



# ASBESTOS FACT SHEET



## What is it?

Asbestos is a mineral. It is made up of long, thin fibrous material.

## Where can it be found?

- Building materials (ceiling tiles, floor tiles, insulation)
- Paper products
- Asbestos-cement products
- Packings and gaskets
- Asbestos-reinforced plastics

## What are the health effects of asbestos?

- Asbestosis (a lung disease)
- Heart disease
- Immune system damage
- Lung cancer
- Stomach cancer

## Why has asbestos use been so wide spread?

Asbestos has been used so frequently in the past because it is strong and flexible and it will not burn. It is also a good insulator and resists corrosion. Asbestos has been used widely to fireproof, insulate, soundproof, and decorate. Currently the use of asbestos in the United States is declining.

## How are people exposed to asbestos?

When asbestos fibers are in the air, people breathe them. Since they are small and light the asbestos fibers can stay in the air for a long time. Damaged and dry asbestos, sometimes referred to as friable, is more likely to be released into the air.

## What can you do to protect yourself from asbestos?

- Don't play in piles of debris that may contain construction materials.
- Don't touch damaged or broken floor tiles or ceilings tiles.



Bureau of Air Quality



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