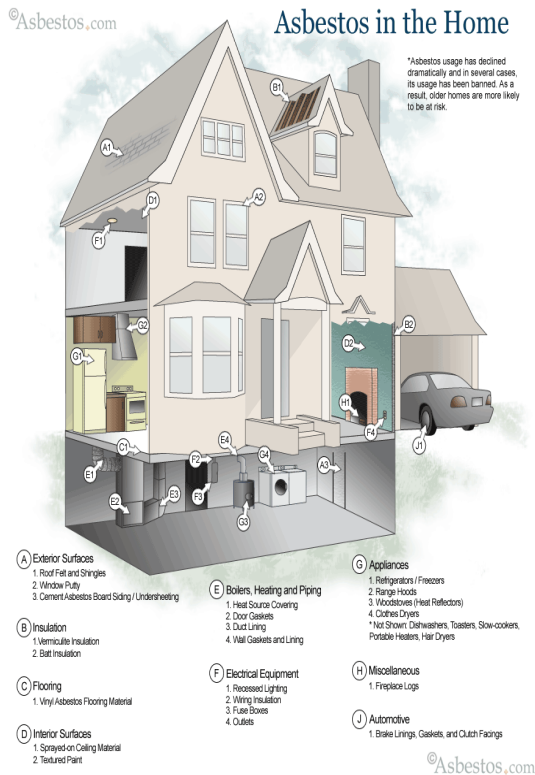


## Asbestos in the Home: Healthy Tips & Home Inspections



Asbestos is a fibrous mineral that's flame resistant and durable qualities transformed the material as the insulation standard throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It contains soft fibers that when disturbed and released in the air can cause several serious health problems if exposed. This information was repressed and hidden from the public for more than sixty years.

Commonly found as a form of insulation for piping, roofing and flooring, many older homes built before 1980 may still contain asbestos. Even homes built in the 1990's still have a chance of harboring asbestos due to vermiculite insulation that came from a mine that contained a large amount of asbestos.

As a homeowner, you can avoid exposure by taking easy precautions. If any asbestos is suspected, a professional [home inspection](#) is beneficial to home owners looking to make sure their property is in the clear!

### Asbestos and Home Inspections

There are a few main themes when dealing with asbestos that should be followed. If asbestos is in good shape, it does not pose itself as a health hazard. If the asbestos appears to be deteriorated or in bad condition then it could become a

problem because its fibers could move into the air. In the majority of situations, *asbestos can appear in roof shingles, attic insulation, pipe coverings, joint compounds, electrical wires, furnace cement, fire brick and gaskets.*

Homes or buildings may need renovations or structural inspections and a home inspector will identify any problematic materials and provide a professional consultation for you. In order to protect your investment, professional consultants can provide an evaluation of the home. Consultants will identify material defects structures and components of the home, in adherence to or exceeding national, state, and industry regulations and standards.

The inhalation of airborne asbestos fibers can lead to the development of a form of asbestos lung cancer known as [mesothelioma](#). When its fibers become airborne, it can be inhaled and ingested into ones lungs. Its latency period lasts 20 to 50 years and most people will not know they have developed an asbestos-related illness until it's too late. With limited treatments available, this form of asbestos lung cancer usually receives poor prognosis from physicians. This makes a [mesothelioma life span](#) not as positive as one would hope.

### Asbestos Removal and Green Alternatives

It is recommended for homeowners to leave any suspected asbestos alone, as this can takes its fibers airborne. Removal of asbestos in public facilities, workplaces and homes must be performed by licensed abatement contractors who are trained in handling toxic substances.

The [Oregon Department of Environmental Quality](#) (DEQ) is a “regulatory agency dedicated to restoring, maintaining and enhancing the quality of Oregon’s air, water and land. They have also initiated an asbestos program that can assist citizens and homeowners with pertinent information in regards to the safe handling/removal of asbestos. (If necessary) These types of public programs help protect and promote the physical and environmental health of citizens from asbestos exposure.

Building green with proper insulation will save you on bills. Rather than expensive and mal-treated wood, interior walls can be made from steel and concrete, avoiding many of the problems associated with asbestos and other insulation methods. The United States Green Building Council (USGBC) conducted a study which estimated a new savings of \$50-\$65 per square foot for positively constructed green buildings.

There are many green, eco-friendly materials that replace the need for asbestos and can reduce energy costs annually such as: cotton fiber, Icynene foam and cellulose. Cotton fiber is quickly becoming a favorite for home builders and renovators. Made from recycled batted material, it is also treated to be fireproof. These asbestos alternatives allow for a healthy, safe home, free of health damaging materials.