



# AGENT ORANGE NEWSLETTER

2025

INFORMATION FOR VIETNAM ERA VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

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## **UPDATE YOUR MAILING ADDRESS WITH VA**

**D**o you have a new mailing address? If you would like to continue to receive future issues of the annual Agent Orange Newsletter, along with many other benefits and service updates from VA, you can update your mailing address online, by phone, or in person.

### **Online**

Learn how to change your address in your VA.gov profile by visiting <https://www.va.gov/change-address/>.

### **By Phone**

Call VA Health Resources at 877-222-VETS (8387) and ask to update your VA profile address. You will need to share your Social Security number or date of birth.

### **In person**

If you are enrolled in VA health care, you can update your address in person in the Eligibility and Enrollment office at a [VA health facility near you](#).

## JOIN THE CAMP LEJEUNE HISTORIC DRINKING WATER NOTIFICATION DATABASE

The Marine Corps is actively seeking individuals who lived or worked at Camp Lejeune in 1987 or before so they can be included in the Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water Notification Database. The purpose of the Notification Database is to help the Marine Corps notify individuals who may have lived or worked aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in 1987 or earlier, of potential exposure to contaminated water. The Marine Corps wants to ensure those who lived on Camp Lejeune and may have been exposed are provided with up-to-date information regarding the past water quality aboard the base.

Please visit the website (<https://clnr.hqi.usmc.mil/>) for complete details regarding the notification database, ongoing studies, and other information. You may also call the toll-free information line, (877) 261-9782, or e-mail [clwater@usmc.mil](mailto:clwater@usmc.mil) to reach a representative who can assist you with questions and concerns. Please encourage friends and family members who were at Camp Lejeune during those years to register as well.



## HOW TO FILE A VA DISABILITY CLAIM

As a Vietnam Veteran, you can file a claim with VA for disability benefits, health care, and other services by following a few steps. First, gather all necessary documents, including your DD-214 (discharge papers), medical records, and any other evidence that supports your claim. You can file your claim online through VA's [online portal](#), by mail, in person at a VA Regional Office, or with the help of a Veterans Service Organization (VSO). To file online, visit [VA's website](#) and follow the instructions for submitting a claim. If you prefer to file by mail, download and complete [VA Form 21-526EZ, "Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits,"](#) and send it to the Claims Intake Center. For in-person filing, locate your closest VA Regional Office and schedule an appointment with a representative who can help you with your application.

VA encourages you to submit a claim if you feel that your military service has affected your health. For further assistance, you can contact the following resources:

### Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)

- Phone: 1-800-MyVA411
- Website: <https://www.va.gov/disability/>

### Online Portal

- Website: <https://www.va.gov/>

### VA Regional Offices

- To find your nearest VA Regional Office, visit: <https://www.va.gov/find-locations>

### Where to Send a Claim

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Claims Intake Center  
PO Box 4444  
Janesville, WI 53547-4444

### Additional Resources

- For more information on how to file a VA disability claim, visit: <https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/>

Additionally, you can seek assistance from an accredited [Veterans Service Organization](#) for valuable support throughout the claims process. They often have representatives who are knowledgeable about VA claims and can guide you through the process.

# VIETNAM VETERANS - EXPOSURES, HEALTH ISSUES, AND BENEFITS

If you served during the Vietnam War, it is important to be aware of certain health conditions that are common among Vietnam Veterans or that have been linked to service in Vietnam.

- Presumptions: VA recognizes certain cancers and other health problems as presumptive diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service. This means that the burden of proof is less and VA automatically assumes (or “presumes”) that your service caused your condition. The conditions are:
  - AL Amyloidosis
  - Bladder Cancer
  - Chronic B-cell Leukemias
  - Chronic lymphocytic leukemia
  - Chloracne (or similar acneform disease)
  - Diabetes Mellitus Type 2
  - Hypertension
  - Hodgkin’s Disease
  - Hypothyroidism
  - Ischemic Heart Disease
  - Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)
  - Multiple Myeloma
  - Other Myelodysplastic Syndromes
  - Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma
  - Parkinsonism
  - Parkinson’s Disease
  - Peripheral Neuropathy, Early-Onset, Acute and Subacute
  - Porphyria Cutanea Tarda
  - Prostate Cancer
  - Respiratory Cancers (includes lung cancer)
  - Soft Tissue Sarcomas (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi’s sarcoma, or mesothelioma)
- Birth defects: VA presumes certain [birth defects in children of Vietnam Veterans or Veterans with specific service in Korea or Thailand](#) are associated with Veterans' qualifying military service.
- [Hepatitis C](#): Vietnam Veterans are at risk for Hepatitis C, an infectious disease that can harm your liver.
- [Liver fluke infection and bile duct cancer](#): Veterans who ate raw or undercooked fish during service may have been infected with liver flukes. Irritation and scarring caused by liver fluke infection can lead to bile duct cancer.
- [Hearing problems caused by noise](#): Harmful sounds from guns, explosives, rockets, heavy weapons, jets and aircraft, and machinery can cause or contribute to hearing loss and tinnitus (ringing in the ears).
- [Illnesses or injuries caused by job- related hazards](#): You may have been exposed to job related hazards such as exposure to chemicals, paints, radiation, or other hazards through your military job.
- [Mental health](#): VA offers a variety of mental health services to support you.

