

HISTORY OF GUIDELINE DEVELOPMENT

Asbestos

The 1958, 1963 and 1971 WHO *International Standards for Drinking-water* did not refer to asbestos. In the first edition of the *Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality*, published in 1984, it was noted that available data were insufficient to determine whether a guideline value was needed for asbestos. The 1993 Guidelines concluded that there was no consistent evidence that ingested asbestos was hazardous to health and that there was therefore no need to establish a health-based guideline value for asbestos in drinking-water. This assessment was brought forward to the third edition of the Guidelines, published in 2004, and the fourth edition of the Guidelines, published in 2011. The fourth edition of the Guidelines incorporating the first and second addenda, published in March 2022 (based on the 2021 assessment as a background document to the Guidelines), reconfirmed the conclusions of the previous assessment, and further clarified that epidemiological studies have a number of limitations that preclude their use for deriving a guideline value. It also includes recommendations to monitor asbestos-cement pipes remaining in active use, minimize their degradation and as these materials are replaced, to replace with non-asbestos-containing materials.