There are four main types of asbestos related diseases which can be divided into two broad categories. Scarring diseases which are asbestosis and asbestos related pleural thickening. Cancers, which are lung cancer and mesothelioma. They are all caused by breathing in asbestos fibres over a period of time. There are no cures or specific treatments for these diseases.

**Asbestosis** occurs when fibres are breathed in and go into the lungs causing the air sacs to thicken, preventing you from breathing in oxygen. This results in coughing and obstruction of breathing/difficulty in breathing/breathlessness.

**Asbestos related Pleural Thickening:** This is caused when scarring occurs on the outer lining of the lungs. It is called pleural plaque or pleural thickening.

**Lung cancer and Mesothelioma:** These are cancers of the chest which cause cough, pain, breathlessness, weakness and sometimes bloody cough. They usually have no cure, but palliative nursing helps very much.

Pneumoconiosis is a dust disease of the lung. It is caused when breathing in large amounts of dust, usually in mines. Gold miners get silicosis caused by inhalation of crystalline silica dust. Coal miners get coal pneumoconiosis. Asbestos miners get asbestosis.

As there is no cure for asbestosis related diseases or cancers, workers are advised to stay away from dusty or smoky areas and not to smoke. The disease is not contagious but if you were exposed to the asbestos fibre, there is a lifelong risk. There is no minimum period for exposure.
Any exposure can put a person at risk. In some cases it can take 10 to 50 years for the disease to show.

**Diagnosis** can be by medical examination, a lung function test, a chest x-ray or through a biopsy or even a CT scan.

Asbestos disease does not affect everybody. Some workers get sick others do not. The majority of the workers tested by the ART do NOT have any asbestos related diseases.

**TB** is different from asbestos disease. TB is an infectious disease which spreads through coughing from person to person. You cannot develop TB from being exposed to asbestos fibres.

Only 1 person out of every 3 tested by the Trust have developed an asbestos disease, and only 2% of these have an asbestos related cancer.

The Trust allows for THREE types of claims. If you were exposed to asbestos at work, the Trust calls this an **Occupational Claim**. If you were exposed to asbestos elsewhere the Trust calls it an **Environment Claim**. This is done as the Trust Deed allows people to be compensated if they were exposed to an asbestos operation even if they were not working there. If a person, who has died of an asbestos related disease, has a wife or family, they can claim from the Trust also. This is called a **Dependents Claim**.

If you worked on asbestos mine and if you feel sick, go to your doctor or a clinic or a hospital, for a diagnosis.

Please note that the Trust does not cover all asbestos mines and or mills/operations. Claims criteria apply.

If you need more information from the Trust, contact us on:
Johannesburg 011 482 1000
Cape Town 021 671 3084
Or visit our website: [www.asbestostrust.co.za](http://www.asbestostrust.co.za)