If you served during the Vietnam War and have concerns about your health, you should see your primary care provider or contact your [local VA environmental health coordinator or the Veterans Exposure Team- Health Outcomes Military Exposures \(VET-HOME\)](#).

Learn more about [health conditions associated with Agent Orange](#).

## MANAGING CHRONIC PAIN

Many Veterans live with “chronic” pain, or pain that lasts over a long period of time. It includes pain that you feel regularly and pain that comes and goes. You may experience chronic pain in one part of the body or all over. Often, chronic pain cannot be eliminated completely. While chronic pain can have a negative impact on your life, there are strategies to help you manage it.



**Medication** – medication may help with chronic pain. However, in many instances, pain medication by itself may not control chronic pain. It also may not be wise to take pain medication for a long period of time. In addition, pain medications may have side effects, especially opiate-based medications. You should work closely with your health care provider to discuss if medication may help your pain and how best to use this medication. Other interventions, such as surgery, or acupuncture, may help with chronic pain. You can also consider integrating other measures, such as:

**Exercise** – low impact exercise, such as walking, swimming, or biking, can help reduce pain. In addition, exercises to improve your strength, flexibility, stamina, and balance may help with pain. Ask your health care provider which exercises are safe and most appropriate for your needs. You may also benefit from working with a physical therapist to tailor an exercise program for you.

**Mind/body strategies** – meditation and yoga may help you reduce stress, improve your mood, and make you less aware of your pain which will help you feel better.

**Lifestyle changes** – lifestyle habits such as getting enough sleep and eating a healthy diet may help you manage chronic pain.

**Improving emotional health** – your chronic pain may negatively impact your emotional health. If you feel depressed, anxious, or have difficulty sleeping because of your pain, medications or cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) may help. CBT is based on the idea that emotions and behavior are influenced by your thoughts about a situation. You can also keep a journal of your emotions, talk to loved ones about how you feel, and/or join a support group.

Talk to your primary care provider or a provider who specializes in pain medicine about options for how best to manage your pain. Most VA Medical Centers also have pain management clinics, where Veterans can be referred. Your strategy for managing pain should be tailored to your personal needs, may involve more than one method for pain relief, and can change over time.

Learn more about [pain management for Veterans](#). VA also offers resources on [whole health](#) to help you improve your overall health.

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# AGENT ORANGE

## NEWSLETTER

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## THE HERBICIDE AGENT BLUE

Service members sprayed more than 19 million gallons of herbicides to remove/reduce vegetation during the Vietnam War. These tactical herbicides were named after the colored stripes on their storage drums.

VA recently updated its list of herbicides used, tested, and stored in and outside of the United States during the Vietnam War to include the use of Agent Blue, an arsenic-based herbicide, at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (AFB) in Arizona.

Between 1973-1977, pesticide applicators stored and used Agent Blue at Davis-Monthan AFB to control vegetation. They applied it along the fence line surrounding the Military Aircraft Storage and Disposition Center and over at least six acres of the aircraft storage area. Only those who were applying the herbicide were at risk for exposure.

If you have concerns about your health related to service at Davis-Monthan AFB, you should discuss them with your health care provider or ask to receive a Military Environmental Exposure Assessment. You can file a claim if you believe that a health condition was caused by an exposure. Disability claims are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Find the complete list of locations where tactical herbicides were used, tested, and stored in and outside of the United States at <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/locations/tests-storage/index.asp>



# HOUSING AND CARE RESOURCES FOR SENIOR VETERANS

Complied by the VA Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care

When it comes to future housing, seniors report that they prefer the security and familiarity of their homes and community and want to continue to live in the same place. Seniors also want a sense of identity through independence, autonomy, caring relationships, and roles in society. The most common barriers for seniors to age in place are the increasing levels of assistance they need to maintain activities of daily living and self-care tasks, transportation issues, and affordable housing.



