as radiation, chemotherapy, and surgery.

There is no evidence to suggest that any of these alternative remedies have the power to cure cancer, but some Hawai'i residents find them very effective as a way to cope with the symptoms of mesothelioma and improve their quality of life. However, these alternative remedies should not replace your medication or other conventional treatments, and you should not attempt any alternative remedies without carefully discussing them with your medical team.



## Acupuncture

Acupuncture is an ancient medical practice that originated in China more than 2,000 years ago. The best-known type of acupuncture involves putting thin, metallic needles into your skin at specific body points to improve health and well-being. However, there are many different acupuncture techniques. Some use sound waves, others use tiny electrical charges, and they may or not use actual needles. There are many acupuncture practitioners in Hawai'i.

Research has shown that acupuncture may be somewhat effective at reducing nausea and vomiting after surgery and chemotherapy. It can also relieve pain. Scientists do not fully understand how acupuncture works, but some researchers believe that it may assist in the release of endorphins in the body. It may also affect the way the body regulates blood pressure and flow.



## Biofeedback

Biofeedback is a relaxation technique that attempts to treat pain and insomnia by changing your heart rate, skin temperature, perspiration, or muscle tension. Essentially, biofeedback attempts to make the patient aware of bodily processes that are normally thought to be involuntary, so that the patient can gain some conscious control over these processes and diminish the level of pain.

Biofeedback was evaluated by an independent panel convened by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and found to be of possible benefit for treating chronic pain and insomnia. There is no scientific evidence to support claims that biofeedback can cure cancer, or even slow its progression, but it may help to improve quality of life for some people.



## Massage

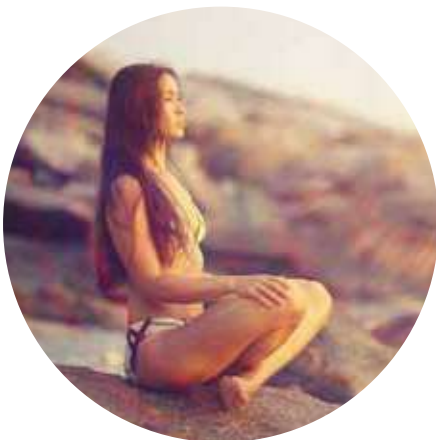
Some health professionals recommend massage as a way for cancer patients to reduce stress, anxiety, and pain. There is some empirical evidence that massage can measurably decrease stress, anxiety, depression, pain, and fatigue among cancer patients. Most people do feel better after a massage, which at a minimum can help patients cope with the emotional stress of mesothelioma and the unpleasant side effects of most conventional treatments. Lomi lomi massage is a traditional part of the Hawaiian healing arts. Shiatsu is also popular in Hawai'i.



## Herbal Remedies

There are a number of herbs, vitamins, and botanical supplements that are promoted for use by cancer patients. This includes a number of herbal remedies used in Chinese medicine, as well as other over-the-counter herbal and vitamin supplements sold in health food stores and drug stores. Some of these supplements may be helpful, and in some cases your doctor may even prescribe specific vitamin supplements to counteract some of the harmful side effects of chemotherapy or radiation.

However, it is very important to consult your doctor before trying any of these remedies. You should be particularly careful about using any herbal remedies or dietary supplements. While these may be “natural”, they are not necessarily safe. They may decrease the effectiveness of certain anti-cancer drugs, and they may actually be harmful when taken in large doses or in combination with other conventional drugs.



