

Can using baby powder, or talc powder, in feminine hygiene cause ovarian cancer? Two Missouri juries have recently answered that question with yeses.

In February 2016, a jury awarded \$72 million to the family of a woman who died of ovarian cancer at the age of 62. Jacqueline Fox, who lived in Alabama, said she had used Johnson & Johnson Baby Powder and Shower to Shower for feminine hygiene for more than 35 years. She was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2013. She died in October of 2015.

Just days ago, a second jury awarded 62-year-old Gloria Ristesund \$55 million in her lawsuit against Johnson & Johnson. Ms. Ristesund, who lives in South Dakota, had a hysterectomy after being diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2011. Her cancer is presently in remission. Ms. Ristesund also claimed that she had used Johnson & Johnson talc-based powder for feminine hygiene for decades.

While Johnson & Johnson has stated it will appeal the verdicts, the company faces an additional 1,000 lawsuits in Missouri and another 200 lawsuits in New Jersey. Lawsuits are claiming that Johnson & Johnson knew as far back as the 1980s of a cancer risk associated with talc powder. Talc in its natural form contains asbestos, but asbestos-free talc has been used in baby powder since the 1970s.

On the [American Cancer Society's website](#), that organization explains, "It has been suggested that talcum powder might cause cancer in the ovaries if the powder particles (applied to the genital area or on sanitary napkins, diaphragms, or condoms) were to travel through the vagina, uterus and fallopian tubes to the ovary." The American Cancer Society also refers to a statement from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), part of the World Health Organization (WHO) that "Based on limited evidence from human studies of a link to ovarian cancer, IARC classifies the perineal (genital) use of talc-based body powder as "possibly carcinogenic to humans.""