

VA Environmental Health Registry Programs



WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide information about:

- Six VA Environmental Health Registry Programs (this includes two VA health surveillance programs)
- Eligibility requirements for Veteran participation
- Potential benefits for both Veterans and their healthcare providers when a Veteran participates in a registry



WHAT ARE VA ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REGISTRY PROGRAMS?

The VA has six registry programs that are designed to monitor the health of Veterans who may have been exposed to certain military hazards during their service. Special attention is paid to any symptoms or abnormalities that may be related to certain military occupational or environmental exposures.

- Participation in VA's registry programs is free to eligible Veterans (no co-pay).
- Some registries include an evaluation with a VA clinician. Registry evaluations are NOT compensation and pension (C&P) exams as Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) handles C&P benefit claims. However, data collected through VA registry evaluations may possibly be used to support a benefits claim.
- Providers are encouraged to check out the VA's Health Outcomes Military Exposures (HOME) website to learn more about registry resources: <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/benefits/registry-evaluation.asp>



VA ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REGISTRY EVALUATIONS

Three of the six registry programs include a registry evaluation with a VA clinician: Agent Orange Registry, Gulf War Registry, and Ionizing Radiation Registry.

- Veterans can schedule an in-person or telehealth registry evaluation for the Agent Orange and Gulf War Registries by contacting their local Environmental Health Coordinator at their local VA facility. Providers and Veterans can locate their local Environmental Health Coordinators here: https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures_coordinators.asp
- Veterans can also schedule a telehealth registry evaluation for the Agent Orange and Gulf War Registries by contacting the Veterans Exposure Team – Health Outcomes Military Exposures (VET-HOME) team at 833-633-8846 or online at vethome.va.gov.
- The Ionizing Radiation Registry includes a telehealth evaluation completed by a VET-HOME clinician. Veterans can schedule a telehealth registry evaluation by contacting the Veterans Exposure Team-Health Outcomes Military Exposures (VET-HOME) team at 833-633-8846 or online at vethome.va.gov



ARE VETERANS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN MORE THAN ONE REGISTRY?

A Veteran may be eligible to participate in more than one registry. For example, some Veterans meet the criteria for enrollment in both the Gulf War Registry and the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry.

All six registries are separate, and Veterans are encouraged to participate in as many registries as they are eligible. In some cases, Veterans may not need to undergo additional registry evaluations if an evaluation is already documented in the health record.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF REGISTRY INVOLVEMENT?

Participating in VA Environmental Health Registries is beneficial for both providers and Veterans alike. Registries help all Veterans by identifying health issues that may be related to military exposures. Registries also provide important information about military exposures which may inform future Veteran care and help VA respond to these exposure concerns more effectively.



WHAT VA REGISTRIES ARE AVAILABLE?

The VA has six registry programs. Registry information and eligibility criteria for each of these registry programs is outlined below.

AIRBORNE HAZARDS AND OPEN BURN PIT REGISTRY (AHOBPR)

VA's newest registry is the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry (AHOBPR). The registry enables VA to identify and research health challenges of Veterans and service members who were exposed to airborne hazards and burn pits during their military service.

On August 1, 2024, the VA and U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) announced critical updates to the registry. This redesigned version of the registry incorporates extensive Veteran feedback, expands participation criteria, establishes auto enrollment, and simplifies participation requirements.

- Veterans and service members (living or deceased) who meet criteria based on DoD records are automatically enrolled in the registry. To learn more about the participation criteria visit: <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/registry.asp>

- Veterans can check their status by contacting their local Environmental Health Coordinator. Veterans can locate their local Environmental Health Coordinators here:

<https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp>

- Veterans are encouraged to participate in the registry to enable VA to identify and research health challenges of Veterans and service members who were exposed to airborne hazards and burn pits during their military service; however, they may opt out of the registry by visiting <https://vethome.va.gov/BurnPitRegistryOptOut/>

For more information:

<https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/registry.asp>

GULF WAR REGISTRY

Gulf War Veterans with military exposure concerns may be eligible for a Gulf War Registry evaluation. The Gulf War Registry evaluation is conducted by a local VA Environmental Health Clinician or the Veterans Exposure Team – Health Outcomes Military Exposures (VET-HOME). It includes an exposure and medical history, a physical exam or review of physical exam findings, and diagnostic testing if appropriate. Registry results are discussed with the Veteran and outlined in the record for follow up care.

- To schedule a Gulf War Registry evaluation, eligible Veterans should contact their local Environmental Health Clinician or VET-HOME.

Veterans can locate their local Environmental Health Coordinators here: <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp> Or contact VET-HOME at 833-633-8846 or by visiting vethome.va.gov.

Eligibility:

Veterans who served in the Gulf during Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or Operation New Dawn are eligible for the Gulf War Registry exam.

For more information:

<https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar/benefits/registry-exam.asp>

IONIZING RADIATION REGISTRY

The Ionizing Radiation Registry includes a telehealth evaluation completed by a VET-HOME clinician. The evaluation covers an exposure and medical history, physical exam or review of physical exam findings, and diagnostic testing if appropriate. The results are discussed with the Veteran and outlined in the record for follow-up care.

- To schedule an Ionizing Radiation Registry evaluation, eligible Veterans should contact VET-HOME at 833-633-8846 or visit vethome.va.gov.