## Mind-Body Approaches

In addition to all of the physical symptoms that come with mesothelioma, the cancer can take a heavy toll on the mind and emotions as well. A cancer diagnosis is incredibly stressful for both the patient and his family and friends. Patients may go through periods of fear, rage, anxiety, grief, depression, or perhaps some combination of all of these feelings at once. These psychological and emotional aspects of cancer are often forgotten or disregarded in conventional medical treatment, but they are a very real part of the experience and certainly affect the patient's well-being. Many cancer treatment centers have come to recognize this, and have begun to offer an increasing number of “mind-body” therapies to help people cope with cancer on a mental, emotional, and spiritual level. Depending on your personal beliefs, some approaches that you may wish to explore include:

- Support groups
- Visualization and guided imagery
- Art or music therapy
- Yoga
- One-on-one psychological counseling
- Prayer
- Tai Chi or Qi Gong
- Meditation

# TYPES & STAGES OF MESOTHELIOMA



Staging is the medical term used to describe how far the cancer has spread through the body. Upon diagnosing a patient with mesothelioma, the doctor will probably order additional imaging tests to determine the stage (or extent) of the disease. The tests may include a chest x-ray, a CT scan, an MRI, or an ultrasound.

Mesothelioma is considered localized if the cancer is found only on the pleura or peritoneum where it originated. Mesothelioma is considered to be advanced if it spreads beyond the original site to the lymph nodes, chest wall, lungs, or other internal organs.

The staging process is very important in the doctor's plan for the appropriate course of treatment. Both treatment options and overall prognosis will vary depending on the current stage of mesothelioma. Generally, the outlook is better if the cancer is diagnosed in the early stages. This is why it is very important to go for frequent medical checkups if you know that you have a history of asbestos exposure, particularly if you show any signs of asbestos disease such as asbestosis or pleural plaques.

## STAGE 1

Pleural mesothelioma is localized. This means that the cancer is limited to either the right or left pleura, and may also be found in the lining of the lung or the diaphragm on the same side.

## STAGE 2

Mesothelioma has spread beyond the lining of the chest to the lymph nodes, chest wall, esophagus, and/or lung on the same side.

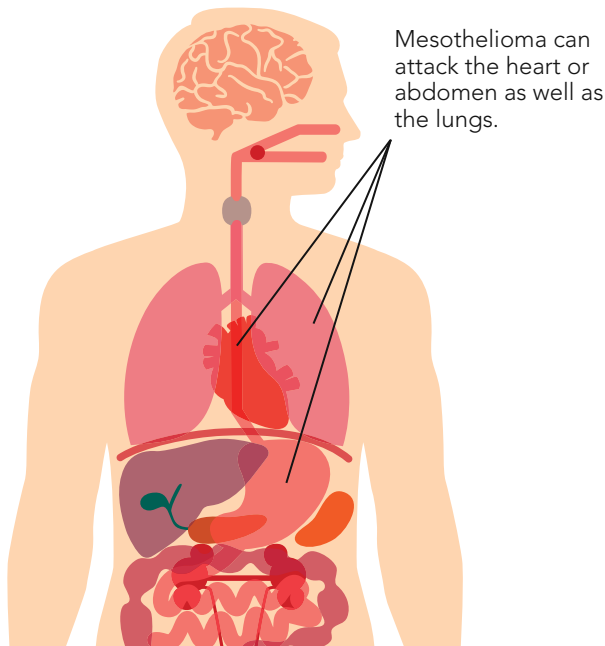
## STAGE 3

Mesothelioma has penetrated the chest wall, heart, peritoneum, and/or other nearby organs. The cancer may have spread into lymph nodes on the other side of the chest or even outside the chest.

## STAGE 4

Mesothelioma has spread, or metastasized, to distant organs. The cancer may have spread throughout the body via the bloodstream or lymph nodes.





## TYPES CLASSIFIED BY WHERE TUMOR OCCURS

Mesotheliomas can develop in different parts of the body. Each of the organs that this tumor invades is lined by the same type of mesothelial cells. These special cells line the lungs, the peritoneum (the abdomen's lining), and pericardium (the sac that surrounds the heart). These are the areas where these cancerous tumors develop. Each type of mesothelioma has a special name. Both the symptoms and treatment options vary depending on the type of mesothelioma.

About 75% of cases are pleural mesothelioma. This is the type that develops in the lining of the lungs which is called the pleura. Another 10% to 20% of cases are called peritoneal mesothelioma, which occurs in the lining of the abdominal cavity, or peritoneum. Very rarely, mesothelioma may also develop in the pericardial lining of the heart.

