

Expansion of VA Benefits Related to Agent Orange Exposure



The Department of Veterans Affairs recently announced that they have added [three additional health conditions](#) to the list of diseases that are associated with exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides during service in Southwest Asia: bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinsonism.

These illnesses join 14 other conditions that are presumed to be caused by exposure to Agent Orange: chronic B-cell leukemia, Hodgkin's disease, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, prostate cancer, respiratory cancers, some soft tissue sarcomas, AL amyloidosis, chloracne, diabetes mellitus type 2, ischemic heart disease, Parkinson's disease, early onset peripheral neuropathy, and porphyria cutanea tarda.

Note that Parkinsonism is separate from Parkinson's disease. According to the VA, [Parkinsonism](#) is defined as "any condition that causes a combination of abnormal movements. These include slow movements, trouble speaking, stiff muscles, or tremors."

If you are a veteran who served in a location that exposed you to Agent Orange, or a survivor of one of these veterans, and you previously filed a claim for benefits related to one of the aforementioned new health conditions *and were denied*, your case will be automatically reviewed by the VA – you do not need to refile a claim on your own. The VA will send letters to those impacted by this change.

[Blue Water Navy](#) veterans diagnosed with one of the presumptive diseases caused by Agent Orange exposure who previously had their claim for benefits based on those diseases denied – or the survivors of these veterans – can file a new claim. In some cases, if the new claim is approved, the VA may provide retroactive payments dating back to when the original claim was filed.

To file a new claim for benefits based on diseases caused by Agent Orange exposure, veterans must meet service requirements – typically serving in or near the Republic of Vietnam, including within 12 nautical miles of the coast of Vietnam, between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975. Assignments in other locations or time periods that brought veterans into contact with Agent Orange may also qualify.



Veterans or their survivors must also provide medical records documenting the diagnosis of an Agent Orange-related illness and military records detailing the necessary service requirements and exposure to Agent Orange. Veterans with an illness not specified by the VA as an Agent Orange presumptive who believe their condition is associated with Agent Orange exposure can still file a claim for benefits but will be required to provide additional evidence supporting their claim. Survivors of these veterans may also apply with the additional supporting evidence.

If you need help filing a claim, have questions regarding the VA's reconsideration of previously filed claims, or have questions about the claims process in general, consider scheduling a benefits counseling session with a Navy Mutual VSO representative [here](#). Our accredited VSO representatives are here to assist veterans and their families in the submission, adjudication, and appeal of claims for benefit from the VA – services that we provide at no charge.

Navy Mutual is here to help. As the oldest federally recognized Veterans Service Organization, our representatives can help you navigate VA benefits and make sure that you get the answers to your questions. You can reach our Veterans Services team at VSO@navymutual.org.