

Occupational & Environmental Medicine Newsletter



MARCH 2013

Arden Hills Clinic Update

Our Arden Hills site provides a partial list of Occupational Medicine services every Wednesday. Dr. Gary Johnson is typically the MD staffing the clinic on Wednesdays, and we can perform:

- Follow-up work injury care
- DOT Exams
- Respirator use clearances
- Return to work exams
- Fitness for duty exams
- Blood tests for immune status and TB Gold
- Hepatitis B and tetanus vaccinations

Urgent Care is available seven days per week in Arden Hills and will typically refer to Dr. Johnson if a follow-up visit is recommended.

Due to the part-time nature of this clinic we don't have the equipment or resources to perform services such as hearing testing, drug/alcohol screening, respirator fit-testing and full medical monitoring. Of course, we offer these services and more at our three full-services sites. We anticipate being able to offer drug testing on Wednesdays sometime mid-year.

Program to Reduce OSHA-Recordable Injuries

If you're looking for every possible way to keep injuries off your OSHA log we can help.

We will develop a custom program for the delivery of worksite early intervention services. One of our physical/occupational therapists will be stationed in your workplace on a schedule that works for you. This person will become part of the safety team. They will deliver first aid strategies and professional instruction in work methods, which are critical in helping to avoid unnecessary injury and associated costs. These same strategies can also help in the prevention of re-injury or the exacerbation of an existing condition.

Our staff will:

- Identify and work with employees developing physical symptoms on the job,
- Evaluate and treat symptoms before they become significant and OSHA-recordable, using early response & first-aid strategies,
- Provide personalized coaching/functional job analysis to correct contributing factors,
- Provide ergonomic consulting and injury prevention classes with workforce when not treating/coaching,
- Provide worksite physical therapy services for ongoing injuries if requested.

Benefits include:

- Overall cost reductions, factoring in reduced missed-work time,
- Increased chance of keeping minor injuries from becoming major,
- Provides onsite work-methods training and the opportunity to monitor in the workplace,
- Increased employee goodwill.

Please contact Kirk Hyatt if you have any questions, 952-541-2619.

Beryllium in the Workplace

By Dr. Gary Johnson, MD, MPH, FACOEM

Beryllium is a metal often associated with the nuclear weapons, aerospace, ceramics, dental supply, telecommunications, and automotive parts industries. Beryllium has useful properties such as strength, electrical and thermal conductivity, and resistance to corrosion which makes the use of the metal and its oxide attractive in a wide range of technological applications. However, as with asbestos, lead and other useful materials, the downside to the use of beryllium in the workplace is the increased risk of worker illness.

In the early 1940s beryllium disease was first described in the United States and was associated with an acute inflammation of the lungs. In recent decades the most common health effect associated with beryllium has been a lung disease known as chronic beryllium disease (CBD). To develop CBD, an exposed person first develops a sensitivity or allergy to beryllium following inhalation of fine particles or dust of the metal during the manufacturing process. This is referred to as beryllium sensitization, which sets the stage for the possible development of CBD, but is not a disease in and of itself.

In sensitized individuals the immune system recognizes the beryllium as a "foreign invader" and responds by recruiting white blood cells to attempt to search for and engulf beryllium particles in the lungs. Over time, this process can produce scarring of the lungs which in turn leads to the thickening of very thin lung membranes. Eventually these lung membranes become unable to transport oxygen into the blood, causing disease and potentially death. It's the development of inflammation and scarring in the lungs that is defined as CBD.

Beryllium sensitivity can be diagnosed through blood testing. Tens of thousands of American

workers participate in beryllium medical monitoring programs. If your firm works with beryllium and would like us to implement an employee medical monitoring program, call Kirk Hyatt at 952-541-2619.

Occupational Medicine & Urgent Care Clinic Locations

HealthPartners Riverside Clinic

Occupational Medicine
2220 Riverside Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55454
952-883-6999 Opt. 1
612-341-5131 (fax)

HealthPartners St. Paul Clinic

Occupational Medicine
205 S. Wabasha St.
St. Paul, MN 55107
952-883-6999 Opt. 2
651-293-8183 (fax)

HealthPartners West Clinic

Occupational Medicine
5100 Gamble Drive, Suite 100
St. Louis Park, MN 55416
952-883-6999 Opt. 3
952-541-2626 (fax)

HealthPartners Arden Hills Clinic

3930 Northwoods Dr
Arden Hills, MN 55112
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