(Next Slide) Mesothelioma, which as I mentioned on the first slide, is a rare type of cancer. It is a diffuse cancer spreading over the surface of the lungs and pleura and abdominal organs and peritoneum. One of the interesting things regarding mesothelioma of the abdominal cavity is how the asbestos fibers reach the peritoneal surface. In fact they have been found not only on the peritoneal surface but in other organs in the abdominal cavity. No one is sure how they get there. Perhaps they migrate.

The first large group of cases of mesothelioma was reported in South Africa in the late 1950's and it was found that this form of cancer is associated particularly with exposure to crocidolite fibers. However, apparently it is not limited to this type of asbestos. In the case of mesothelioma, asbestosis is often absent as contrasted to bronchogenic cancer. The latent period here is 40 years and you can see that the latent period is stretching out for each one of these conditions. It is rarely less than 20 years for mesothelioma. Smoking has not been shown to be a contributory factor as in the case of the bronchogenic cancer. Exposures are not always occupational. Several cases have been found in persons living near a source of asbestos and even in members of families of asbestos workers. That is, the workers come home with contaminated clothing and apparently there is enough asbestos on this clothing to cause this type of disease in members of the family.

(Next Slide) What are the possible mechanisms for the carcinogenic behavior of asbestos? Several theories have been put forward. The first of these suggests that metal complexes found in asbestos naturally, or they can get there from processing the fibers may be responsible. Such