



The Training Brief

Quick Reference mini-training Topics

Mesothelioma

The purpose of this training topic is to understand the signs and symptoms of Mesothelioma.

Discussion

Fact: Firefighters have a 2.0 times greater risk of Mesothelioma than the general public.

The NIOSH Study released in 2013 found firefighters were at an increased risk for excess malignant mesothelioma.

Key Points: It cannot be understated about the importance of annual medical exams.

You can download a medical form from our website that highlights the needed medical tests to be done if you're a firefighter.

https://firefightercancersupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Primary-care-cancer-evaluations-for-firefighters_HamrockMD_2016_FCSN.pdf

Action: Download and print the form. Bring it to your primary care physician. Discuss the risks firefighters have in regards to occupational cancer.

Make the necessary changes

A cancer tumor of the mesothelium is called a **malignant mesothelioma**. This is often shortened to just mesothelioma. Mesotheliomas can start in 4 main parts of the body.

- **Pleural mesotheliomas** start in the chest. More than 3 out of 4 mesotheliomas are pleural mesotheliomas.
- **Peritoneal mesotheliomas** start in the abdomen. They make up most of the remaining cases.
- **Pericardial mesotheliomas** start in the covering around the heart and are very rare.
- **Mesotheliomas of the tunica vaginalis** are very rare tumors that start in the covering layer of the testicles.

The main risk factor for **pleural mesothelioma** is exposure to asbestos. In fact, most cases of pleural mesothelioma have been linked to high levels of asbestos exposure, usually in the workplace.

Pleural mesothelioma (mesothelioma of the chest) symptoms

- Pain in the side of the chest or lower back
- Shortness of breath
- Cough
- Trouble swallowing (feeling like food gets stuck)
- Hoarseness
- Swelling of the face and arms

Peritoneal mesothelioma symptoms:

- Abdominal (belly) pain
- Swelling or fluid in the abdomen
- Nausea and vomiting
- Constipation

Pericardial mesothelioma symptoms:

- Chest pain
- Irregular heart rhythm
- Heart murmur
- Shortness of breath

General mesothelioma symptoms:

- Fever
- Excessive sweating
- Fatigue
- Weight loss (without trying)
- Blood clots
- Loss of appetite

Source: American Cancer Society <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/malignant-mesothelioma.html>