

CSC

Hanford Occupational Health Services

Inside Out

Preventing Asbestos Health Effects

by L. B. Sandy Rock, MD—CSC Hanford Occupational Health Risk Communicator

Asbestos can be found in many natural and manufactured materials. Mined from natural deposits in many parts of the world, this mineral—a kind of silicate existing in six different crystalline forms—has been used for centuries for everything from wrappings for kings who were to be cremated to the many fire-retardant and insulating components in modern industry. But because of health effects that come from breathing in the fine fibers that make up this otherwise very useful mineral, the United States and other countries have banned its use in many products. It still exists, though, in many older structures and manufactured components, as well as in nature, thus presenting a potential hazard to those living or working with or around it. As with most toxic substances, “the dose makes the poison,” meaning that the more exposure there is to asbestos fibers, the more likely the development of lung health effects.

Lung diseases caused by asbestos inhalation include lung cancer, mesothelioma—a rare cancer of the lining of the lung, and chronic obstructive pulmonary (lung) disease (COPD)—similar to that caused by tobacco and other smoke, coal and rock dust, and other air pollutants. Smoking tobacco greatly increases the risk of lung cancer from asbestos. The best “treatment” for asbestos health effects—as for so many other illnesses—is prevention. Avoiding exposure to asbestos is key in preventing lung disease. Prohibition of use in many items sold in the U.S. has reduced the

risk of exposure considerably. Workplace exposure, however, can still be a concern, particularly during renovation or demolition of structures containing asbestos. For that reason, OSHA and other regulatory agencies have defined the amounts of asbestos fibers to which workers are permitted to be exposed, minimizing the risk of health effects.

Many of the buildings on the Hanford Site contain or contained materials made with asbestos in varying amounts. For that reason, strict controls are in place to protect workers from exposure. While there are no medical tests that can determine recent exposures, evaluation over time can indicate if there is development of effects on the lungs. It takes years for lung diseases to occur after repeated, unprotected exposures to elevated air levels of asbestos. Workers who might be exposed to asbestos must complete training and follow strictly delineated and monitored protocols; they are also placed into the Asbestos Current Worker Program with CSC Hanford OHS. This program provides a periodic evaluation—particularly of the pulmonary (lung) system—to assure that lung disease is not developing. In addition, any worker who thinks that (s)he might have been exposed to asbestos may be enrolled in the Asbestos Worker Previous Exposure program which offers the same evaluation. (Former asbestos workers are automatically entered into the “Previous Worker” program, as triggered by their EJTA modification.) For further information, see the [CSC website](#) or call or email [Dr. Sandy Rock](#) (509) 372-0407. Also, see:

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WATCH FOR UPCOMING EVENTS:

March

[Site-wide Exercise Challenge \(ends 1st\)](#)

[Site Health Fairs \(8th\)](#)

[Workfit Leader Training \(9th\)](#)

[Tobacco Cessation Class \(starts 12th\)](#)

April

[Nutrition Challenge \(2nd-26th\)](#)

[Workfit Leader Training \(6th\)](#)

[Site Health Fairs \(12th\)](#)

[Tobacco Cessation Class \(continues\)](#)

[Back Health Safety Workshop \(24th\) Site-wide](#)



Select a link or visit our website: www.hanford.gov/amh

The 2nd Annual Hanford Health & Productivity Symposium—Contractor successes from the field

by Kelly Harnish, MCHES, Health Education Specialist



leadership at DOE, who sought to improve the working environment in the Federal Building.

Ike Spivey, CHPRC: He has advocated for the health and safety of his work group by promoting the [Hanford WorkFit program](#) and hosting numerous [preventive health presentations](#). He shared examples of employees who have made significant healthy lifestyle changes as a result of what they've learned.

Jill Harvill, CSC HOHS: She is building a wellness committee here at CSC HOHS to further promote health for our own employees and she shared stories on how healthy choices have been made easier here. Jill believes that as the occupational medicine contractor, CSC HOHS has a unique opportunity to lead by example and provide guidance to other Hanford contractors.

Clint Wolfley, WRPS: He has coordinated a number of healthy living campaigns during his time at WCH. These campaigns turned health into a group initiative that was fun and rewarding for the crew. Clint works hand-in-hand with labor unions, and he sees the opportunity for creating allies in the development of policies and standards of health for employees.

Carla Hages, WRPS: She shared ideas for using human resources and safety committee linkages in designing worksite health initiatives. She also discussed the power of our workplace social groups in encouraging healthy choices.

The ideas and experiences of this group of professionals are such assets to the Hanford Site community. In unique ways, each of the panelists answered a need that exists for a culture of health. They have made the healthy choice easier for those around them. Their work fits within a health promotion model developed by [Dr. Dee Edington](#) of the University of Michigan, the [Zero Trends Model](#). In his book, [Zero Trends: Health as a Serious Economic Strategy](#) he proposes that health be woven into organizational strategy from the highest level of leadership and exist at every level. This model was presented at the Symposium. I invited the Hanford contractors to contact me to discuss ways to apply the ideas of this model within the unique vision and structure of a work group or organization. To set up meetings to discuss this idea, please call Kelly Harnish at 373-3729 or email kelly_e_harnish@rl.gov.

I am pleased to report that the 2nd Annual Health & Productivity Symposium was a great success! The goal of the Symposium was to open the dialogue about how to integrate health into an existing organizational strategy. We invited six professionals from across the Hanford Site to share their stories on how they have made an impact on the culture of health in their workplace.

Debbie Mensinger, MSA: She has brought healthy food options and nutrition information to the [HAMMER Cafeteria](#). She ensured that it became a contract requirement that the vendor of the cafeteria provide a minimum number of healthy meals that meet specific nutritional standards. What a great example of lasting change!

Marla Marvin, DOE: She has lead DOE staff at the federal building in the creation and implementation of DOE-Fit, a worksite physical activity program. This program was initiated by senior

ANNOUNCING THE 2012 SITE-WIDE NUTRITION CHALLENGE!

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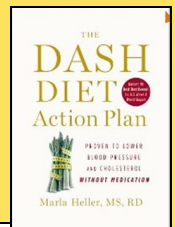
Building good nutrition habits can give you a lifetime of health benefits, including a healthy heart, a strong immune system, and greater energy. You can even look your best when you eat healthy! Eating right can give you clear and healthy skin and shiny hair, and can help you reach or maintain your best weight. For all those reasons, this month we challenge you to sharpen your nutrition skills, and get points for all your great habit-building activities.

Participants in the challenge will receive points for consuming their daily dietary fiber, fruits, vegetables, water, and limiting their daily consumption of saturated fats.

Participants can also earn one-time points for the following:

- 5 points for visiting the [USDA SuperTracker](#)
- 5 points for looking up the calorie information of five foods at www.calorieking.com
- 15 points for printing your caloric needs by using the Nutrition and Exercise Tracker located inside the Health Challenge Tracker on the right side of your Dashboard.

Eligible participants will be entered into a drawing to receive one of ten DASH Diet Action Plan books and a Portion Plate to give you continued support in your nutrition.



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