

icare[™]

Dust Diseases Care



Medical Examination Fact Sheet

Dust Diseases Care

Workers who have been exposed to hazardous dust during employment in NSW can make a request to Dust Diseases Care (DDC) for a respiratory medical examination to find out if they have a dust disease.

Where do I go to have a medical examination?

We can arrange for you to have a medical examination at:

- Our icare centre at 115 Pitt Street, Sydney; or
- Our Mobile Lung Screen Service which visits regional centres around NSW
- A doctor in your local area. Your local doctor may not be able to do all three parts of the examination on the same day at the same place, but he/she will give you a referral for the tests required. The doctor will send the results of your examination to DDC.

What is a respiratory medical examination?

This is an examination of the lungs to determine if you have a dust disease. There are three parts to the examination:

- Chest X-rays
- Lung function test
- Examination by a doctor

Are there any risks from Chest X-rays?

The chest X-ray is performed by a licensed radiographer and is painless. The risk of harm from a chest X-ray is generally considered to be negligible. You will receive a small amount of X-ray radiation that is approximately equivalent to the level of background radiation that everyone receives in about ten days of ordinary living. Women who are, or think they may be pregnant should tell the radiographer before an X-ray.

If you have any questions about chest X-rays, please ask to speak to the Radiographer on the day of your examination.

Are there any risks from Lung Function Tests?

The lung function tests are performed by a lung function scientist or technician. Lung function testing is generally safe, however there are some health conditions which may be adversely affected by testing. The lung function scientist will ask you to respond to a list of questions about your current health condition before your test. If you have any concerns, you should discuss this with them prior to testing.

If you are on any medication you should continue to take your medication as normal before the test.

What does the Doctor examination involve?

The examining doctor will review the X-rays and the lung function report. The doctor will ask you about your medical history and in particular about any unusual symptoms you may have experienced in relation to breathing or coughing. If necessary the doctor may refer you for additional tests, such as a CT scan.

The doctor who examines you **is not** the doctor who will make the decision about whether or not you have a dust disease.

Who assesses my medical examination results?

The results of each medical examination are presented to an expert panel of respiratory specialist doctors called the Medical Assessment Panel. The Medical Assessment Panel will determine if you have a dust disease, and if so, whether you have any disablement as a result.

There are many medical causes of breathlessness. Most of the Workers examined by Dust Diseases Care do not have a dust disease. If you do not have a dust disease, we will offer you another medical examination after 3 years.

What if they find a dust disease?

If the Medical Assessment Panel finds you have a dust disease, we will recommend you speak to your doctor about treatment options. We will also invite you to lodge an 'Application for Compensation' form and to provide any other necessary documents. One of our Client Liaison team members will be there to guide you through the compensation process.

When will I find out the result?

If you are examined by a local doctor, the doctor may discuss the results with you at the time of your visit. The doctor will also send the results to us and we will send you a letter detailing your results after they have been reviewed by the Medical Assessment Panel.

If you are examined at our Sydney office, you will normally receive a letter advising you of the decision of the Medical Assessment Panel within one month of your medical examination. If you have a dust disease, the Medical Assessment Panel may require you to undertake additional medical test results. In this case, your outcome letter will not be sent until after all the test results are received.

What if I develop new symptoms after the examination?

You should not rely on your medical examinations for the purpose of early detection or treatment of lung disease. If you develop any new symptoms after the examination you should consult your own doctor promptly. **Do not wait** for your next scheduled DDC examination.

Am I eligible for compensation?

It is important to understand that having a medical examination by the DDC does not automatically mean that you will be entitled to receive compensation if you have a dust disease. To be eligible for an award of compensation you must also meet the following criteria:

- The Medical Assessment Panel must certify that you are disabled as a result of the dust disease, and
- The dust disease must be reasonably attributable to occupational exposure as a worker in New South Wales.

What if I am sick on the day?

If you are unwell on the day of your appointment you should not attend the medical examination. This is particularly important if you have a respiratory infection such as a cold or flu. Please telephone the DDC and ask to speak to the Medical Appointments Officer to make another appointment.

Is there any cost or reimbursement of travel expenses?

The medical examination is free and any additional tests requested by the examining doctor will also be paid for by us.

We will also reimburse you for the following out-of-pocket expenses for your attendance at the medical examination:

- Public transport via train, bus or ferry (A ticket or receipt is required or if using an Opal card, then reimbursement will be made to the trip value in accordance with the NSW Transport trip planner calculator)
- Use of a private vehicle, where public transport is unavailable and only with prior DDC approval
- Lost wages
- Other (please contact the DDC to discuss reimbursement for any other expenses incurred).

Would you like more information?

We are here to help you understand our services. If you have any questions about medical examinations, or would like further information, please contact us so we can help you.

Call: (02) 8223 6600 or Toll Free on 1800 550 027

Email: DDAenquiries@icare.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.icare.nsw.gov.au