

# A guide to asbestos in your home

**This leaflet explains what you need to know about asbestos. It will address concerns and questions about asbestos in the home and will explain where it can be found, why it might be a problem and how to deal with it.**

## What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous mineral found in many parts of the world. Commonly occurring forms are white (Chrysotile), brown (Amosite) and blue (Crocidolite). There are however a number of other forms which can be found.

Asbestos fibres are resistant to chemicals and heat and are extremely strong. As a consequence, asbestos was included in many building materials and products and was used up to 1999.

## Why might asbestos be a problem?

When asbestos materials age or become damaged they can release tiny fibres into the air which cannot be seen by the eye. These fibres can be breathed deep into the lungs where they can remain for a long time and be very damaging. When high levels are breathed in there is a greater risk of lung disease and other illnesses such as lung cancer and mesothelioma.

## Is everyone exposed to asbestos?

There are extremely low levels of fibres all around us. These are everywhere as asbestos has been extensively and widely used for so long and is a naturally occurring substance. Everybody breathes these low levels in all the time. However as these levels are so low, they are unlikely to harm your health.

The level of fibres may be higher in buildings containing asbestos materials, especially where the materials are damaged. Again, the levels of fibres found in buildings are unlikely to be harmful. If you have damaged asbestos materials in your home you need to seek advice from us so we can take care of it.

## Where is asbestos found in buildings?

Asbestos has been widely used in building materials and products since the 1930s, but was most popular in the 1960s and 1970s in particular. Therefore houses, flats and bungalows built or refurbished around this period are more likely to contain asbestos.



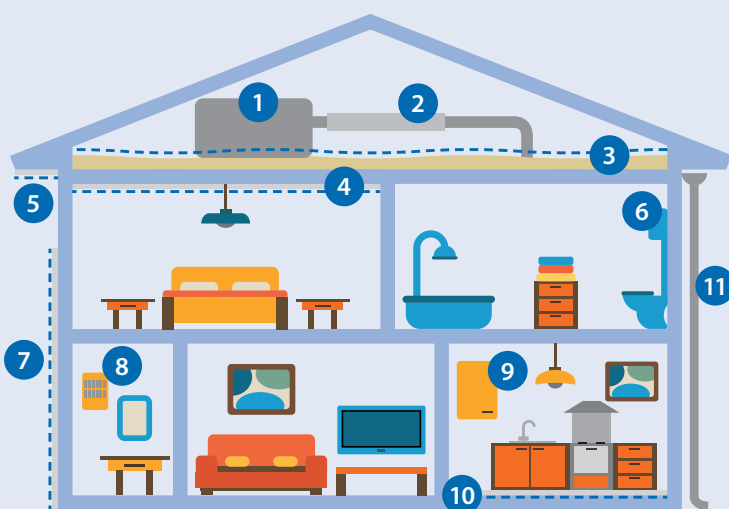
**Asbestos is not dangerous if it is in good condition and left alone.**

## Where might asbestos be in my home?

Asbestos can be found in almost anything, anywhere such as:

- ◆ Sheet roofing and cladding
- ◆ Bath panels
- ◆ Textured coatings to walls and ceilings
- ◆ Vinyl floor tiles
- ◆ Domestic Items such as oven gloves and ironing boards
- ◆ Sink pads
- ◆ Water tanks
- ◆ Flue pipes
- ◆ Bitumen roofing felt
- ◆ Fuse boards

It is not always easy to tell whether a product or material may contain asbestos as many modern materials and products which are asbestos free can look similar.



- 1 Water tank
- 2 Pipe lagging
- 3 House insulation
- 4 Textured coatings (e.g. artex)
- 5 Soffit board (roof overhang)
- 6 Toilet cistern
- 7 Wall panelling
- 8 Fuse box
- 9 Heater cupboards
- 10 Vinyl floor tiles
- 11 Rainwater pipes and gutters

## What should I do if I suspect asbestos is present in my home?

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) guidance is that if an asbestos containing material or product is in good condition it should be left in place and not touched if it cannot be damaged easily. We follow this HSE guidance. Our Asbestos Register is constantly updated as part of our ongoing inspection processes.

High, short term exposure to asbestos fibres might occur when undertaking DIY work. Therefore, if you plan to carry out any DIY or improvements to your home you must seek written consent from us before doing so.

Further advice can also be sought from the HSE:  
[www.hse.co.uk/asbestos](http://www.hse.co.uk/asbestos)



v2 Nov21