

**TOXICOLOGICAL PROFILE FOR
ASBESTOS**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health Service
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry**

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UPDATE STATEMENT

Toxicological profiles are revised and republished as necessary, but no less than once every three years. For information regarding the update status of previously released profiles, contact ATSDR at:

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FOREWORD

This toxicological profile is prepared in accordance with guidelines* developed by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The original guidelines were published in the *Federal Register* on April 17, 1987. Each profile will be revised and republished as necessary.

The ATSDR toxicological profile succinctly characterizes the toxicologic and adverse health effects information for the hazardous substance described therein. Each peer-reviewed profile identifies and reviews the key literature that describes a hazardous substance's toxicologic properties. Other pertinent literature is also presented, but is described in less detail than the key studies. The profile is not intended to be an exhaustive document; however, more comprehensive sources of specialty information are referenced.

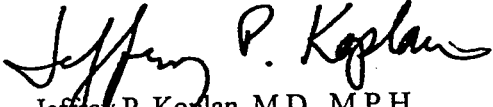
The focus of the profiles is on health and toxicologic information; therefore, each toxicological profile begins with a public health statement that describes, in nontechnical language, a substance's relevant toxicological properties. Following the public health statement is information concerning levels of significant human exposure and, where known, significant health effects. The adequacy of information to determine a substance's health effects is described in a health effects summary. Data needs that are of significance to protection of public health are identified by ATSDR and EPA.

Each profile includes the following:

- (A) The examination, summary, and interpretation of available toxicologic information and epidemiologic evaluations on a hazardous substance to ascertain the levels of significant human exposure for the substance and the associated acute, subacute, and chronic health effects;
- (B) A determination of whether adequate information on the health effects of each substance is available or in the process of development to determine levels of exposure that present a significant risk to human health of acute, subacute, and chronic health effects; and
- (C) Where appropriate, identification of toxicologic testing needed to identify the types or levels of exposure that may present significant risk of adverse health effects in humans.

The principal audiences for the toxicological profiles are health professionals at the Federal, State, and local levels; interested private sector organizations and groups; and members of the public.

This profile reflects ATSDR's assessment of all relevant toxicologic testing and information that has been peer-reviewed. Staff of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other Federal scientists have also reviewed the profile. In addition, this profile has been peer-reviewed by a nongovernmental panel and was made available for public review. Final responsibility for the contents and views expressed in this toxicological profile resides with ATSDR.


 Jeffrey P. Koplan, M.D., M.P.H.
 Administrator
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*Legislative Background

The toxicological profiles are developed in response to the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) of 1986 (Public law 99-499) which amended the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA or Superfund). This public law directed ATSDR to prepared toxicological profiles for hazardous substances most commonly found at facilities on the CERCLA National Priorities List and that pose the most significant potential threat to human health, as determined by ATSDR and the EPA. The availability of the revised priority list of 275 hazardous substances was announced in the *Federal Register* on November 17, 1997 (62 FR 61332). For prior versions of the list of substances, see *Federal Register* notices dated April 29, 1996 (61 FR 18744); April 17, 1987 (52 FR 12866); October 20, 1988 (53 FR 41280); October 26, 1989 (54 FR 43619); October 17, 1990 (55 FR 42067); October 17, 1991 (56 FR 52166); October 28, 1992 (57 FR 48801); and February 28, 1994 (59 FR 9486). Section 104(i)(3) of CERCLA, as amended, directs the Administrator of ATSDR to prepare a toxicological profile for each substance on the list.

QUICK REFERENCE FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

The Toxicological Profile for asbestos reflects a comprehensive and extensive evaluation, summary, and interpretation of available toxicologic and epidemiologic information on asbestos. Health care providers treating patients potentially exposed to asbestos will find the following information helpful for fast answers to often-asked questions.

Primary Chapters/Sections of Interest

Chapter 1: Public Health Statement: The Public Health Statement can be a useful tool for educating patients about possible exposure to a hazardous substance. It explains a substance's relevant toxicologic properties in a nontechnical, question-and-answer format, and it includes a review of the general health effects observed following exposure.

