

Erionite Exposure and Mesothelioma Cancer

The naturally occurring mineral erionite is usually found in volcanic ash that has been altered by weathering and ground water. Typically, the substance is located throughout the hollows of rock formations where asbestos can also be found. It usually varies in color from white to clear, and is said to feel and look like wool.



Although the properties of erionite have been compared to those of asbestos, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has yet to regulate the toxic mineral. In fact, the inhalation of erionite poses some of the same health effects that are associated with asbestos, including lung cancer and [mesothelioma](#).

Mesothelioma is a type of cancer that develops in the mesothelial cells found in the body. [Pleural mesothelioma](#), the most common type of mesothelioma cancer, develops in the mesothelial lining of the lungs. After attaching to the lungs, many of these erionite and asbestos fibers can remain in place because the body has a difficult time expelling them.

Other areas that are known to be afflicted by the disease, but are less likely to, include the mesothelial linings of the abdomen and heart. Due to an extended latency period associated with mesothelioma, a diagnosis usually occurs during the latest stages of development, which often leads to [mesothelioma treatments](#) being more palliative than curative.

According to the EPA, erionite fibers exhibit the same size and structure of asbestos particles. Because of this, any disturbance to the mineral can present serious hazards and lead to toxic fibers being released into the air. In Cappadocia, Turkey, an unprecedented mesothelioma epidemic caused 50% of all deaths in three small villages.

The mesothelioma epidemic was attributed to erionite stones from volcanic rocks used in homes. At first, the erionite-containing stones were strictly noted as the cause of death, however, it has recently been discovered that erionite exposure typically causes mesothelioma in those with a genetic predisposition. These findings have shown that genetically predisposed individuals can actually develop [malignant mesothelioma](#) at rates much higher than those without a genetic predisposition.

Approximately 2,000 to 3,000 cases of mesothelioma are currently diagnosed each year, and those numbers are expected to rise in the very near future. If you or a loved one has been exposed to erionite or asbestos, it is important to seek the advice of a medical doctor. For more information on mesothelioma, please visit [Asbestos.com](#).

References

http://www.inctr.org/publications/2003_v04_n01_s03.shtml
http://www.health.state.nd.us/EHS/Erionite/General/Erionite_Fact_Sheet.pdf