Eligibility:

- Veterans who participated in on-site testing involving the atmospheric detonation of a nuclear device
- Veterans who participated in the occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki from August 6, 1945 through July 1, 1946
- Veterans who were interned as a prisoner of war in Japan during World War II
- Veterans who received nasopharyngeal (NP)—nose and throat—radium irradiation treatments while in the active military, naval, or air service

- Veterans who were involved in the following “radiation-risk activities”:
 - Service at Department of Energy gaseous diffusion plants at Paducah, KY, Portsmouth, OH, or the K25 area at Oak Ridge, TN, for at least 250 days before February 1, 1992 under certain condition.
 - Proximity to “Longshot,” “Milrow,” or “Cannikin” underground nuclear tests at Amchitka Island, AK, before January 1, 1974

Note: Veterans with health concerns related to ionizing radiation who do not qualify for this registry are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their primary care provider who may consult with the Environmental Health Registry Clinician at their facility or VET-HOME.

For more information:

<https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/radiation/benefits/registry-exam.asp>

<https://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/WARRELATEDILLNESS/education/factsheets/Radiation.pdf>

TOXIC EMBEDDED FRAGMENT SURVEILLANCE CENTER

The Metal Exposures and Depleted Uranium (MEDU) Surveillance Center at the Baltimore VA Medical Center offers medical surveillance for post-9/11 Veterans who have, or likely have, an embedded fragment from a bullet, blast, or explosion injury sustained while serving in an area of conflict.

- Eligible Veterans are identified and electronically enrolled in the VA's Embedded Fragment Registry following completion of screening questions that are incorporated in the VA's electronic medical record.
- To enroll in surveillance, Veterans must work with their local VA provider to submit a urine sample for special testing to measure concentrations of metals that may be released from retained fragment(s).

- To initiate the process, the local VA facility must obtain a urine collection kit from the MEDU Surveillance Center. This kit contains instructions and all materials needed to collect and ship the specimen back to the Center. It also contains a urine collection checklist (VA Form 10-0464b) and exposure questionnaire (VA Form 10-0464) which must be completed.
- The MEDU team sends interpretation letters containing results of the urine testing and recommendations for follow-up to the Veteran and VA provider.

For more information:

https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/toxic_fragments/surv_center.asp

DEPLETED URANIUM (DU) REGISTRY

Since 1993, the MEDU Surveillance Center has provided on-going clinical surveillance for 'friendly fire' DU-exposed Gulf War 1 (GW1) Veterans. These Veterans were exposed to DU through inhalational exposure, from wounds contaminated with DU and had retained fragments of embedded DU shrapnel. They are invited to participate in biennial clinical assessment visits performed at the Baltimore VA Medical Center.

In 1998, the Center was expanded to offer urine depleted uranium testing for any Veteran concerned about DU exposure. Veterans must work with their local VA provider to submit a urine sample via mail.

- To submit a urine sample for testing, local VA facilities must first obtain a urine collection kit from the MEDU Surveillance Center. This kit will contain instructions

and all materials needed for collecting and shipping the specimen back to the Center. It will also contain a urine uranium checklist (VA Form 10-9009F) and DU worksheet (VA Form 10-9009D) which must be completed.

- A DU interfacility consult must be entered into CPRS which will allow for tracking of the specimen and documentation of the results in CPRS.
- The MEDU team sends interpretation letters containing results of the urine testing and recommendations for follow-up to the Veteran and VA provider.

For more information:

https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/depleted_uranium/DU_Screening.asp

AGENT ORANGE REGISTRY

Veterans with Agent Orange herbicide exposure may be eligible for an Agent Orange Registry evaluation. The Agent Orange Registry is a registry evaluation completed by a local VA Environmental Health Clinician or the Veterans Exposure Team – Health Outcomes Military Exposures (VET-HOME). It includes an exposure and medical history, physical exam or review of physical exam findings, and diagnostic testing if appropriate. The results are discussed with the Veteran and outlined in the record for follow-up care.

- To schedule an Agent Orange Registry evaluation, eligible Veterans should contact their local Environmental Health Clinician or VET-HOME. Veterans can locate their local Environmental Health Coordinators here: <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp>. Or contact VET-HOME at 833-633-8846 or by visiting vethome.va.gov.

Eligibility:

- Veterans who served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975
- Veterans who served aboard smaller river patrol and swift boats that operated on the inland waterways of Vietnam (also known as “Brown Water Veterans”)
- “Blue Water” Navy Veterans who served on a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation of the

waters of Vietnam and Cambodia (as defined by Public Law 116--23)

- Veterans who served in a unit in or near the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between September 1, 1967 and August 31, 1971
- Veterans who served in Thailand between January 9, 1962, through June 30, 1976
- Veterans who served in Laos from December 1, 1965 through September 30, 1969
- Veterans who served in Cambodia at Mimot or Krek, Kampong Cham Province from April 16, 1969, through April 30, 1969
- Veterans who served in Guam or American Samoa or in the territorial waters off of Guam or American Samoa from January 9, 1962, through July 30, 1980
- Veterans who served at Johnston Atoll or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll from January 1, 1972, through September 30, 1977
- Veterans who flew or worked on C-123 aircraft between 1969 and 1986
- Other potential exposures include Veterans exposed to herbicides during a military operation or as a result of testing, transporting, or spraying herbicides for military purposes.

For more information:

<https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/benefits/registry-exam.asp>

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