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## Background

On July 28, 2011, the Schnucks supermarket at Sangamon Center North in Springfield was closed after samples indicated asbestos in areas undergoing floor tile removal and resurfacing. Proper precautions were not observed to prevent the spread of asbestos fibers. Although the extent of contamination is not yet known, the entire facility is being considered potentially contaminated at this time.

The following questions and answers are to provide guidance for customers of the store to use in deciding whether to keep any of the products purchased from this grocery store at Sangamon Center North in Springfield July 1 through July 28. For questions about refunds, please contact Schnucks at 1-800-264-4400.

### *1. Are the items purchased from this store safe to handle or eat?*

If an item was sealed *outside the store*, the food or material inside the container should not have been exposed to asbestos fibers and should be safe to eat or handle. Because it is possible that the outer packaging may have dust containing asbestos fibers, care should be used in handling these items to minimize releasing the dust back into the air.

If you wish to keep these items, wash canned goods or plastic containers with soap and water to reduce exposure to any asbestos during handling. Cloths used in the cleaning process may be discarded in the trash or washed with soap and water in a washing machine for reuse. See question 8 for additional information.

If you wish to minimize your potential risk related to these items, place the items inside sealable plastic containers or bags and throw them into the trash.

If an item was sealed *inside the store*, such as meat, baked goods, salad bar or ready-to-eat foods, place it inside a sealable plastic container or bag and throw it into the trash.

*Unsealed produce* should be thrown away in a sealed plastic container or bag.

*If you are unsure whether or not a packaged item was sealed inside the store, contact Schnucks, at 1-800-264-4400*

**2. Why is it recommended to throw away unsealed produce or items sealed inside the store?**

Unsealed produce and items sealed inside the store could have asbestos fibers on them. All of us are exposed to low levels of asbestos in the air we breathe, and the health risk of consuming or inhaling a small amount of asbestos fibers is considered minimal. However, the risk from asbestos increases with exposure, so throwing away these items is recommended to ensure that the risk of exposure is reduced. For information about the serious health risks of exposure to asbestos, please visit the CDC website, at [http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/asbestos/asbestos/health\\_effects/](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/asbestos/asbestos/health_effects/).

**3. I have already eaten food products purchased from this store. I also shop in that store regularly. Should I go or take my children to the doctor for tests?**

No. At this time, we do not anticipate that there would be any immediate health hazards from these exposures. The majority of asbestos-related illnesses do not present themselves for many years. Smokers and people with compromised airway clearance conditions such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, Emphysema, Cystic Fibrosis or Asthma are at increased risk of health problems associated with asbestos exposure. The risk of asbestos-related illness increases with repeated exposures over time.

**4. Could this make other existing medical conditions like asthma worse?**

We do not anticipate that this would contribute to any problems with existing medical conditions.

**5. Should I be worried this could make me sick in years to come?**

This is unlikely since these exposures were for a very short duration.

**6. Could other items in my kitchen be contaminated?**

It is not anticipated that there would be much contamination from the store's food to the other food in your cabinets, refrigerator or pantry at home. It is possible that some asbestos-containing dust could be transferred from the purchased food to the stored food, but such contamination would be very low.

**7. How can I clean my cabinets or other surfaces after removing the items?**

Asbestos is a naturally-occurring mineral fiber and can be easily cleaned with soap and water. Do not try to clean the dust off the surfaces with a dry method such as a dust cloth. **Be sure to use soap and water when cleaning surfaces.** Cloths used in the cleaning process may be discarded in the trash or washed with soap and water in a washing machine for reuse.

**8. What precautions should I take during cleaning?**

While it is extremely unlikely that the exposure levels would have any long-term health effects, the primary concern with asbestos is with exposure to the lungs, so you may consider precautions to minimize exposure to the dust from re-suspending the dust in the air to be breathed in later. To minimize contamination to other objects or surfaces, wet cleaning using soap and water is advised.

***9. Should I decontaminate my car?***

It is most likely the food items were contained in plastic or paper bags, which would have minimized any contamination of the vehicle.

***10. What should I and my family do about the clothes I wore when I was in the store?***

Washing clothes in a washing machine should remove asbestos dust off your clothes.

***11. I keep the grocery bags from this Schnucks store. What should I do with them?***

Throw them in the trash. Washable bags should be washed in a washing machine with soap and water prior to reuse.

***12. I work or live near this Schnucks store. Could the asbestos have gotten outside the store, could I have breathed it in while working?***

While workers inside the store were likely exposed, it is unlikely that anyone outside of the store would have been exposed.