



## Beryllium – If You Think You’ve Been Exposed, Get Tested!

### What is beryllium?

Beryllium is a naturally occurring metal that is extremely lightweight yet hard, is a good electrical conductor, and is nonmagnetic. In the past, this **highly toxic material** was used in laboratory work at the Hanford Site as early as 1958. There is still some limited use of beryllium and beryllium compounds in laboratory operations, such as small quantities used in fume hoods.

### What is Chronic Beryllium Disease?

Chronic beryllium disease is caused by an allergic reaction to beryllium. It has a very slow onset, and occurs in 2% to 17% of those exposed. This serious lung disease occurs when beryllium dust or fumes are inhaled. If you are allergic to beryllium, **even a brief or small exposure can lead to this disease.**

### How many are affected at Hanford?

As of August 2002, 981 workers have had a blood test known as a Beryllium Lymphocyte Proliferation Test (LPT). Thirty-six workers have been classified as “sensitized,” meaning their immune systems launch an allergic response to the presence of beryllium and they are at increased risk of developing Chronic Beryllium Disease. Seven others have been diagnosed with Chronic Beryllium Disease. A list of buildings that have been evaluated for beryllium is located at <http://www.hanford.gov/safety/beryllium/curfclst.htm>.

For more information on Chronic Beryllium Disease and beryllium exposure, see the National Jewish Medical Center Web site at

[http://www.njc.org/medfacts/beryllium\\_medfact.html](http://www.njc.org/medfacts/beryllium_medfact.html).

The Porcelain Press is distributed both electronically and in PNNL building restrooms. If your restrooms’ newsletters are out of date, please contact Vern Madson (376-0792) or Russ Meichenheimer (373-6165). This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

### What do I do if I’ve been exposed or suspect past or current exposure to beryllium?

**You will need to be tested** to determine if you are sensitized or have Chronic Beryllium Disease. To get tested:

- **Enroll in the Hanford Beryllium Monitoring Program** by calling Mary Sams at the HEHF Beryllium Hot Line (372-0137) or by completing the Hanford Employee Beryllium Work History Questionnaire (<http://www.hanford.gov/safety/beryllium/questionnaire.pdf>) and sending it to **Beryllium, H1-04**.
- You will be contacted for a beryllium exam by HEHF. This exam will **include an LPT and a chest x-ray**. It is voluntary and completed only at your request. (3E123)



## Don’t Let Halloween Haunt You

Halloween is fast approaching. During this fun-filled time of trick or treating, parents can help keep their kids (and others!) safe with the following safety tips: (3H035)

- **Supervise the outing** for kids under age 12.
- For older children, **establish a curfew**.
- **Prepare your home for trick-or-treaters** by clearing porches, lawns, and sidewalks, and by placing jack-o-lanterns away from doorways and landings. (3C846)
- **Avoid giving choking hazards** such as gum, peanuts, hard candies, and small toys.
- **Inspect all candy** before your children eat it.

Many other Halloween safety tips are available at the National Safety Council’s Web site at <http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/halloween.htm>.