



Veterans Affairs

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Director

Fact Sheet

GULF WAR SYNDROME AND PRESUMPTIVE ILLNESSES FOR OEF/OIF

What causes Gulf War Syndrome and Other Illnesses associated with OEF/OIF?

From August 2, 1990 through the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan members of our military have been exposed to various hazardous environmental factors. These range from oil fires and the burning of chemical and biological agents to infectious diseases native to Southwest Asia.

Who was exposed and when?

Veterans with military service in the Southwest Asia Theater and Afghanistan are considered exposed to these hazards. The Southwest Asia Theater includes:

- Iraq
- Saudi Arabia
- Kuwait
- Qatar
- Bahrain
- The United Arab Emirates
- Oman
- Persian Gulf
- Gulf of Aden
- Gulf of Oman
- Arabian Sea
- Red Sea
- The airspace above these locations

Service must occur on or after August 2, 1990 in Southeast Asia, or on or after Sept 19, 2001 in Afghanistan.

What is Gulf War Syndrome? When is it considered “Service Connected”?

Gulf War Syndrome is a set of undiagnosed or medically unexplained, chronic, multisymptom illnesses that arose following Operation Desert Storm. They include:

- chronic joint/muscle pain (fibromyalgia)
- skin conditions
- chronic fatigue
- neurological symptoms
- neuropsychological symptoms
- sleep disturbances
- gastrointestinal symptoms (IBS, GERD)
- respiratory disorders
- heart/ cardiovascular symptoms
- headaches
- menstrual disorders
- Abnormal weight loss

In order to obtain service connection for these conditions, medical records must show that the symptoms manifest to at least a 10% degree before December 31, 2016.

Are there Other Conditions Related to Service in Southwest Asia and Afghanistan?

There are nine diseases that have been linked to service in the Southwest Asia Theater. Veterans may be eligible for compensation and healthcare benefits for the following diseases and their secondary effects as long as medical records show that they were manifested to a 10% degree within a year of discharge:

- Brucellosis
- Campylobacter Jejuni
- Coxiella Burnetii (Q Fever)
- Nontyphoid Salmonella
- Shigella
- West Nile Virus
- Malaria*
- Visceral Leishmaniasis**
- Mycobacterium Tuberculosis**

* Malaria must have become manifest to a 10% degree or more within 1 year of discharge OR within a time when standard treatises indicate that the incubation period commenced during service.

** There is no time limit for claiming service connection for these conditions.

Veterans Affairs Office Locations:

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- 8575 Haven Ave., Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730 (909-948-6470
- **Or call Toll Free from anywhere in San Bernardino County : 1-866-4SB-Vets (1-866-472-8387)**