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Types of Asbestos

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that is found in six different varieties. Asbestos was used for decades in insulation and other industrial applications before its health hazards became widely known. Exposure to asbestos has been linked to [mesothelioma cancer](#), as well as lung cancer, asbestosis and [other diseases](#).

Also known as white asbestos, **chrysotile asbestos** is the most widely used variety of the mineral, accounting for about 95% of the asbestos used in the U.S. Chrysotile is found in curled serpentine fibers, rather than the straight, needle-like amphibole fibers of the five other types of asbestos.

Also known as Grunerite or brown asbestos, **amosite asbestos** is a type of amphibole asbestos that is mined in Africa. Amosite has been used in a number of industrial applications, including cement sheet and pipe insulation.

Crocidolite is a type of amphibole asbestos and is also known as blue asbestos. **Crocidolite asbestos** is mined in Australia and Africa and is considered to be the most dangerous form of the mineral. Because blue asbestos is less heat resistant than other forms, it is rarely used for insulation and is most commonly found in asbestos cement.

Tremolite asbestos is often found together with other minerals, including talc and vermiculite. It can be brown, gray, white, green or transparent. **Tremolite asbestos** caused widespread contamination in the towns of Troy and Libby, Montana as a result of their proximity to the nearby [W.R. Grace vermiculite mine](#). Tremolite is most commonly used as insulation and in fire-resistant clothing and other products.

Anthophyllite is a grey-brown form of amphibole asbestos that has been mined in both Finland and Japan. Although extremely rare, **anthophyllite asbestos** can be found in asbestos cement, insulation, roofing material and composite flooring.

Actinolite is a dark-colored type of amphibole asbestos that is rarely used for industrial purposes. **Actinolite asbestos** was once mined in Australia, and can be found in gem form in Taiwan, Canada and the United States.