

Gulf War and Post 9/11 Veterans who Served during the Persian Gulf War

For VA benefit purposes, Gulf War service is active military duty in any of the following areas in the Southwest Asia theater of military operations at any time August 2, 1990 to present. This includes Veterans who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003-2010).

Locations:

- Southwest Asia theater of operations
- Afghanistan
- Israel
- Egypt
- Turkey
- Syria
- Jordan

Southwest Asia theatre of military operations:

- Iraq
- Kuwait
- Saudi Arabia
- The neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia
- Bahrain
- Qatar
- The United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.)
- Oman
- Afghanistan
- Israel
- Egypt
- Turkey
- Syria
- Jordan
- Gulf of Aden
- Gulf of Oman
- Persian Gulf
- Waters of the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, and the Red Sea
- The airspace above these locations


For Veterans who served in Southwest Asia theater of operations, Afghanistan, Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, or Jordan, during the Persian Gulf War and have a medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses **that exist for six months or more**, such as:

- Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/**Chronic Fatigue Syndrome** (ME/CFS)
- Fibromyalgia
- Functional gastrointestinal disorders

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
VA Palo Alto Health Care System



Any diagnosed or undiagnosed illness that warrants a presumption of service connection, as determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs:


- Abnormal weight loss
 - Fatigue
 - Cardiovascular disease
 - Muscle and joint pain
 - Headache
 - Menstrual disorders
 - Neurological and psychological problems
 - Skin conditions
 - Respiratory disorders
 - Sleep disturbance
-

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/**Chronic Fatigue Syndrome** (ME/CFS), a condition of long-term and severe fatigue that is not relieved by rest and is not directly caused by other conditions.

The following are the most common symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome. However, each person may experience symptoms differently. Symptoms may include:

- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Unrefreshing sleep
- Post-exertional malaise (period of intense exhaustion and a spike in other symptoms that lasts for more than 24 hours following physical exertion)
- Orthostatic intolerance (inability to sit or stand up)
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Tender lymph nodes
- Muscle and joint pain
- Problems with memory and concentration
- Chills and night sweats
- Digestive symptoms, like irritable bowel syndrome

The symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome may look like other medical conditions. Always talk with your healthcare provider for a diagnosis.

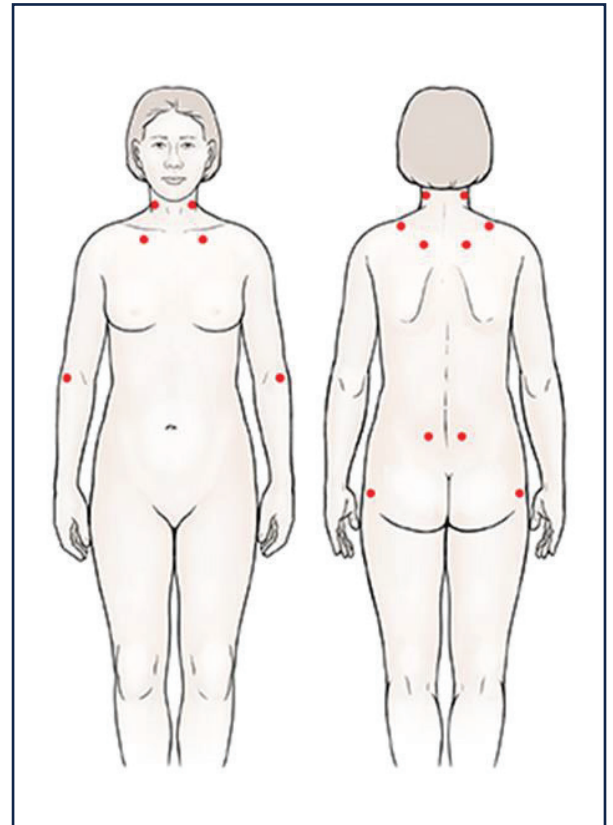


Fibromyalgia, a condition characterized by widespread muscle pain. Other symptoms may include insomnia, morning stiffness, headache, and memory problems.

People with fibromyalgia tend to have at least 11 of the 18 tender points shown above.

Along with the tender points, you may have some or all these symptoms:

- Constant tiredness (fatigue), even after a full night's sleep (nonrestorative sleep)
- A burning or throbbing pain in many parts of the body (this pain may vary during the day)
- Stiffness or aching all over your body
- Numbness or tingling in your arms and legs
- Trouble sleeping
- Bowel problems (bloating, diarrhea, constipation)
- Headaches
- Depression




Functional gastrointestinal disorders, a group of conditions marked by chronic or recurrent symptoms related to any part of the gastrointestinal tract. Functional condition refers to an abnormal function of an organ, without a structural alteration in the tissues. Examples include irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), functional dyspepsia, and functional abdominal pain syndrome.