Chapter 2: Relevance to Public Health: The Relevance to Public Health Section evaluates, interprets, and assesses the significance of toxicity data to human health.

Chapter 3: Health Effects: Specific health effects of asbestos are reported by *type of health effect* (death, systemic, immunologic, reproductive), by *route of exposure*, and by *length of exposure* (acute, intermediate, and chronic). In addition, both human and animal studies are reported in this section.

NOTE: Not all health effects reported in this section are necessarily observed in the clinical setting. Please refer to the Public Health Statement to identify general health effects observed following exposure.

Pediatrics: Four new sections have been added to this Toxicological Profile to address child health issues:

Section 1.6	How Can Asbestos Affect Children?
Section 1.7	How Can Families Reduce the Risk of Exposure to Asbestos?
Section 3.7	Children's Susceptibility
Section 6.6	Exposures of Children

Other Sections of Interest:

Section 3.8	Biomarkers of Exposure and Effect
Section 3.11	Methods for Reducing Toxic Effects
Appendix F	Consultation on Tremolite and Other Related Asbestos

Other information available at ATSDR Information Center

Phone: 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-404-498-0110 **Fax:** 1-404-498-0057
E-mail: atsdric@cdc.gov **Internet:** <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov>

National Public Health Activities regarding Tremolite Asbestos Exposure: Medical Testing, Libby, Montana, Summer 2000 - Over 6,000 Libby, Montana, residents screened for asbestos-related diseases associated with living or working near a vermiculite mine contaminated with a fibrous amphibole. *National Assessment of Vermiculite Sites, Mortality Review of Cancer and Noncancer Cases Associated with Asbestos Exposure, and other projects.*

Case Studies in Environmental Medicine: Taking an Exposure History—The importance of taking an exposure history and how to conduct one are described, and an example of a thorough exposure history is provided. Other case studies of interest include *Reproductive and Developmental*

Hazards; Skin Lesions and Environmental Exposures; Cholinesterase-Inhibiting Pesticide Toxicity; and numerous chemical-specific case studies.

Managing Hazardous Materials Incidents is a three-volume set of recommendations for on-scene (prehospital) and hospital medical management of patients exposed during a hazardous materials incident. Volumes I and II are planning guides to assist first responders and hospital emergency department personnel in planning for incidents that involve hazardous materials. Volume III—*Medical Management Guidelines for Acute Chemical Exposures*—is a guide for health care professionals treating patients exposed to hazardous materials.

Fact Sheets (ToxFAQs) provide answers to frequently asked questions about toxic substances.

Other Agencies and Organizations

US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) - Asbestos Ombudsman Office: 1-800-368-5888. Addresses regulations concerning asbestos in public schools and other facilities containing asbestos that are being renovated or demolished. *Washington Office:* 202-260-2090.

The National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) focuses on preventing or controlling disease, injury, and disability related to the interactions between people and their environment outside the workplace. *Contact:* NCEH, Mailstop F-29, 4770 Buford Highway, NE, Atlanta, GA 30341-3724 • Phone: 770-488-7000 • FAX: 770-488-7015.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) conducts research on occupational diseases and injuries, responds to requests for assistance by investigating problems of health and safety in the workplace, recommends standards to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), and trains professionals in occupational safety and health. *Contact:* NIOSH, 200 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20201 • Phone: 800-356-4674 or NIOSH Technical Information Branch, Robert A. Taft Laboratory, Mailstop C-19, 4676 Columbia Parkway, Cincinnati, OH 45226-1998 • Phone: 800-35-NIOSH.

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) is the principal federal agency for biomedical research on the effects of chemical, physical, and biologic environmental agents on human health and well-being. *Contact:* NIEHS, PO Box 12233, 104 T.W. Alexander Drive, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709 • Phone: 919-541-3212.

