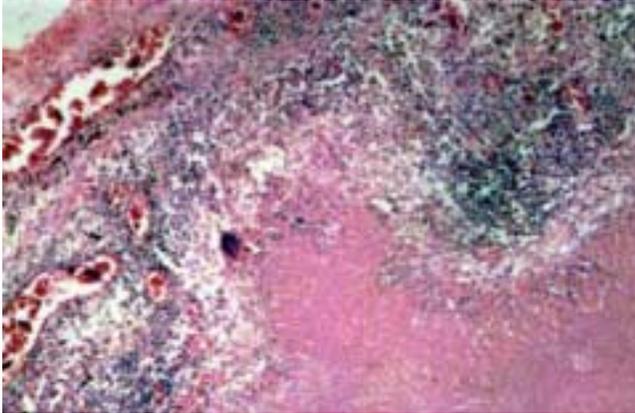


H AZARD A LERT L IVE T OMORROW

SILICOSIS

There is no cure for this disease



X-rays of a miners lungs damaged by dust containing silica.

SILICOSIS is a disease that is commonly associated with the coal mining industry. This disease occurs as a result of prolonged breathing of dust containing silica (quartz). Quartz is the main substance in sand and sandstone rock. Breathing quartz laden dust will yield the same effects as breathing fine glass particles. Silica dust develops scar tissue inside the lungs which reduces the lungs ability to extract oxygen from the air.

REMEMBER: All miners working in underground coal mines are at risk of being exposed to mine dust containing silica. If we are interested in saving ourselves from this deadly disease, the following must be done:

MAINTAIN ENGINEERING CONTROLS

This includes maintain ventilation controls and adequate air movement to carry away silica dust from the face areas, keeping water spray systems on continuous miners working properly, and maintaining dust collection systems on roof bolting machines.

AVOID GENERATING OR EXPOSURE TO DUST

Cutting sandstone top and/or bottom creates excessive amounts of silica dust. Keep the cutting of this type of rock to a minimum. If dry, dusty haul roads are present, apply water or other dust allaying agents. Develop and follow an effective mining system that limits the amount of time that personnel are working on the return side of the miner during mining operations. Roof bolting machine operators should avoid dust that results from cleaning the cuttings from bolting machine dust boxes. Use common sense and avoid dust as much as possible.

USE EFFECTIVE RESPIRATORY PROTECTION DEVICES

This will not take the place of previously mentioned means of avoiding the disease, but the proper use of a filter-type breathing device will reduce the inhalation of deadly silica particles.

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For additional information or assistance, contact the Division of Mines, Big Stone Gap (276) 523-8227 or Keen Mountain Field Office (276) 498-4533

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