

Health Care Options

for Airborne Hazards and Burn Pit Exposures

Exposure to airborne hazards is a serious concern for many Veterans and active-duty service members. Many health conditions related to these hazards are temporary and should disappear after the exposure ends. Other longer-term health issues may be caused by a combination of hazardous exposures, injuries, or illnesses you may have experienced during your military service.

Possible airborne hazard exposures include:

- 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

VA offers several options to get care for health issues related to your military exposures. Read on to learn more.

How to Get Care for Your Exposures

VA health care is available to Veterans who may have been exposed to burn pits or other airborne hazards. If you are concerned about the potential health effects of your environmental exposures, we encourage you to talk to your health care provider, apply for VA health care, and file a claim for compensation and benefits.

Apply for VA Health Care Today

If you served in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan or Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) or New Dawn (OND) in Iraq, you can receive free VA health care for up to 5 years after separation. Taking advantage of this enhanced eligibility period may help your VA claim for compensation, benefits, and health care later.

Veterans who served in other campaigns and regions or during other time periods can check their eligibility for VA health care by visiting www.VA.gov/health-care or calling 877-222-8387. You do not need to file a claim to receive care from VA.

Once enrolled, your VA care team will work with you to understand your health concerns and connect you with the care and services you need to get – and stay – healthy.

You can also contact your facility's environmental health coordinator for more information and resources: www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp.

Service Connection for Airborne Hazard Exposures

Currently, VA makes determinations about whether certain health conditions are connected to exposure to airborne hazards on a case-by-case basis through the VA claims process. Through this process, we consider the unique experiences and needs of each Veteran including:

- Your number of deployments
- The length and proximity of your exposure
- The presence of other air pollution and other environmental hazards

You can learn more about to file a claim by visiting www.VA.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim.

Join the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry

VA established this registry in 2014 to put data to work for Veterans and help us better understand the potential health effects of exposure to airborne hazards during military service. By joining the registry, you can provide information that supports ongoing research and helps VA provide better care to all Veterans. Joining the registry can also help you identify health concerns, discuss them with your health care providers, and get follow-up care.

To learn more about how to join the registry, visit www.publichealth.VA.gov/airbornehazards. You will need to log in via the secure registry portal to complete an online questionnaire. Once you have completed the questionnaire, you have the option to schedule a free environmental health evaluation at your local VA facility.

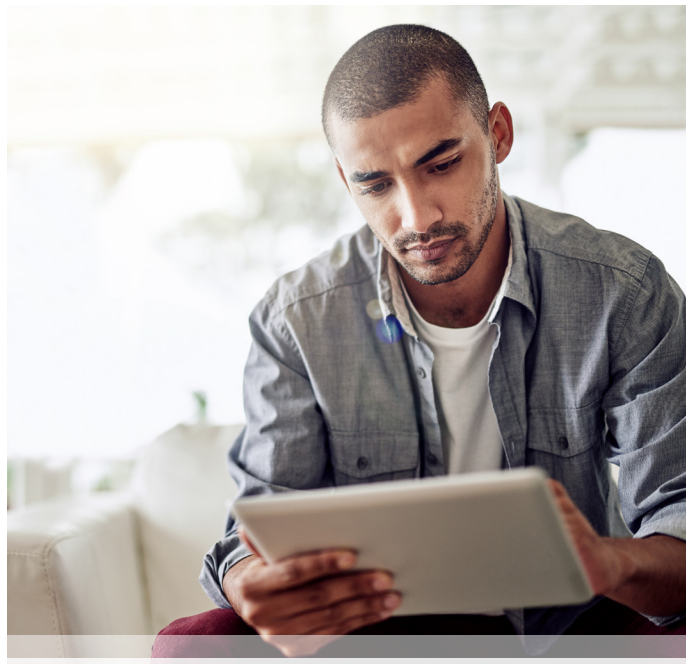
Why should I schedule my registry health evaluation?

By taking part in this evaluation, you can help us understand the potential long-term health effects of these types of exposures. Participating is also an opportunity to learn more about your own health, document your exposures, and talk to a VA health care provider about your health concerns.

Even if you aren't experiencing symptoms or illnesses you think are related to your exposures, the discussion can help you proactively monitor your own health.

Can the health evaluation impact my VA claim or access to care from VA?

No, the registry health evaluation is separate from compensation and benefits evaluations and regular visits with your VA provider. Participating cannot negatively impact your VA claim, though you can submit notes from the evaluation to support your claim if you choose.



How do I schedule the evaluation?

You can schedule an evaluation at your convenience by contacting the environmental health coordinator at your local VA facility. In some cases, these evaluations are performed by primary care providers and in other cases they may be completed by an environmental health clinician at special environmental hazard clinics or remotely via a telehealth appointment.

There is no deadline to participate – you can schedule your visit any time after completing the registry questionnaire.

Find your environmental health coordinator:

www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp

We encourage all Veterans concerned about their military exposures to talk to their health care provider, apply for VA health care, and file a claim for compensation and benefits.



Scan this QR code with your smartphone camera to learn more.

Apply for VA Health Care: www.VA.gov/health-care or call 877-222-8387

File a Claim: www.VA.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs