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What are the Clinical Signs of Mesothelioma?

Management of mesothelioma depends largely on the staging of the tumor. Early diagnosis and surgical intervention may lengthen life expectancy. Depending on the age and physical condition of the patient, however, surgery may not be a viable option. In addition to surgical options, radiation treatment and chemotherapy may be helpful in the overall therapeutic program. Pain management and home care are typical alternatives in the later stages of the disease.

Symptoms of pleural mesothelioma (lining of the chest cavity) include:

- Cough
- Difficulty sleeping
- Fever
- Pain at the side of the chest or the lower back
- Pleural effusions (fluid in the chest cavity)
- Progressive loss of appetite and weight loss
- Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
- Tireness
- Trouble swallowing

Symptoms of peritoneal mesothelioma (lining of the abdominal cavity) include:

- Belly Pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Weight loss



If there is reason to suspect you might have mesothelioma, or some other ailment, the doctor will take your medical history and often do a complete physical exam. The exam can help tell if you have fluid in the chest, abdomen, or heart area. This fluid can be a sign of mesothelioma. Then one or more of the methods below can be utilized to determine out if you actually have cancer.

Imaging tests allow the doctor to see a picture of the area in question. These could include x-rays, CT scans (computed tomography), MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), or PET scans.

Fluid or tissue samples may be taken (from the chest, stomach, or heart area) with a needle and sent to the lab to see if cancer cells are present.

Other methods involve making a small cut (incision) in the chest or stomach area and then using a small tube with a video camera to allow the doctor to look directly at the area in question.

In another approach, the doctor can insert a lighted tube through the mouth and into the chest. This is called a bronchoscopy (bron-KOS-kuh-pee). If the tube is placed under the chest bone and then moved down into the chest, it is called a mediastinoscopy (media-stine-AHS-kuh-pee).

Surgery allows the doctor to remove a larger sample of tumor or, sometimes, the whole tumor.

It is often hard to identify mesothelioma by looking only at the cells from the fluid around the lungs, stomach, or heart. So your doctor may want to do other tests as well. Sometimes an electron microscope is used to look at cells in greater detail.

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Mesothelioma Information Resource Group, MIRG.org, tries to assist individuals and families in learning about mesothelioma and other asbestos related injuries. It is the aim of MIRG.org to provide an account of the disease mesothelioma, its causes, various treatment options and potential legal impact. To find out more about Mesothelioma and other asbestos related diseases, new medical advances, and clinical trials now available please use the links provided.

The information on this website is presented by the Mesothelioma Information Resource Group and is for informational purposes only. No particular course of treatment is suggested. All persons are advised to consult with a medical doctor concerning treatment of mesothelioma or any illness. Also, nothing on this website is intended to constitute legal advice by a lawyer or attorney. Note disclaimer.