

## What is Mesothelioma

---

Mesothelioma is a rare and aggressive form of cancer caused by asbestos. It affects the cells that make up the mesothelium, the lining that covers and protects various internal organs of the body. Mesothelioma most commonly occurs in the lining of the lungs or the abdomen. Less common is pericardial and testicular mesothelioma. Mesothelioma is a terminal disease with a poor prognosis and is much more common in males and tradespeople. This disease has a long latency period after inhaling or ingesting asbestos, so it can be difficult to get a diagnosis and often presents in advanced stages. Unfortunately mesothelioma has limited treatment options .



Mesothelioma may not be curable,  
but it is one of the most  
preventable cancers,  
because the cause is known;

ASBESTOS

Mesothelioma Support &  
Asbestos Awareness Trust

---

Website: [msaatrust.org.nz](http://msaatrust.org.nz)  
Email: [msaatrustnz@gmail.com](mailto:msaatrustnz@gmail.com)  
Postal Address:  
PO Box 44451  
Point Chevalier, Auckland 1216

*Publication Date: August 2024*



Mesothelioma  
Support &  
Asbestos  
Awareness  
Trust

---

*Mesothelioma*

*Difficult to pronounce  
Difficult to diagnose  
Difficult to treat*



## About the Trust

---

Mesothelioma Support and Asbestos Awareness Trust (MSAA Trust) is a newly established New Zealand charity to support those with a mesothelioma, asbestos-related disease, or silicosis diagnosis and for those carers supporting them. Also collectively to raise the awareness of the exposure (pathways and prevention) for asbestos which may lead to the development of malignant mesothelioma and other asbestos-related diseases. MSAA Trust was registered as a Charitable Trust in 2022.

*Dr Terri-Ann Berry  
Chair, MSAA Trust*

## Diagnosing & Treating Mesothelioma

---

### *Diagnosing:*

Although often difficult to diagnose if any exposure to asbestos is suspected then Mesothelioma must be considered. Mesothelioma symptoms can be mistaken for other, more common cancers and illnesses, and misdiagnosis is common. It is essential to be aware of your history of asbestos exposure and discuss it with your doctor as soon as possible.

Tests to confirm diagnosis include: x-rays (may show pleural effusion); CT, MRI, or PET imaging; biopsy.

### *Treatment:*

There is no cure for mesothelioma so the aim of treatment is to ensure the best quality of life for as long as possible. Your oncologist and/or treating team will work closely with you and your family/whanau/support to discuss and formalise a treatment plan best suited to you. This is going to be your cancer journey so it is very important that your wishes are respected and you are fully informed of all possible treatment options.

Symptomatic management is a treatment option for mesothelioma which includes: pleural effusion drainage, permanent drain, pleurodesis, and pain management. Further treatment options include: Chemotherapy, immunotherapy, radiation, supportive care, palliative care, and surgery (rare).

## ACC & Support

---

### *ACC (Accident Compensation Corporation) Assistance:*

If you have been diagnosed with mesothelioma any of your doctors can lodge an ACC claim on your behalf.

### *Support:*

Receiving a mesothelioma diagnosis can be devastating and coping with the stress can be very overwhelming. Developing a support system and coping strategies for the patient, family/whanau and also friends is important for everyone involved in the patient's cancer journey.

MSAA Trust provides an online private support group via Facebook that all patients and carers are welcome to join. Please search for "Mesothelioma Support NZ - For Patients and Carers".

