

Pleural Thickening

A guide to claims for asbestos related illness, pleural thickening

Expert advice

Being diagnosed with pleural thickening can be worrying news for the person diagnosed and their family. Having specialised in cases of pleural thickening for many years, Slater and Gordon understand just how much life can change at this time and it's our aim to make the claims process as easy as possible for everyone concerned.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a mineral that has been mined for hundreds of years and was used due to its fireproof qualities. There are three common types of asbestos which are Chrysotile (white), Amosite (brown) and Crocidolite (blue).

Where might exposure to asbestos take place?

Asbestos was once used everywhere. It was used at home, in schools and other public places. Most people who develop an asbestos related illness were exposed to asbestos many years ago whilst working in professions such as:

- engineers
- plumbers
- joiners
- ladders
- dockyard workers

and could be found in places such as:

- lagging on pipework and boilers
- artex and ceiling tiles
- fire proof insulation
- linoleum floor tiles
- panels, boards and partitions

What is pleural thickening?

Pleural thickening is a scarring and thickening along the linings of the lungs. It's caused by inhaling asbestos fibres through the nose and the mouth.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of pleural thickening do not usually develop until many years after exposure to asbestos dust takes place.

However, if symptoms do develop, they may include progressive breathlessness, reduced chest wall movement, chest pain and persistent coughing.



How is pleural thickening diagnosed?

If an x-ray shows some abnormality, the chest consultant may arrange for you to have a CT Scan which takes pictures of the inside of the body and provides much more information.

Asbestos isn't the only explanation for the development of pleural thickening. It can also be caused by infections, certain medications, blood clots, radiotherapy and the early development of certain types of tumour.

Therefore, the consultant is likely to take a detailed history to determine whether or not your development of pleural thickening is asbestos related.

Is there treatment available for pleural thickening?

There's a risk that people suffering from pleural thickening may go on to develop another asbestos related condition, such as cancer, but this is due to your exposure to asbestos dust rather than because you suffer from pleural thickening.

Regular monitoring through x-rays and lung function tests will show progression, and if the disease does progress, treatment such as steroids or oxygen may be offered.

Advice on making a claim for compensation

For those who don't have experience of the legal process, contacting a lawyer and making a claim for compensation can be a daunting prospect. However, we're with our clients every step of the way, ensuring they understand the claims process, and relieving the burden of having to deal with a variety of practical issues, at what can be a difficult time.



What should you do if you think you have a claim?

Contact us. Our team of specialists have a vast amount of experience in dealing with asbestos related illnesses such as pleural thickening, and have been involved in some of the most important and ground-breaking cases.

Once we've taken details, we'll confirm whether or not you have a claim. If you're entitled to compensation, we can start work on your case straight-away and begin gathering evidence.

Time limits apply when making a claim for compensation, so don't delay in contacting us.

What is the cost of making a claim?

We understand that the cost of legal advice can be a worry, but there are options available to fund injury claims.

You may have legal expenses insurance under an existing insurance policy which entitles you to free representation. If legal expenses insurance is not in place, we can conduct your case under a Conditional Fee Agreement, also known as a 'No Win, No Fee' Agreement. This means if the case fails, no payment is due.

Once we know the circumstances of your claim, we'll be able to discuss your funding options in more detail.

What is the amount of compensation likely to be?

Compensation is based on your personal circumstances and it's aim is to put you in the same financial position that you were in before the onset of your condition. Compensation is awarded for pain and suffering to reflect the nature and severity of the case, together with any financial losses.

Where the employer admits fault, it may be possible to get an interim payment (a payment which is made before the case reaches settlement).

Frequently asked questions

How long will the case take?

Every case is different so it's difficult to estimate how long a case is likely to take without first reviewing the circumstances.

Proving enough exposure has taken place can often be difficult. However, we're highly specialised in this area and are committed to ensuring that cases of pleural thickening are dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Will I have to go to court?

It's very rare that a case of pleural thickening will continue to trial. A large majority of cases settle before a trial takes place. However, if the case doesn't settle before trial, attendance at court may be necessary.

Can I claim compensation if my employer has gone out of business?

Don't worry if the company has gone out of business. It's often still possible to trace their insurers. Our industrial illness team has unrivalled expertise in tracing the insurers of companies which have been out of business for many years.

We often take over cases and succeed in tracing the company's insurers, where other firms have failed.

What if I live outside the UK?

If you live outside the UK but were exposed to asbestos dust in the UK, you may still be entitled to make a claim. You may also be entitled to payments from the UK Government. We'll advise you further once we've reviewed the circumstances of your case.

What if I need assistance in other areas?

We have expert lawyers in many areas of law such as family, employment, welfare benefits, trusts, and disability rights and work closely with those departments to ensure that you get the best possible outcome.