

## **Beryllium Medical Surveillance Information for Workers**

### **What is the beryllium medical surveillance program?**

The medical surveillance program is offered to workers by employers to detect health effects related to beryllium exposure. Employers are required to offer medical surveillance, at no cost, to any worker within 30 days of meeting the criteria below and then at least every two years thereafter for those who continue to meet the criteria below. Participation in medical surveillance is voluntary for workers.

### **Who must be offered medical surveillance?**

OSHA requires employers to offer medical surveillance to workers who meet one of the following conditions: is or is reasonably expected to be exposed above the action level of  $0.1 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  for 30 days in a year; shows signs or symptoms of chronic beryllium disease (CBD) or other beryllium-related health effects; was exposed to beryllium during an emergency (note: the emergency provision does not apply in the construction and shipyards sectors); or has received a recommendation for continued medical surveillance from a physician after the worker's most recent exam required by the beryllium standard. In addition, regardless of whether an employee continues to meet the criteria described above, employers must continue to offer a Beryllium Lymphocyte Proliferation Test (BeLPT) (or equivalent test) to employees who previously qualified for BeLPT testing at least every two years after the first examination, unless the employee is confirmed positive for beryllium sensitization.

### **What medical services could I receive in the medical surveillance program?**

The medical examination must include:

- Medical and work history with emphasis on past and present airborne exposure to or dermal contact with beryllium, smoking history, and any history of respiratory system dysfunction,
- Physical examination with emphasis on the respiratory system,
- Physical examination for skin rashes,
- Pulmonary function tests,
- BeLPT (or other equivalent test), and
- Any other test deemed appropriate by the physician or licensed health care professional (including low-dose CT scan).

OSHA also requires employers to offer certain employees, including those who have been confirmed positive for beryllium sensitization by the BeLPT or an equivalent test, follow-up evaluation at a CBD diagnostic center. As part of an evaluation for CBD, employees may be offered additional medical services such as bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL), and transbronchial biopsy.

## **Why participate in a beryllium medical surveillance program?**

One purpose of a beryllium medical surveillance program is to detect and mitigate adverse health effects from beryllium exposure. For workers, participating in a medical surveillance program is a way to detect diseases or other health related conditions they may have and determine eligibility for medical removal protection. Participating in a medical surveillance program can also contribute significantly to the success of worksite health and safety programs by identifying potential problem areas or verifying the effectiveness of existing worksite control and prevention programs. By voluntarily sharing beryllium sensitization or CBD information with employers, the worker can contribute to the overall health and safety of the workplace by identifying processes, operations, or deficiencies in the existing worksite control program that have led to an employee being sensitized and may need further control measures.

## **What are my privacy rights?**

Under the beryllium standard, workers do not have to share information about beryllium sensitization or CBD status with their employer. Most of the medical information gathered by the physician or licensed health care professional is also protected and cannot be shared with the employer without the worker's written consent.

## **Where can I find more information?**

For more information on the BeLPT and potential treatments related to developing CBD, please see [Worker Information on the BeLPT QuickCard](#); [Guidance on Medical Surveillance for Beryllium Exposed Workers](#); Beryllium FAQs; and the [Beryllium Safety and Health Topics](#) webpage.



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