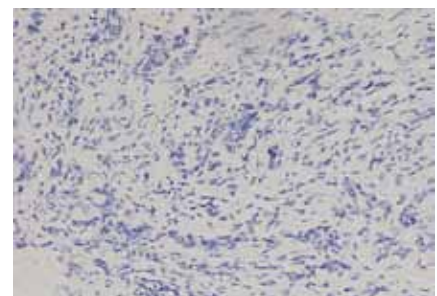
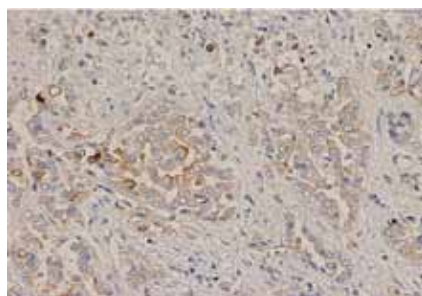
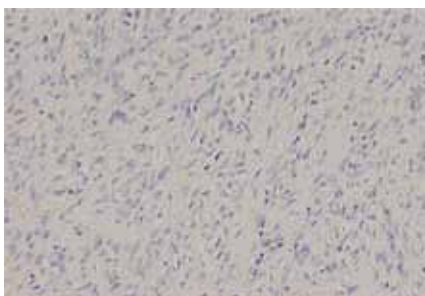
## CLASSIFICATION BY CELL TYPE

Mesothelioma can also be classified by the type of cancer cell. The cell type may be epithelial, sarcomatoid, or a mix of the two, known as biphasic. The majority of mesotheliomas are epithelial, and the epithelial type is somewhat easier to treat. To determine which type of mesothelioma is present, a doctor will perform a biopsy.

It is also important to note that there are some benign tumors of the mesothelium. These tumors are typically removed by surgery with no further treatment.

## TREATMENT DEPENDS ON TYPE OF MESOTHELIOMA

The treatment a patient receives will depend on the type of mesothelioma that has been diagnosed. Treating physicians will also determine the stage of the disease as this also has important implications as far as treatment options are concerned.



*Sarcomatoid, epithelial, and biphasic cells (pictured, left to right).*

# MESOTHELIOMA TREATMENT

Options for mesothelioma treatment are steadily increasing. Standard treatments include surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation, which are often combined in what is known as multi-modality approach. Some patients may want to explore complementary or alternative remedies.



## EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT TREATMENT OPTIONS

The articles in our Mesothelioma Knowledge Center are designed to help you learn about the treatment options for mesothelioma, including information on mesothelioma treatment centers:

Visit our website to learn more: [www.galiherlaw.com/knowledge/](http://www.galiherlaw.com/knowledge/)



Because each patient is different, there is no single right path to mesothelioma treatment. What works for one patient may not work for another. Most of the therapies that are available can also have serious side effects, and the choice of treatments can be difficult and bewildering.

The most common mesothelioma treatment options include surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation. These treatment options are aimed at relieving symptoms to improve the patient's quality of life. If a diagnosis of mesothelioma is confirmed, your doctor will most likely order additional tests to determine the stage or extent of the disease. This helps the doctor plan the proper course of treatment.

Mesothelioma can be difficult to diagnose. There are no early symptoms so those who have been exposed to asbestos should have regular checkups with a qualified doctor. The symptoms of mesothelioma are often similar to the symptoms of other disease. Symptoms of Mesothelioma may include shortness of breath, a persistent cough, or pain in the chest or abdomen.

Since mesothelioma is relatively rare, many doctors have very limited experience with the disease. Therefore, if you have a history of asbestos exposure, it is very important to have regular physical examinations to monitor the functioning of your lungs and abdomen. You should also visit the doctor as soon as you begin to show any of the symptoms of mesothelioma.

Helford Research Hospital at City of Hope (left) is one of a few elite institutions at the leading edge of mesothelioma treatment and research.

