



# Asbestos

## 1. What is asbestos and where can I find it?

Asbestos is a fibrous mineral found in nature. Because these fibers are strong, flexible, and heat-resistant, they have been used in many automobile parts, building materials, and heat-resistant fabrics. Asbestos fibers are very small and can only be seen with special equipment.

## 2. How might I be exposed to asbestos?

Most people are exposed daily to very small amounts of asbestos from the air we breathe and the water we drink. Exposure to larger amounts is more likely in people who work with automobile brake pads or asbestos-containing building materials.

## 3. How can asbestos affect my health?

Breathing in large amounts of asbestos over many years may damage or cause cancer in the lungs or in the tissue lining that surrounds the lungs and the abdomen. Most people do not develop health problems from daily exposure to small amounts of asbestos.

## 4. How can I reduce my exposure to asbestos?

- If you have material containing asbestos in your home and it is in good condition, it is recommended that you leave it alone.
- If the material is damaged, contact the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to find out how to test your home, and to locate companies that are certified to remove or contain the material.

### Sources

1. *Asbestos*. L.A. County Department of Public Health. <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh>
2. *Asbestos*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov>
3. *Asbestos*. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. <http://epa.gov/asbestos>

For additional resources, please visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.