Johnson And Johnson Knew Asbestos Was In Baby Powder, More Lawsuits Are Coming

Johnson & Johnson paid a steep price this year for claims that its celebrated baby powder was contaminated with asbestos. And its 2019 could be even worse.

In July a jury ordered Johnson & Johnson to pay $4.69 billion to 22 women who claim the talc-based baby powder caused their ovarian cancer. The prospect of more judgments to come has helped to remove $45 billion of the company's market value. Next year the company is slated to face more lawsuits for its baby powder.

Talc is a clay mineral that is the primary ingredient in baby powder and it keeps the skin dry and is also an astringent. It can help prevent diaper rash. In its natural form, some talc contains asbestos, which is linked to mesothelioma and ovarian cancer.

Juries in California, New Jersey, and Missouri have awarded more than $5 billion in awards to plaintiffs since 2016, but some of the verdicts have been removed judges. Johnson & Johnson continues to deny any wrongdoing or culpability.

> *Johnson & Johnson is committed to defending these cases based on the strong scientific evidence showing that talc does not cause cancer.*

> *"Of the last five trials in 2018, two were decided in our favor, and there have been [three hung-jury] mistrials, reflecting the juries' appreciation of our argument. "Every case that has gone through the appellate process has also been reversed, and we feel confident that the five cases*

> *currently on appeal will be reversed as well.” – Ernie W. Knewitz, a company spokesman, emailed statement*

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But recent news reports on internal documents show company officials knew there was asbestos in the baby powder since the 1970s. Now thousands of plaintiffs are saying the company hid cancer risk to protect the brand.

> *A Reuters examination of many of those documents, as well as deposition and trial testimony, shows that from at least 1971 to the early 2000s, the company’s raw talc and finished powders sometimes tested positive for small amounts of asbestos, and that company executives, mine managers, scientists, doctors and lawyers fretted over the problem and how to address it while failing to disclose it to regulators or the public.” – Reuters*

Johnson & Johnson produces many pharmaceutical products including vaccines under the name Janssen.