If you’re in the mood for home improvement, there’s one question you need to ask before you start.

And by the way, this question doesn’t only apply to major renovations, you could simply be drilling into a wall to hang a picture.

Was your home built or renovated before 1990?

If the answer is yes, your house probably contains asbestos. Australia has one of the highest rates of asbestos-related diseases in the world. It kills about 4000 people every year. That’s more than three times the annual road toll.

You can stay safe if you know where it is, and what to do.

It lurks in more places then you’d think. Let’s start outside.

What is your house made of? Asbestos fibro houses are still very common. Asbestos could also be in your eaves, roof and electrical box.

If we head to the garden – do you have an old fence, A shed or outbuildings? Moving inside, it can be found in bathrooms, the laundry or kitchen and under floors especially lino or tiles.

So what can you do to stay safe?

One – know where it is. If in doubt, get the material tested or assume it is asbestos.

Two – don’t disturb or damage it. If it is in good condition, leave it alone.

Three – replace it if damaged. If broken, weathered or damaged, fibres can be released risking your health.

And finally, seek professional help to remove it. It could cost less than you think.

Like plumbing and electrical work, asbestos removal – or renovations that might disturb asbestos are jobs best left to the experts

There’s lots of places you can go for help and advice including our website www.asbestossafety.gov.au