*Photo: Matthew Stringer, CC:SA 3.0, [tinyurl.com/hrhch](http://tinyurl.com/hrhch)*

# ABOUT CLINICAL TRIALS

Research conducted in clinical trials offers the best hope for finding a cure for mesothelioma. For some Hawai'i patients, clinical trials also offer a superior standard of care, and access to the latest and most encouraging treatment options. We encourage you to seriously consider participating in a clinical trial if you are eligible.

Clinical trials are human studies designed to test the safety and effectiveness of new drugs and medical treatments. In the case of cancer and mesothelioma patients, clinical trials are usually conducted to evaluate promising new treatments.

## HOW DOES A TRIAL WORK?

Clinical trials to test new treatments are usually divided into four phases. Researchers usually start by testing new treatments on cells in a laboratory, then on animals, then finally progressing to studies in humans. Before any drug or treatment is tested on human volunteers, it is first tested in the laboratory. In the United States, all new drugs must go through three phases of clinical trials before they are approved for general use. These are carefully controlled studies conducted with human volunteers. Every clinical trial has a different set of requirements that you must meet in order to be eligible to take part in the trial.

The researchers who are conducting the trials carefully evaluate the new drugs and treatments for safety, clinical effectiveness, and pharmacological effects such as side effects and interactions. The results are compared to current standard treatments.

## CURRENT CLINICAL TRIALS

Many of the clinical trials for mesothelioma involve new combinations of traditional treatments such as chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and surgical treatments. However, there are also trials of newer drugs and other novel therapies. These newer drugs are designed to target the tumor cells alone, without destroying the healthy cells. Some of these new treatments include inhibitors, such as enzyme inhibitors, tumor cell surface receptor inhibitors, growth factor





receptor inhibitors, proteasome inhibitors, and kinase inhibitors. Other therapies include gene therapy, biological therapy, immune therapy, and antibody therapies.

There are currently a number of trials of these newer therapies, as well as trials of the newer therapies in combination with chemotherapy and one trial with radiation therapy. Some of the research to support these clinical trials is happening right here in Honolulu, at the Cancer Research Center of Hawai'i. There is definitely a need for new therapies for the treatment of mesothelioma.

### **MORE INFORMATION**

We strongly encourage you to discuss the subject of clinical trials with your oncologist. There are many benefits to enrolling in a clinical trial: You will receive excellent care; many patients feel better and their quality of life is enhanced; there are cases where the disease process stabilizes or even goes into remission; and clinical trials offer the single most important means for developing new and better treatments for this disease and for making strides toward the day when we will see a cure.

For the most current list of clinical trials offered for mesothelioma, check the National Institute of Health's website at <http://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/results?term=mesothelioma>.

### **FACTS ABOUT MESOTHELIOMA & ASBESTOS:**

- Over 8 million people in the United States have been exposed to asbestos.
- Asbestos remains in many workplaces and continues to pose a serious health threat.
- Despite being prohibited in many countries, there are approximately 5,000 products that still use asbestos.
- Workers in the asbestos insulation industry face a mesothelioma death rate that is over 300 times higher than the death rate of the general population.
- An average of 2,472 people in the U.S. died of mesothelioma each year from 1999 to 2010.

# WE ARE EXPERIENCED MESOTHELIOMA LAWYERS

Choosing an attorney to represent you in a mesothelioma case is an important decision. Because these cases present unique factual, medical, and legal issues, it is essential to choose an experienced firm. Our firm has the expertise, background, and courtroom experience to effectively represent our mesothelioma clients, and we know the challenges that you and your family are facing as a result of this tragic diagnosis.

For over 35 years, the Galiher firm has focused on mesothelioma cases. In 1978, Gary Galiher filed one of the very first mesothelioma cases in the country. Our adversaries know that we stand ready to go to trial in every mesothelioma case and we have an excellent reputation nationwide, which leads to the best possible results for our clients.

Persons with mesothelioma may sue the asbestos manufacturers, sellers, or companies that incorporated asbestos into their products to recover money damages for their injuries.

