



General Information for Asbestos Cancer and Mesothelioma

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Mesothelioma is a cancerous condition of the serous membrane covering the body cavities viz. pleura, pericardium or peritoneum. Mesothelioma is an occupational disease. It primarily occurs in the workers who come in close contact with asbestos.

PR9.NET September 20, 2005 - Mesothelioma is a cancerous condition of the serous membrane covering the body cavities viz. pleura, pericardium or peritoneum. Mesothelioma is an occupational disease. It primarily occurs in the workers who come in close contact with asbestos. i.e. workers in manufacturing units of asbestos or carpenters who inhale the dust coming out of asbestos sheets while cutting the sheets. Primarily, Mesothelioma occurs in the pleura i.e. the membranous covering on the lungs. From here through blood vessels it may reach the pericardium, the serous covering on heart or to peritoneum, the serous layer on the inside of the abdomen.

Types of Mesothelioma

Mesothelioma comes in two types, benign type which does not spread and malignant type which spreads to other parts of the body. The spread of Mesothelioma may occur by continuity i.e. direct spread to the other parts of pleura thus involving a greater part of pleural membrane or it may spread by contiguity i.e. direct spread to the adjoining parts of lung & trachea i.e. windpipe.

Prevention Care for Mesothelioma

As is true with any disease prevention is better than cure. It holds true especially with Mesothelioma as chances of survival are not significant after Mesothelioma especially malignant type. All the workers should be provided with protective gear which covers their noses & filters air of asbestos particles before it enters the nose.

Symptoms of Mesothelioma

Mesothelioma generally presents with symptoms pertaining to respiratory system. Chest pain, persistent cough, excessive sputum which may be blood stained are the symptoms patients have. The doctor that treats Mesothelioma is a thoracic surgeon who has had specialty training in chest surgery after basic graduate degree in medicine. For the diagnosis of Mesothelioma x ray chest is the baseline investigation which rules out other respiratory diseases having similar presentation. HRCT i.e. high resolution CT scan of the chest shows the involved part of the pleura and the lung with the spread to the adjoining structures. Histopathology in which a very small part of the suspected lesion i.e. diseased part is removed surgically, stained with special dyes and subjected to microscopic examination helps in grading i.e. knowing the severity of the disease.

Treatment for Mesothelioma

The treatment of the disease is essentially surgical. The surgeon opens the thorax i.e. the chest cavity through thoracotomy incision, verifies the extent of the spread of disease and then he may choose to remove the involved part by local resection or pleurectomy by removing the pleura or pneumonectomy which involves removing the affected part of the lung with pleura. After the patient recuperates from the surgery and surgical wounds heal the patient may be subjected to radiotherapy and chemotherapy depending upon the severity of the disease. In radiotherapy, the affected part of the patient is subjected to high energy x ray radiation which kills the leftover microscopic cells of the Mesothelioma. In chemotherapy, anticancer medication is given through intravenous injections to kill those microscopic cells of cancer which have reached other parts of the body through blood. Sometimes radiotherapy & chemotherapy is used pre-operatively i.e. before surgery to reduce inadvertent spread of the tumor cells during the surgery.

Choosing a right thoracic surgeon who will chalk out a proper treatment plan insures a positive outcome with maximum benefit.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this article is for the general public awareness only. The patient is advised to take proper medical opinion before undergoing any treatment mentioned herein.

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