



Clydeside Action  
on Asbestos



# Pleural Plaques

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**Helpline 0800 089 1717**

[www.clydesideactiononasbestos.org.uk](http://www.clydesideactiononasbestos.org.uk)

## What are pleural plaques?

Pleural plaques are benign markers of contact with asbestos, usually developing 20 years or more following exposure. Pleural plaques do not develop into cancer or any other asbestos related condition. However, a diagnosis of pleural plaque does confirm that a person has been exposed to asbestos, and there is therefore a small risk of developing a separate asbestos-related condition in the future.

Pleural plaques affect a part of the lung called the pleura. The pleura is commonly referred to as the lining of the lung and is made up of two layers. Between the layers there is a very thin space which is normally filled with a small amount of fluid. The fluid allows the two layers of the pleura to glide past each other when the lungs breathe in and out.

Pleural plaques develop when a substance called collagen builds up on the surface of the pleura. A pleural plaque can become calcified and be seen on a Chest X Ray or CT scan. Pleural plaques are quite often discovered during investigations into other health problems.

## Is there any treatment?

No treatment is required for pleural plaques. In virtually all instances there are no symptoms and you can live with them without having any long term health problems. This is because the lungs themselves are unharmed and only the lining (or pleura) is damaged.

As pleural plaques are symptomless, it is advisable to seek medical assistance if you develop chest discomfort, worsening breathlessness or weight loss.

## What can I do if I am breathless?

The knowledge that pleural plaques have been diagnosed can cause feelings of anxiety. Anxiety and breathlessness are very closely linked. If we are anxious, our bodies become tenser. The tension within the muscles makes them work harder, using more oxygen, therefore we can feel breathless. When we experience breathlessness, a common reaction is to become more anxious which can lead to more breathlessness.

There are simple techniques which can help to break this cycle of breathlessness. Relaxation, breathing techniques, and coping strategies can all help. At Clydeside Action on Asbestos, we have produced a film about managing symptoms such as stress, anxiety and breathlessness. You can order a **free copy** of DVD by contacting us or film can be viewed on our website at **[www.clydesideactiononasbestos.org.uk](http://www.clydesideactiononasbestos.org.uk)**.

*“I was diagnosed with pleural plaque last year. I was concerned when my doctor told me I had this because of exposure to asbestos. I contacted Clydeside Action on Asbestos and was given a copy of their self-management film. The film answered a lot of questions I had and was a great source of advice. I would recommend anyone with an asbestos related condition to get a copy of the film.”*

## Am I entitled to compensation?

As pleural plaques are caused by exposure to asbestos, you are entitled to seek legal advice about pursuing compensation. It is advisable to do this even if you think that your employers are no longer trading or that your exposure was many years ago. Clydeside Action on Asbestos can provide advice and assistance with pursuing compensation.

If you have been diagnosed with pleural plaques you may also be entitled to additional social security benefits and payments. Clydeside Action on Asbestos offer a welfare rights service. This means that we can provide advice about any social security benefits and payments you may be entitled to based on your personal circumstances.

## Where can I get additional advice and support?

We understand how important it is to have support and information following your diagnosis and this is why we provide monthly support groups across Scotland. The group meetings are friendly and informal and give people the chance to meet others who have been diagnosed with an asbestos related condition. For information about the times and locations of the support group please contact us. Information and support is also available on our website.



The main objective of **Clydeside Action on Asbestos** is to provide advice, support and information to those affected by a diagnosis of an asbestos related condition.

The charity has a Welfare Rights Service, campaigns to influence legislation and policy and works in partnership with healthcare professionals within the NHS to produce publications, host conferences, run support groups and receive referrals.

Our Welfare Rights team provide information and assistance with obtaining entitlement to state benefits and compensation.

We have been assisting people with asbestos related disease and their families for over 25 years and have a well established reputation for providing expert advice and assistance to people whose lives are affected by a diagnosis of an asbestos related condition.



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