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# Bergman – Top 10 Ways to Protect Your Family From Asbestos

Asbestos is all around us every day. You are likely in at least one structure (if not more) each day where asbestos is present. Most homes and buildings built prior to 1999 have some asbestos-containing elements. And common consumer products you have in your home may also contain asbestos. Even a relatively brief exposure to asbestos can cause devastating illness. Here are the top 10 ways you can protect your family from asbestos on the job, in your home or at school.



1

*Be aware of the risk associated with your career*

– Many jobs have been phased out (like asbestos mining) that carried high risk, but there are still many jobs with exposure risk. If you work in an older building, asbestos is likely present. Renovation, flood or fire that disturbs asbestos puts you at risk. Those that work with damaged buildings including firefighters and construction workers are at high risk. If your building is older and undergoing construction, avoid work areas and/or work from home until work is complete.

## Protect Yourself from Asbestos on the Job

2

*Be aware that smoking aggravates asbestos exposure*

– If you work in a higher asbestos risk industry like construction, law enforcement or firefighting, smoking is one of the worst things you can do for your health. Smoking by itself is unhealthy, but smoking when there's a possibility of asbestos exposure increases your lung cancer risk by 50-90% according to recent research. If you expose a loved one to second-hand smoke and they are exposed to asbestos, their health risks are greatly increased.

3

*Be aware of your rights regarding asbestos exposure at work*

– According to OSHA, roughly 1.3 million workers are exposed to asbestos at work every day. Those that work in older buildings or in higher risk industries are part of this group of at-risk workers. You have the right to be protected at work from asbestos exposure. You can read more about your rights in OSHA publication 3507. If you do become ill because of asbestos, you may be eligible for damages through worker's compensation and/or litigation against the parties responsible for your exposure.



## Protect Your Children from

## asbestos at School

4

*Be aware of asbestos presence in your child's school* – Unless your child's school was built within the last 15 years, there's a good chance asbestos components were used in its construction. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has created strict guidelines for school systems to report the presence of asbestos in schools. To find out if your child's school has asbestos, web search the name of your county school system along with the word asbestos and AHERA (the acronym for the guideline).

5

*Be aware of construction at your child's school* – Many schools contain asbestos in the construction materials. Left undisturbed, it doesn't pose a significant risk. But if your child's school was built prior to the 90s and major renovations are taking place, this could disturb the asbestos and put your child at risk. If this construction takes place during the school year and the building likely contains asbestos, keeping them out of school during the construction period is the best way to protect them.

6

*Be aware of the unique risks asbestos poses to your child* – Asbestos exposure can affect children more drastically than it does adults. Because children breathe more rapidly than adults, they take in more air. If there is asbestos in that air, they will take in more of it than an adult will. Those exposed to asbestos as children are more likely to develop a related disease than those exposed as adults. Because kids put their hands and fingers in their mouths, they are more likely to ingest asbestos they touch.





## Protect Your Family from Asbestos in Your Home



7

***Be aware of asbestos components in your home's construction*** – If your home is older, there are likely many parts of your home that contain asbestos from floor to ceiling. Shingles and other roofing materials, siding, pipe and attic insulation, fireproofing materials, drywall, spackling, old vinyl wallpaper, floor and ceiling tiles and more all may contain asbestos. Investing in an asbestos inspection can let you know what products in your home could put your family at risk if they are damaged.

8

***Be aware of the risks of disturbing the asbestos in your home*** – Asbestos left undisturbed generally is not harmful, but when it becomes friable (i.e. powdery), it can be breathed in and cause dire health consequences. If any of the components in your home that may contain asbestos become damaged, it can harm your family. If you plan on adding on to your home or are considering renovations, you should use a construction company with asbestos expertise rather than attempting a DIY project to keep your family safe.

9

***Be aware of consumer products in your home that contain asbestos*** – If you have older

appliances in your home or collect them, you may be exposing your family to asbestos. Older crock pots, hair dryers and popcorn poppers may contain asbestos. Some brands of baby powder and crayons made overseas may contain asbestos. Stove mats, ironing board covers, fertilizer, potting soil and cigarette filters all may contain asbestos. Replace old appliances and check products carefully before you purchase them.

10

***Be aware of symptoms of asbestos exposure and seek treatment*** – Some of the symptoms of illnesses

caused by asbestos include persistent cough that won't go away that involves mucus, unexplained weight loss, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, ongoing chest pain, loss of appetite, tightness in the chest and/or coughing up blood. If you or a family member has symptoms like this and you suspect you may have been exposed to asbestos, seek medical attention immediately.

