

**Potential Benefits and
Adverse Consequences of the
Beryllium Lymphocyte
Proliferation Test**



When deciding whether to take the Beryllium Lymphocyte Proliferation Test (BeLPT), you should carefully consider both the potential benefits and possible negative consequences.

Potential Benefits

If you know you are sensitized, you may seek follow-up evaluation. That could result in early diagnosis of Chronic Beryllium Disease (CBD) and treatment for it. Early treatment may help control progression of the disease.

While a confirmed reactive BeLPT result does not mean that you have CBD, it suggests that you may want to pursue further medical evaluation to determine whether there is evidence of CBD. It is possible to diagnose CBD in its early stages when there are no noticeable symptoms.

Any person with a lung condition, including CBD, may benefit from pneumonia and flu vaccinations and early treatment of respiratory infections. Detection of CBD by further medical evaluation after a confirmed reactive BeLPT may be the best way to get this important information.

Symptoms of CBD are difficult to distinguish from those of more common conditions like emphysema and asthma. If you and your health care provider know that you are sensitized to beryllium, it is more likely that an early and correct diagnosis of CBD can be made and that your health care provider and you will not mistake your symptoms for another respiratory illness.

If you know you are sensitized, you are better equipped to make an informed decision about the advisability of potential future beryllium exposure.

Possible Negative Consequences

No one can predict if or when an individual who is sensitized to beryllium will develop CBD. The BeLPT can only tell if an individual is sensi-

tized and, therefore, at higher risk for CBD. No treatment is available for sensitized individuals to reduce or eliminate the higher risk of getting CBD. Living with these uncertainties has resulted in depression and/or anxiety in some sensitized individuals. Some have sought and received treatment for depression and/or anxiety after learning they were sensitized.

Recommended evaluations for sensitized individuals may include periodic lifelong bronchoscopies and lung biopsies, and exercise tolerance tests. Bronchoscopy with biopsy is an invasive test and the Exercise Tolerance Test involves the use of an invasive arterial line. While these are considered low-risk medical procedures, all invasive medical procedures have some risk of complications.

PLEASE NOTE: Be sure to read all the educational material listed on the Beryllium Medical Monitoring Employee Consent Form before you make your decision about participating. You may wish to take advantage of other sources of information on the BeLPT and Chronic Beryllium Disease as well. Below are two websites you may wish to browse:

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/beryllium/index.html>

<http://www.eh.doe.gov/be/links.html>



**Occupational Safety
and Health Administration**
U.S. Department of Labor
www.osha.gov

Chronic Beryllium Disease occurs only in people who have been exposed to beryllium, so most primary care health care providers have not had the opportunity to treat individuals with CBD. For this reason, you may wish to consult a health care provider who is familiar with Chronic Beryllium Disease. Be sure to check if your medical insurance covers any health care provider visits that you schedule, although you may be eligible for medical coverage under the Workers' Compensation Program if you are sensitized to beryllium or if you are diagnosed with Chronic Beryllium Disease.

Most exposures to beryllium occur in the workplace. However, there are documented cases in which beryllium-sensitization and/or Chronic Beryllium Disease have occurred in persons with no known occupational exposure to beryllium.