

Free screening for former workers or household members

Screening is a critical first step in the early detection of any asbestos-related changes to the lungs. If you worked at the W.R. Grace Santa Ana Plant between 1972 and 1993, you may be eligible for a free screening by the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). Family members who lived with workers during the same time period may also be eligible for the free screening. The screening will include a chest x-ray and spirometry test.

Call toll-free 866-553-9207 for more information on the free screening.

Get involved

Get involved by:

- Calling toll-free 866-553-9207 if you are a former worker or household member to see if you qualify for a free medical screening,
- Calling Maria Teran-Maclver at her number below to report any information about disposal or distribution of waste rock from this site, and
- Sharing this fact sheet with former workers, their family members, and people who lived near the plant between 1972 and 1993. Please give them the phone numbers below to call for more information.

Stay informed

For questions about the 2003 exposure evaluation, or to report any information about disposal or distribution of waste rock from this site, contact:

Maria Teran-Macler, Community Involvement Specialist
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
404-498-1754 or MTeran-Maciver@cdc.gov

For online information about the site investigation, and asbestos and health, go to:

www.atsdr.cdc.gov/asbestos/sites/national_map/fact_sheets/santaanaca.html. This Web site gives information on ATSDR's 2003 health evaluation of the W. R. Grace Santa Ana site.

www.atsdr.cdc.gov/naer. This Web site gives asbestos-related information and explains ATSDR's review of 28 sites around the country that received Libby vermiculite.

www.atsdr.cdc.gov/asbestos. This Web site gives you an overview of the health effects of asbestos exposure.

For a copy of the 2003 health consultation on the W.R. Grace Santa Ana site, go to: http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/asbestos/sites/health_consultations/santaanaca.html

Copies can also be viewed at:

City of Orange Main Library (714) 288-2410
101 N. Center Street
Orange, CA 92866

Santa Ana Public Library (714) 647-5250
26 Civic Center Plaza
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Asbestos



Neighborhood Health Alert

Regarding the former W. R. Grace & Company Santa Ana Plant
2502 South Garnsey Santa Ana, California

Overview

Introduction

In 2003, the California Department of Health Services and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), a federal public health agency, completed an exposure evaluation on the former W.R. Grace plant in Santa Ana, California and released the findings to the public.

Major findings

The evaluation considered ways that people, particularly past workers, could have been exposed to asbestos-contaminated vermiculite and waste rock. Major findings were:

- Those who worked at the plant between 1972 and 1993 were most at risk for asbestos exposure.
- Since these workers may have brought asbestos fibers home on their clothes, shoes, and bodies, people who lived in their households could have been exposed to asbestos, too.

Who should read this

Read this alert if you or someone you know:

- Worked at the plant between 1972 and 1993.
- Lived in a household in which someone worked at the plant between 1972 and 1993.
- Lived near the plant for any period between 1972 and 1993.
- Currently lives near the former W.R. Grace Santa Ana plant.

Why this site was evaluated

ATSDR is evaluating a number of sites throughout the United States where facilities received vermiculite from a mine in Libby, Montana. Vermiculite from Libby was found to contain asbestos. The former W.R. Grace plant in Santa Ana received Libby vermiculite between 1972 and 1993.

Purpose of alert

This alert related to the former W.R. Grace plant in Santa Ana explains:

- Who might be at risk for exposure to asbestos in the past and present,
- How people were or are exposed to asbestos,
- What to do if you think you've been exposed to asbestos,
- How to get a free medical screening if you worked at the plant between 1972 and 1993 or lived in the household of a worker during that time, and
- Where you can get more information.

Am I at risk for asbestos exposure?

Important!

Being exposed to asbestos does not mean that you will develop health problems! Many things need to be considered when evaluating whether you are at risk for health problems from asbestos exposure. A doctor can help you find out if you have health problems from asbestos exposure.

Former workers are most at risk

Workers may have been exposed to asbestos anywhere in and around the plant. The plant processed vermiculite that contained asbestos. Vermiculite was processed by expanding it in furnaces. Asbestos fibers were released into the air in the plant throughout the workday when vermiculite was processed and handled. Here are some examples of work activities known to have released fibers into the air:

- Unloading vermiculite from rail cars,
- Moving vermiculite to furnaces,
- Processing vermiculite, or
- Handling waste rock (unexpanded vermiculite) after processing
- Taking waste rock home to use in driveways and gardens.

Family members of former workers

Workers who were exposed may have brought asbestos fibers home on their clothes, shoes, and bodies. Therefore, people who lived in their households could have been exposed to asbestos, too. Even handling or washing a worker's clothes could have exposed someone to asbestos.

Former residents

People who lived near the plant may have been exposed to asbestos in the following ways:

- **Playing on waste piles.** At some vermiculite plants, children living nearby played on vermiculite waste rock piles left outside the plant. They might have breathed in air containing asbestos fibers while they played there. We do not know if this occurred in the Santa Ana plant.
- **Moving or handling the waste rock.** People, workers included, may have taken waste rock from the plant to their homes. This waste rock was used in many ways—for example, in gardens, in children's play areas, and for fill or paving material. People who came into direct contact with this waste rock probably breathed in air that contained asbestos fibers.
- **Breathing air within a few blocks of the site.** Sometimes when the plant was operating, dust and asbestos fibers were released into the air. It is not known whether people living within a few blocks of the plant between 1972 and 1993 might have breathed in air that contained asbestos fibers.

Current residents

It does not appear that current residents living in the neighborhood are being exposed to asbestos from the site. The plant stopped processing asbestos-contaminated vermiculite in 1993.

It is not known if some people may have taken waste rock home from the plant and used it around their homes. Today, people could still be exposed to asbestos around their homes if any waste rock remains uncovered and open to the air. That's because every time this waste rock is stirred up, asbestos fibers may be released into the air.

How can asbestos exposure make you sick?

Asbestos exposure and health

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral. It can break down to fibers that are so small that you cannot see them. If asbestos fibers are in the air you breathe, you will get asbestos fibers in your lungs. This is the primary way that people are exposed to asbestos.

Asbestos fibers may remain in the lungs for a lifetime. Breathing in asbestos does not mean that you will develop health problems. But in some cases, the fibers might damage the lungs or the lining of the lungs, leading to illness and even death.

What should I do if I have been exposed?

Take action

- **Inform your doctor.** Even if you don't feel sick, tell your doctor that you might have been exposed to asbestos. Most people don't show any signs or symptoms of asbestos-related disease for 10 to 20 years or more after exposure. Only a doctor can tell if you have any health problems due to asbestos exposure. Your doctor may refer you to a specialist who treats diseases caused by asbestos.
- **Show this fact sheet to your doctor.** Please take this fact sheet to your doctor because the information in it might be helpful in evaluating your health risk.
- **Quit smoking.** If you are a smoker, quit smoking. Smoking combined with asbestos exposure greatly increases the risk of getting lung cancer.
- **Get regular influenza (flu) and pneumonia shots.** Regular inoculations help reduce the chance of lung infections.