VA provides many care services that could help you continue to live in your home or in another location that is best for you in your senior years. Below are options for housing and care through VA:

**Home Based Primary Care:** Health care services are provided to Veterans in their home. This type of care is available for Veterans who need team-based, in-home support for ongoing diseases and illnesses that affect their health and daily activities.

**Skilled Home Health Care:** Short-term or long-term health care services, which include wound care, therapy services, medication

administration, and other services performed by a licensed nurse or therapist in the home of the Veteran, when the Veteran's needs cannot be met on an outpatient basis.

**Homemaker/Home Health Aide:** Veterans can receive personal care services from homemakers and home health aides who will help assist with daily living needs.

**Veteran Directed Care Program:** Veterans can hire their own workers for personal care services and help with activities of daily living, such as bathing, dressing, or fixing meals. This program is also for Veterans who are isolated or have caregivers that need help. Veterans in this program are given a budget for services.

**Home Respite Care:** Veterans can receive homemaker and home health aide care while their caregivers take breaks to run errands or go on vacation.

**Community Adult Day Health Care:** Veterans can go to community facilities during the day for personal care services, in addition to health maintenance, nutrition, age-appropriate exercise, social activities, peer support, and recreation.



## CONT'D: HOUSING AND CARE RESOURCES

[Community Living Centers](#): Veterans can go to nursing homes that are owned and operated by VA for short, long, or permanent stays. Community Living Centers offer short stay rehabilitation, long term care, hospice, respite, skilled nursing care, dementia care, and mental health recovery. VA is mandated to provide nursing home care to all Priority 1a Veterans (>70% service-connected disability or unemployable) who require that level of care.

[State Veterans Homes](#): State Veterans Homes are owned, operated, managed, and financed by individual states. There are three levels of care: nursing home care, domiciliary care, and adult day health care.

[Community Nursing Homes](#): Veterans requiring 24-hour nursing services and meeting a nursing home level of care by state standards have the choice to reside close to their family and community through one of 1,750 nationwide, VA-contracted, Medicare- or Medicaid-certified nursing homes. Additionally, VA is required to provide nursing home care for Veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 70% or greater or who need nursing home care for a service-connected condition.

[Medical Foster Home](#): A medical foster home is an alternative to a nursing home. Veterans who are no longer able to safely live independently in their community may reside in a caregiver's personal home. A medical foster home may be a fit for you if you have a serious, chronically disabling condition that meets a nursing home level of care but you prefer a non-institutional setting.

[Palliative/Hospice Care](#): These programs represent part of a continuum of comfort-oriented and supportive services provided by an interdisciplinary team in the home, community, outpatient, nursing home, or inpatient setting for Veterans with serious illness.

Learn more about these services by speaking to your VA health care provider or social worker, and by visiting [https://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/pages/Home\\_and\\_Community\\_Based\\_Services.asp](https://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/pages/Home_and_Community_Based_Services.asp)



## VETERANS WHO SERVED AT EDGEWOOD ARSENAL BASE BETWEEN 1955-1975

If you served at Edgewood Arsenal Base in Maryland as a research volunteer between 1955-1975, you may have been a part of chemical tests to evaluate the impact of low-dose chemical warfare agents on military personnel and to test protective clothing and antidotes. Between 6,000-7,000 soldiers participated in the testing.

The agents that were tested included:

- Nerve agents
- Nerve agent reactivators
- The nerve agent antidotes atropine and scopolamine
- Incapacitating agents
- Mustard agents
- Psychoactive agents, such as LSD, PCP, and cannabinoids
- Irritants and riot control agents
- Alcohol and caffeine

There are no medical tests to confirm if you were exposed to a chemical warfare agent at Edgewood Arsenal Base. A 2016 report to the Department of Defense concluded that although

the scientific literature has shown that there are health effects from exposure to individual agents, research volunteers at Edgewood Arsenal Base would have experienced lower concentrations of those agents for shorter periods of time. No significant test-related health effects have been observed in the volunteers since the tests took place. A National Academies of Science review in 2018 agreed that volunteers were exposed at low concentrations and for a short amount of time, with no significant test-related health effects.

If you have concerns about exposure at Edgewood Arsenal Base and your health, you can talk to your health care provider, an [environmental health coordinator](#) near you, or a [Veterans Exposure Team – Health Outcomes Military Exposures \(VET-HOME\)](#) health care provider.

Learn more about Edgewood Arsenal Base, exposures, and health at <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/edgewood-aberdeen/index.asp>

