

Screening Examination for Beryllium Disease

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT WHEN I GO FOR MY PHYSICAL EXAMINATION?

If you choose to participate in the screening you will be offered a chest x-ray and special blood test. The chest x-ray is done only if it is your first examination, if you had a previous abnormal chest x-ray or if you have new symptoms related to your breathing. You will also be asked to complete a medical and occupational history questionnaire.

The screening examinations will be conducted at a site in your part of the country. The testing and your travel expenses will be paid by the Department of Energy, if approved by this program operated for DOE by Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education.

The chest x-ray will be reviewed by a specialist in interpreting x-rays who is also certified as a B-reader. B-readers are skilled in reading x-rays for mineral dust related disease.

The blood test, called a Lymphocyte Proliferation Test (LPT), is currently the most accurate method to identify those at risk of developing Chronic Beryllium Disease. The blood is drawn from a vein in your arm and sent to one or more of the few laboratories in the United States that are skilled in performing this test. The LPT examines how a type of disease-fighting blood cell in our bodies—called lymphocytes—react to beryllium.

You will receive a copy of the results of the LPT. If the chest x-ray is abnormal, you also will receive a copy of the report from the specialist who read the x-ray. If the abnormality is not related to Chronic Beryllium Disease, you will be told to take the report to your own doctor for his or her recommendations. If either the LPT or the chest x-ray suggests that you may be at an elevated risk of getting Chronic Beryllium Disease, you will be contacted about further testing. You should ask the examiners any questions you might have, either at the time of the testing, or later, at the phone number you will be given.

This fact sheet was prepared for your use in part from information supplied by the Workplace Health Fund. It is NOT meant as a substitute for consulting with your own doctor! However, because Chronic Beryllium Disease is rare, most family doctors and internists have not had the opportunity to treat individuals with Chronic Beryllium Disease. For this reason, you may also wish to consult a lung specialist that your doctor recommends. If you do not have a personal physician, you can request a list of board certified pulmonary doctors from the local medical society, or look for a pulmonary doctor in the yellow pages. Be sure to check if your medical insurance covers the doctor visits that you schedule, because the Department of Energy will not be responsible for doctor visits scheduled outside of their official program.