

Asbestos ($\text{Mg}_3\text{Si}_2\text{O}_5(\text{OH})_4$)

What is Asbestos?

Asbestos occurs naturally in the environment. Asbestos minerals have separable long fibers that are strong and flexible enough to be spun and woven and are heat resistant. Because of these characteristics, asbestos has been used for a wide range of manufactured goods, mostly in building materials, friction products, heat-resistant fabrics, packaging, gaskets, and coatings. Some vermiculite or talc products may contain asbestos.

Does Asbestos have any additional names?

Asbestos is the name given to a group of six different fibrous minerals (amosite, chrysotile, crocidolite, and the fibrous varieties of tremolite, actinolite, and anthophyllite).

What are the known health effects?

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the EPA have determined that asbestos is a human carcinogen.

Some people who drink water containing asbestos in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of developing benign intestinal polyps.

How does exposure occur?

We are all exposed to low levels of asbestos in the air we breathe with the highest concentrations generally found in cities and industrial areas.

Drinking water may contain asbestos from natural sources or from asbestos-containing cement pipes.

Materials containing asbestos that are not disturbed or deteriorated do not, in general, pose a health risk and can be left alone.

Is this contaminant regulated?

Yes, and water supplied to Mount Laurel MUA customers is in compliance with USEPA and NJDEP requirements. The maximum concentration of Asbestos permitted in drinking water is 7 MFL (million fibers per liter), water supplied by the MLTMUA system has not reported any detections of Asbestos.

How can I reduce exposure?

Asbestos in drinking water can be removed at point of use by reverse osmosis filtration.

Additional information regarding Asbestos, including the information referenced, can be found at:

<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxprofiles/tp61.pdf>

<https://www.epa.gov/asbestos>