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Asbestos fibers are tiny, so small that individual fibers cannot be seen by the naked eye. For asbestos fibers to be visible to the human eye, there must be thousands or even millions of fibers in the air. This typically happens in industrial environments, for example when a drywall worker is sanding down dried asbestos joint compound, or a pipe fitter is using a wire brush to clean off pieces of an asbestos gasket from a flange. In those instances, millions of asbestos fibers are released and that can be a sufficient quantity to create a visible cloud of asbestos dust in the air.

It is scientifically accepted that malignant mesothelioma can be caused by relatively low doses of asbestos, certainly even amounts of asbestos that do not create visible clouds of dust in the air. That's one of the aspects of mesothelioma that make it such an insidious disease.

But just how small are these fibers? Take a look at the photo.