Southwest Asia theater of operations or in **Afghanistan** on or after September 19, 2001 and:

Manifest one of the following infectious diseases to a degree of 10 percent or more within 1 year of separation, specific conditions include:

- **Malaria:** An infectious disease caused by a parasite transmitted by mosquitoes. Symptoms include chills, fever, and sweats.
- **Brucellosis:** A bacterial disease with symptoms such as profuse sweating and joint and muscle pain. The illness may be chronic and persist for years.
- **Campylobacter Jejuni:** A disease with symptoms such as abdominal pain, diarrhea, and fever.

- 
- **Coxiella Burnetii (Q Fever):** A bacterial disease with symptoms such as fever, severe headache, and gastrointestinal problems such as nausea and diarrhea. In chronic cases, the illness may cause inflammation of the heart.
 - **Nontyphoid Salmonella:** A condition characterized by symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.
 - **Shigella:** A condition characterized by symptoms such as fever, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.
 - **West Nile Virus:** A disease spread by mosquitoes characterized by symptoms such as fever, headache, muscle pain or weakness, nausea, and vomiting. Symptoms may range from mild to severe.

Manifest to a degree of 10% or more at any time after separation, specific conditions include:

- **Mycobacterium Tuberculosis:** An illness that primarily affects the lungs and causes symptoms such as chest pain, persistent cough (sometimes bloody), weight loss and fever.
- **Visceral Leishmaniasis:** A parasitic disease characterized by symptoms such as fever, weight loss, enlargement of the spleen and liver, and anemia.

If you served **any amount of time in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Syria, or Uzbekistan during the Persian Gulf War, from Sept. 19, 2001 to the present or the Southwest Asia theater of operations from Aug. 2, 1990 to the present**, specific conditions include: (cancers affecting throat, and lungs)

- Squamous cell carcinoma of the larynx
- Squamous cell carcinoma of the trachea
- Adenocarcinoma of the trachea
- Salivary gland-type tumors of the trachea
- Adenosquamous carcinoma of the lung
- Large cell carcinoma of the lung
- Salivary gland-type tumors of the lung
- Sarcomatoid carcinoma of the lung
- Typical and atypical carcinoid of the lung
- Squamous cell carcinoma of the larynx





If you served on or after **Sept. 11, 2001** in **Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Uzbekistan, or Yemen** or if you served in the ***Southwest Asia theater of operations, or Somalia, on or after Aug. 2, 1990, specific conditions include:**

Cancers:

- Brain cancer
- Gastrointestinal cancer of any type
- Glioblastoma
- Head cancer of any type
- Kidney cancer
- Lymphatic cancer of any type
- Lymphoma of any type
- Melanoma
- Neck cancer of any type
- Pancreatic cancer
- Reproductive cancer of any type
- Respiratory cancer of any type


Respiratory:

- Asthma that was diagnosed after service
- Chronic bronchitis
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Chronic rhinitis
- Chronic sinusitis
- Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis
- Emphysema
- Granulomatous disease
- Interstitial lung disease (ILD)
- Pleuritis
- Pulmonary fibrosis
- Sarcoidosis

Airborne Hazards and Burn Pit Exposures

**Southwest Asia theater of operations any time after August 2, 1990
or Afghanistan or Djibouti on or after September 11, 2001**

Regions and countries include:

- Afghanistan (after 9/11/2001)
 - Bahrain
 - Djibouti (after 9/11/2001)
 - Egypt (1990 and later)
 - Gulf of Aden
 - Gulf of Oman
 - Iraq
 - Kuwait
 - Oman
 - Qatar
 - Saudi Arabia
 - Syria (after 9/11/2001)
 - United Arab Emirates
 - Uzbekistan/Karshi-Khanabad (after 9/11/2001)
 - Bodies of Waters: Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Persian Gulf, and Red Sea (limited to ship deployment)
- 



Operations and campaigns include:

Desert Shield and Desert Storm (ODS/S)

Iraqi Freedom (OIF)

Enduring Freedom (OEF)

“Airborne hazard” refers to any sort of contaminant or potentially toxic substance that we are exposed to through the air we breathe. While on active duty, military service members may have been exposed to a variety of airborne hazards including:

- The smoke and fumes from open burn pits
- Sand, dust, and particulate matter
- General air pollution common in certain countries
- Fuel, aircraft exhaust, and other mechanical fumes
- Smoke from oil well fires

Open Burn Pits – What Was Burned

Waste products commonly disposed of in open burn pits include:


- Chemicals, paint, medical and human waste
- Metal and aluminum cans
- Munitions and unexploded ordnance
- Petroleum and lubricant products
- Plastics, rubber, wood, and food waste

Exposure to smoke created by burning these materials may cause irritation and burning of eyes or throat, coughing, breathing difficulties, skin itching or rashes. Many of these conditions are temporary and resolve on their own when the exposure ends. However, if you were closer to burn pit smoke or were exposed for longer periods of time, you may be at greater risk for longer-term health conditions.

