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My presentation will review what is known about the nature of the two principal classes of asbestos minerals, namely the serpentine and amphibole classes. To provide a context, the presentation will briefly describe the environments in which these minerals form and the reasons for their formation. The focus, however, will be the structures of the two classes of asbestos minerals and the effect that differences in these structures may have on the solubility of serpentine (chrysotile) and amphibole in lung fluids.