Referrals

The Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics (AOEC) has developed a network of clinics in the United States to provide expertise in occupational and environmental issues. *Contact:* AOEC, 1010 Vermont Avenue, NW, #513, Washington, DC 20005 • Phone: 202-347-4976 • FAX: 202-347-4950 • e-mail: AOEC@AOEC.ORG • Web Page: <http://www.aoec.org/>.

The American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) is an association of physicians and other health care providers specializing in the field of occupational and environmental medicine. *Contact:* ACOEM, 55 West Seegers Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005 • Phone: 847-818-1800 • FAX: 847-818-9266.

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THE PROFILE HAS UNDERGONE THE FOLLOWING ATSDR INTERNAL REVIEWS:

1. Health Effects Review. The Health Effects Review Committee examines the health effects chapter of each profile for consistency and accuracy in interpreting health effects and classifying end points.
2. Minimal Risk Level Review. The Minimal Risk Level Workgroup considers issues relevant to substance-specific minimal risk levels (MRLs), reviews the health effects database of each profile, and makes recommendations for derivation of MRLs.
3. Data Needs Review. The Research Implementation Branch reviews data needs sections to assure consistency across profiles and adherence to instructions in the Guidance.

PEER REVIEW

A peer review panel was assembled for asbestos. The panel consisted of the following members:

1. Bruce Case, M.D., Associate Professor of Pathology, McGill University Faculty of Medicine, Montreal, Canada;
2. Philip Landrigan, M.D., Ethel H. Wise Professor of Community and Preventive Medicine, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, Mamaroneck, NY;
3. Morton Lippman, Ph.D., Director, Human Exposure and Health Effects Program, Nelson Institute of Environmental Medicine, New York University Medical Center, Tuxedo, NY;
4. William Nicholson, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, Fair Lawn, NJ.

These experts collectively have knowledge of asbestos's physical and chemical properties, toxicokinetics, key health end points, mechanisms of action, human and animal exposure, and quantification of risk to humans. All reviewers were selected in conformity with the conditions for peer review specified in Section 104(I)(13) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, as amended.

Scientists from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) have reviewed the peer reviewers' comments and determined which comments will be included in the profile. A listing of the peer reviewers' comments not incorporated in the profile, with a brief explanation of the rationale for their exclusion, exists as part of the administrative record for this compound. A list of databases reviewed and a list of unpublished documents cited are also included in the administrative record.

The citation of the peer review panel should not be understood to imply its approval of the profile's final content. The responsibility for the content of this profile lies with the ATSDR.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	v
QUICK REFERENCE FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS	vii
CONTRIBUTORS	ix
PEER REVIEW	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xvii
LIST OF TABLES	xix
1. PUBLIC HEALTH STATEMENT	1
1.1 WHAT IS ASBESTOS?	1
1.2 WHAT HAPPENS TO ASBESTOS WHEN IT ENTERS THE ENVIRONMENT?	2
1.3 HOW MIGHT I BE EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS?	3
1.4 HOW CAN ASBESTOS ENTER AND LEAVE MY BODY?	4
1.5 HOW CAN ASBESTOS AFFECT MY HEALTH?	5
1.6 HOW CAN ASBESTOS AFFECT CHILDREN?	7
1.7 HOW CAN FAMILIES REDUCE THE RISK OF EXPOSURE TO ASBESTOS?	8
1.8 IS THERE A MEDICAL TEST TO DETERMINE WHETHER I HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS?	10
1.9 WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS HAS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MADE TO PROTECT HUMAN HEALTH?	11
1.10 WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?	12
2. RELEVANCE TO PUBLIC HEALTH	15
2.1 BACKGROUND AND ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES TO ASBESTOS IN THE UNITED STATES	15
2.2 SUMMARY OF HEALTH EFFECTS	17
2.3 MINIMAL RISK LEVELS	22
3. HEALTH EFFECTS	23
3.1 INTRODUCTION	23
3.2 DISCUSSION OF HEALTH EFFECTS BY ROUTE OF EXPOSURE	23
3.2.1 Inhalation Exposure	24
3.2.1.1 Death	39
3.2.1.2 Systemic Effects	39
3.2.1.3 Immunological and Lymphoreticular Effects	47
3.2.1.4 Neurological Effects	48
3.2.1.5 Reproductive Effects	48
3.2.1.6 Developmental Effects	48
3.2.1.7 Cancer	48
3.2.2 Oral Exposure	57
3.2.2.1 Death	57
3.2.2.2 Systemic Effects	63
3.2.2.3 Immunological and Lymphoreticular Effects	64
3.2.2.4 Neurological Effects	64
3.2.2.5 Reproductive Effects	64