Presumptive Conditions for Airborne Hazards and Burn Pit Exposures

The following are presumptive conditions:

CANCERS	RESPIRATORY
Brain cancer	Asthma that was diagnosed after service
Gastrointestinal cancer of any type	Chronic bronchitis
Glioblastoma	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
Head cancer of any type	Chronic rhinitis
Kidney cancer	Chronic sinusitis
Lymphatic cancer of any type	Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis
Lymphoma of any type	Emphysema





CANCERS	RESPIRATORY
Melanoma	Granulomatous disease
Neck cancer	Interstitial lung disease (ILD)
Pancreatic cancer	Pleuritis
Reproductive cancer of any type	Pulmonary fibrosis
Squamous cell carcinoma of the larynx	Sarcoidosis
Squamous cell carcinoma of the trachea	Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis
Adenocarcinoma of the trachea	Emphysema
Salivary gland-type tumors of the trachea	
Adenosquamous carcinoma of the lung	
Large cell carcinoma of the lung	
Salivary gland-type tumors of the lung	
Sarcomatoid carcinoma of the lung	
Typical and atypical carcinoid of the lung	
Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type	

Depending on a variety of factors, you may experience health effects related to this exposure. Factors that may indicate you have a greater or lesser risk of short or long-term health effects include:

- Types of waste burned
- Proximity, amount of time, and frequency of exposure
- Wind direction and other weather-related factors
- Presence of other airborne or environmental hazards in the area





Depleted Uranium

Uranium is a metal that occurs naturally in the earth's crust and is found in air, water, soil, and food. We all have trace levels of Uranium in our bodies. This natural uranium is a weakly radioactive substance. Depleted Uranium (DU) is what is left over after natural uranium is processed. DU has some of its radioactivity removed during processing. DU is 40% less radioactive than natural uranium. The type of radiation released by DU does not readily go through skin.

Eligibility

VA requires active duty service in any of the conflicts listed below to qualify for the DU Follow-up Program:

- Gulf War
- Bosnia
- Operation Enduring Freedom
- Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Operation New Dawn

The DU Follow-Up Program has two aspects: 1) for Veterans who were on or in vehicles hit with DU "friendly fire"; and 2) for rescuers entering burning vehicles, and those near burning vehicles; salvaging damaged vehicles; or near fires involving DU munitions.

Screening and follow-up care

Most Veterans concerned about DU exposure during combat were not involved in friendly fire, but had a possible exposure inhaling DU. For these Veterans, VA offers a screening program that involves completing:

- An exposure questionnaire
- A spot urine collection test to measure DU

For Veterans exposed to DU from embedded fragments or with DU-contaminated wounds from friendly fire, the Depleted Uranium Follow-up Program involves:

- Detailed physical exams
- Clinical tests of organ systems function
- Recommendations for treatment, including surgical removal of embedded fragments in some cases

In a group of Veterans exposed to DU in friendly fire events, recent research shows there may be an association between elevated urine U results and lower bone mineral density (BMD). The BMD results require further study to determine if they persist over time and researchers and clinicians continue to monitor the health of these Veterans.





Toxic Embedded Fragments

Some post-9/11 Veterans have retained toxic embedded fragments in their bodies after blast injuries sustained during military service. These Veterans may be eligible for medical surveillance conducted by the Toxic Embedded Fragment Surveillance Center at the Baltimore VA Medical Center. Shrapnel is a common term to describe the toxic fragments from improvised explosive devices (IEDs), bombs, mines, and shells. Some of the fragments may contain depleted uranium.

Health problems related to toxic embedded fragments

Although health problems caused by toxic embedded fragments are not fully understood, generally fragments are potentially harmful in two ways:

- Injury at the site of the fragment
- Chemicals from the fragment can travel through the bloodstream and affect other parts of the body

If you have an embedded fragment, talk with a VA health care provider who can provide you with a urine collection kit and a form that asks about your injury and fragments. The kit will also include instructions for collecting a spot urine sample. A spot urine sample is needed to measure the level of toxic materials that may be present or released from fragments.

Your urine will be tested to detect possible exposure to certain metals and plastics. The creatinine level will also be measured. Creatinine is a waste product always found in urine. It helps determine how diluted or concentrated the urine is during the time of the test. It also allows urine samples to be more accurately compared to each other.

