# Understanding Your Life Expectancy With Mesothelioma

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## What Does a Mesothelioma Prognosis Look like?

Malignant pleural mesothelioma is responsible for approximately 75 percent of all asbestos-related lung cancer diagnoses today. There are also two other types of mesothelioma; peritoneal affects the abdomen, and pericardial affects the lining of the heart. Pleural mesothelioma is a disease that forms in the outer, protective tissue of the lungs and is exclusively caused by asbestos exposure. So, what does a mesothelioma prognosis entail?

There are many different schools of thought that provide a life expectancy for those who have been diagnosed with mesothelioma. All sources seem to have a different number on how long one can survive with pleural mesothelioma. But, one thing is common throughout – life expectancy is always dependent on how advanced the disease is when diagnosed.

### Mesothelioma Prognosis: What You Need to Know

Malignant pleural mesothelioma is known to have a long latency period, and it has been diagnosed up to 50 years after asbestos exposure occurred. With the long latency period, and symptoms that mimic those of the flu, pneumonia or other lung infections, it is often difficult to diagnose this disease in the early stages for maximum life expectancy. Oftentimes, pleural mesothelioma does not even show any symptoms until it has reached stage III or IV.

Due to the late onset of symptoms, the majority of cases are only diagnosed at stage III or IV, which generally gives the patient 4 to 18 months to live. There are many factors related to the patient, as well as the treatment given, that can help to increase life expectancy.

Malignant pleural mesothelioma is more prevalent in men than women, and it is generally found in older individuals. As pleural mesothelioma is caused by asbestos exposure, it seems logical that older men would be the major victims of this fatal disease as they are the ones that spent time working with asbestos throughout the 20th Century.

Medical treatment for malignant pleural mesothelioma is always dependent on the stage of cancer has reached. If the mesothelioma has reached stage IV, it has likely begun to affect other organs surrounding the lungs, and there is a high probability that treatment will not slow cancer at all. With stage IV malignant pleural mesothelioma, life expectancy is generally between 6 and 12 months.

### What Can Be Done to Prevent Mesothelioma Spreading?

If treatment is an option, an oncologist will look into surgery, radiation and chemotherapy treatments to slow the spread of cancer and increase the life expectancy of the patient.

If surgery is a viable option, it is generally the best choice to provide the patient with the longest survival time

when dealing with pleural mesothelioma. Surgery coupled with radiation or chemotherapy afterward increases life expectancy even more.

Other forms of treatment seem to benefit those dealing with a pleural mesothelioma diagnosis. Treatments are often found to be most beneficial when done alongside traditional medical treatments such as surgery, chemotherapy or radiation.

These alternative treatments include acupuncture, massage, yoga and meditation. These types of therapies can help to reduce stress levels associated with dealing with a pleural mesothelioma diagnosis, and they can also help to relieve pain and improve the general quality of life.

A diagnosis of malignant pleural mesothelioma is always terminal, but it is important to discuss all treatment options that are available for each specific case.

As mentioned, pleural mesothelioma tends to present no symptoms until cancer has reached stage III, and oftentimes there is not much that can be done medically to help extend life expectancy. In such cases, alternative therapies would be recommended to the patient to assist in making the time they do have left as comfortable as possible.