3.2.2.6	Developmental Effects	65
3.2.2.7	Cancer	65
3.2.3	Dermal Exposure	71
3.2.3.1	Death	71
3.2.3.2	Systemic Effects	71
3.2.3.3	Immunological and Lymphoreticular Effects	71
3.2.3.4	Neurological Effects	71
3.2.3.5	Reproductive Effects	71
3.2.3.6	Developmental Effects	71
3.2.3.7	Cancer	71
3.3	GENOTOXICITY	71
3.4	TOXICOKINETICS	79
3.4.1	Absorption	80
3.4.1.1	Inhalation Exposure	80
3.4.1.2	Oral Exposure	81
3.4.1.3	Dermal Exposure	81
3.4.2	Distribution	81
3.4.2.1	Inhalation Exposure	81
3.4.2.2	Oral Exposure	83
3.4.2.3	Dermal Exposure	83
3.4.2.4	Other Routes of Exposure	83
3.4.3	Metabolism	84
3.4.3.1	Inhalation Exposure	84
3.4.3.2	Oral Exposure	85
3.4.3.3	Dermal Exposure	85
3.4.3.4	Other Routes of Exposure	85
3.4.4	Elimination and Excretion	86
3.4.4.1	Inhalation Exposure	86
3.4.4.2	Oral Exposure	87
3.4.4.3	Dermal Exposure	87
3.4.4.4	Other Routes of Exposure	87
3.4.5	Physiologically Based Pharmacokinetic (PBPK)/Pharmacodynamic (PD) Models	87
3.4.5.1	Summary of PBPK Models	90
3.4.5.2	Asbestos PBPK Model Comparison	90
3.4.5.3	Discussion of Model	91
3.5	MECHANISMS OF ACTION	92
3.5.1	Pharmacokinetic Mechanisms	93
3.5.2	Mechanisms of Toxicity	96
3.5.3	Animal-to-Human Extrapolations	100
3.6	ENDOCRINE DISRUPTION	101
3.7	CHILDREN'S SUSCEPTIBILITY	101
3.8	BIOMARKERS OF EXPOSURE AND EFFECT	105
3.8.1	Biomarkers Used to Identify or Quantify Exposure to Asbestos	106
3.8.2	Biomarkers Used to Characterize Effects Caused by Asbestos	110
3.9	INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER CHEMICALS	111
3.10	POPULATIONS THAT ARE UNUSUALLY SUSCEPTIBLE	113
3.11	METHODS FOR REDUCING TOXIC EFFECTS	115
3.11.1	Reducing Peak Absorption Following Exposure	115
3.11.2	Reducing Body Burden	115
3.11.3	Interfering with the Mechanism of Action for Toxic Effects	116
3.12	ADEQUACY OF THE DATABASE	119
3.12.1	Existing Information on Health Effects of Asbestos	119