## Damages that may be recovered include:

- Medical bills related to treatment
- Pain and suffering
- Loss of income and/or earning capacity
- Loss of companionship or a spousal or parental relationship
- Loss of financial support
- Funeral and burial costs

## ACT WITHOUT DELAY

Once an individual is diagnosed with mesothelioma, prompt action is required. The laws vary state from state, but the statute of limitations in every state requires that lawsuits be filed within certain time periods. To successfully bring a lawsuit against those who were responsible for your mesothelioma, it is important to act quickly so that none of your legal rights are lost.



### WE HAVE A NATIONAL PRESENCE

We have helped clients with mesothelioma in over 40 states, and will travel to wherever you are to meet with you.



### WE ARE SUCCESSFUL FOR OUR CLIENTS

We have negotiated substantial settlements for our clients and obtained significant verdicts at trial.



### WE UNDERSTAND YOUR EMOTIONAL AND FINANCIAL STRESS

We will work tirelessly on your case to obtain the most favorable financial result possible for you and your family.



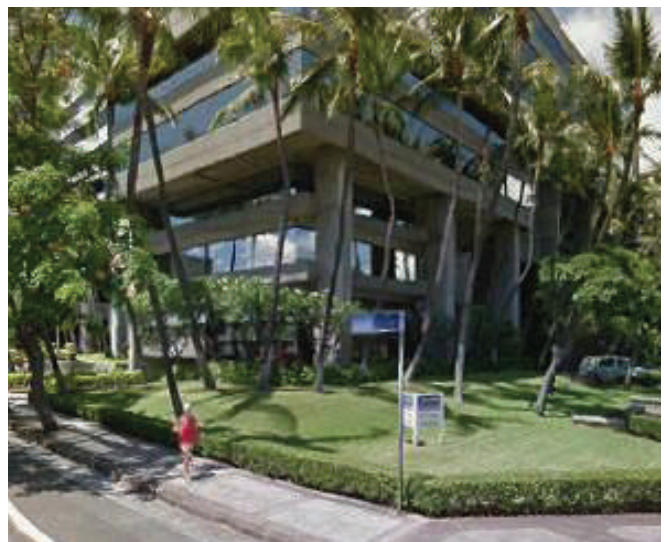
### WE ARE RESOURCEFUL & AGGRESSIVE

The Galiher firm gets full compensation for its clients by staying involved, being prepared and ready for trial in each and every case.



### NO RECOVERY, NO FEE

We handle cases on a contingency fee basis so that you won't pay anything unless there is a recovery in your case.



Our Honolulu office located at 802 Mililani, Ste 505 (pictured).

We understand the emotional impact on the whole family when you or a loved one is diagnosed with mesothelioma. As you face the diagnosis, you must decide on treatment options and cope with the financial consequences of medical bills and loss of income. We realize that this is an incredibly difficult and trying time as you come to terms with your diagnosis and prognosis.

Although it is probably hard to think about right now, you should be aware that you may have a claim against the companies who caused you or your loved one to be exposed to the asbestos that resulted in this devastating disease. For over 35 years, we have successfully represented hundreds of families with mesothelioma claims, and we welcome the opportunity to work with you. Our firm is recognized as one of the premier plaintiffs' law firms in the country. We negotiate substantial settlements for our clients and have obtained multimillion dollar verdicts at trial.

Just as important, we understand what you are going through and will help you find the support that you need. In addition to all of the medical issues, you may be facing added pressures due to financial concerns. We are aware of these pressures, and will help you address these challenges by identifying all potential sources of support and compensation. We will work tirelessly on your case to obtain the most favorable result possible for you and your family.

We have helped clients with mesothelioma in over 40 states, working with our colleagues across the country. An attorney will travel immediately to wherever you are to meet with you. We will talk with you about your case, answer all your questions regarding your legal rights, and begin working with you on your case.

Please call us so we can help you.



Galiher DeRobertis & Waxman

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# Aloha!

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Galiher DeRobertis & Waxman has tried hundreds of mesothelioma and personal injury cases throughout the United States for over 35 years. We are experienced, aggressive, and resourceful trial lawyers who will carefully and fully investigate and prepare your case. If you or a loved one is a victim of mesothelioma, we welcome the opportunity to work with you.

## Get in touch

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