3.12.2	Identification of Data Needs	121
3.12.3	Ongoing Studies	131
4.	CHEMICAL AND PHYSICAL INFORMATION	135
4.1	CHEMICAL IDENTITY	135
4.2	PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL PROPERTIES	139
5.	PRODUCTION, IMPORT/EXPORT, USE, AND DISPOSAL	143
5.1	PRODUCTION	143
5.2	IMPORT/EXPORT	144
5.3	USE	146
5.4	DISPOSAL	147
6.	POTENTIAL FOR HUMAN EXPOSURE	149
6.1	OVERVIEW	149
6.2	RELEASES TO THE ENVIRONMENT	154
6.2.1	Air	154
6.2.2	Water	155
6.2.3	Soil	155
6.3	ENVIRONMENTAL FATE	156
6.3.1	Transport and Partitioning	156
6.3.2	Transformation and Degradation	156
6.3.2.1	Air	156
6.3.2.2	Water	157
6.3.2.3	Sediment and Soil	157
6.4	LEVELS MONITORED OR ESTIMATED IN THE ENVIRONMENT	157
6.4.1	Air	158
6.4.2	Water	164
6.4.3	Sediment and Soil	165
6.4.4	Other Environmental Media	165
6.5	GENERAL POPULATION AND OCCUPATIONAL EXPOSURE	168
6.6	EXPOSURES OF CHILDREN	175
6.7	POPULATIONS WITH POTENTIALLY HIGH EXPOSURES	180
6.8	ADEQUACY OF THE DATABASE	181
6.8.1	Identification of Data Needs	181
6.8.2	Ongoing Studies	185
7.	ANALYTICAL METHODS	187
7.1	BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES	189
7.2	ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES	192
7.3	ADEQUACY OF THE DATABASE	192
7.3.1	Identification of Data Needs	195
7.3.2	Ongoing Studies	196
8.	REGULATIONS AND ADVISORIES	197
9.	REFERENCES	205
10.	GLOSSARY	319

APPENDICES

A.	ATSDR MINIMAL RISK LEVELS AND WORKSHEETS	A-1
B.	USER'S GUIDE	B-1
C.	ACRONYMS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND SYMBOLS	C-1
D.	RISK ASSESSMENT SUMMARY	D-1
E.	INDEX	E-1
F.	CHEMICAL-SPECIFIC HEALTH CONSULTATION: TREMOLITE-RELATED ASBESTOS	F-1

LIST OF FIGURES

3-1	Levels of Significant Exposure to Asbestos—Inhalation (Human Studies)	33
3-2	Levels of Significant Exposure to Asbestos—Inhalation (Animal Studies)	38
3-3	Levels of Significant Exposure to Asbestos—Oral	62
3-4	Summary of Calculated Gastrointestinal Cancer Risks from Ingestion of Asbestos	70
3-5	Conceptual Representation of a Physiologically Based Pharmacokinetic (PBPK) Model for a Hypothetical Chemical Substance	89
3-6	Existing Information on Health Effects of Asbestos	120
4-1	Basic Polysilicate Structures of Asbestos	137
6-1	Frequency of NPL Sites with Asbestos Contamination	150

LIST OF TABLES

3-1	Levels of Significant Exposure to Asbestos—Inhalation (Human Studies)	26
3-2	Levels of Significant Exposure to Asbestos—Inhalation (Animal Studies)	35
3-3	Levels of Significant Exposure to Asbestos—Oral	58
3-4	Summary of NTP Lifetime Asbestos Feeding Studies	67
3-5	Genotoxicity of Asbestos <i>In Vivo</i>	72
3-6	Genotoxicity of Asbestos <i>In Vitro</i>	74
3-7	Ongoing Studies on the Health Effects of Asbestos	132
4-1	Chemical Identity of Asbestos	136
4-2	Physical and Chemical Properties of Asbestos	140
5-1	Facilities that Produce, Process, or Use Asbestos	145
6-1	Releases to the Environment from Facilities that Produce, Process, or Use Asbestos	152
6-2	Asbestos Levels in Ambient Air Around Taiwanese Factories	160
6-3	Exposure to Airborne Asbestos in U.S. Buildings	162
6-4	Summary of Typical General Population and Occupational Exposures	169
6-5	Exposure to Airborne Asbestos in Nonproduction Departments of the Pulp and Paper Industry	172
6-6	Exposure to Airborne Asbestos During Asbestos Abatement	173
6-7	Exposure to Airborne Asbestos During Building Maintenance or Repair	176
7-1	Analytical Methods for Determining Asbestos in Biological Samples	191
7-2	Analytical Methods for Determining Asbestos in Environmental Samples	193
8-1	Regulations and Guidelines Applicable to Asbestos	198