



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Benefits Administration

Presumptive Disability Benefits

What is “Presumptive” Service Connection?

VA presumes that certain disabilities were caused by military service. This is because of the unique circumstances of a specific Veteran’s military service. If a presumed condition is diagnosed in a Veteran within a certain group, they can be awarded disability compensation.

What are “Presumptive” Conditions?

If you are diagnosed with a chronic disease within one year of active duty release, you should apply for disability compensation. Examples of chronic disease include: arthritis, diabetes or hypertension.

Or, if you served continuously for at least 90 days and are diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) after discharge, you can establish service connection for the disease.

Veterans in the following groups may qualify for “presumptive” disability benefits:

- Former prisoners of war who:
 - Have a condition that is at least 10 percent disabling
- Vietnam Veterans who were:
 - Exposed to Agent Orange
 - Served in the Republic of Vietnam or on a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia between Jan. 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975
- Atomic Veterans exposed to ionizing radiation and who experienced one of the following:
 - Participated in atmospheric nuclear testing
 - Occupied or were prisoners of war in Hiroshima or Nagasaki
 - Served before Feb. 1, 1992, at a diffusion plant in Paducah, Kentucky, Portsmouth, Ohio or Oak Ridge, Tennessee
 - Served before Jan. 1, 1974, at Amchitka Island, Alaska

- Gulf War Veterans who:
 - Served in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations
 - Have a condition that is at least 10 percent disabling by Dec. 31, 2021
- Gulf War Deployed Veterans who:
 - Served in the Southwest Theater of Operations during the Persian Gulf War
 - Served in Afghanistan, Syria, Djibouti or Uzbekistan on or after September 19, 2001

See the table below for specific presumed conditions for these groups:

Former Prisoners of War	Vietnam Veterans	Atomic Veterans	Gulf War Veterans	Gulf War Deployed Veterans
<p>Imprisoned for any length of time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychosis • Any anxiety state • Dysthymic disorder • Organic residuals of frostbite • Post- traumatic osteoarthritis • Heart disease or hypertensive vascular disease • Stroke and the residual effects <p>Imprisoned for at least 30 days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beriberi • Chronic dysentery • Helminthiasis • Malnutrition (including optic atrophy) • Pellagra • Other nutritional deficiencies • Irritable bowel syndrome • Peptic ulcer disease • Peripheral neuropathy • Cirrhosis of the liver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AL amyloidosis • B-cell leukemia • Chronic lymphocytic leukemia • Type 2 diabetes • Hodgkin’s disease • Ischemic heart disease • Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma • Parkinson’s disease • Parkinsonism • Prostate cancer • Respiratory cancers • Soft-tissue sarcoma (not including osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi’s sarcoma or mesothelioma) • Bladder cancer • Hypothyroidism <p>The following conditions, if they become greater than 10 percent debilitating within a year of exposure to an herbicide agent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy • Chloracne or other similar acneform disease • Porphyria cutanea tarda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All forms of leukemia, except chronic lymphocytic leukemia • Cancer of the thyroid, breast, pharynx, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, pancreas, bile ducts, gall bladder, salivary gland, urinary tract, brain, bone, lung, colon or ovary • Bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma • Multiple myeloma • Lymphomas, other than Hodgkin’s disease • Primary liver cancer, except if there are indications of cirrhosis or hepatitis B 	<p>Medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses that exist for six months or more, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic fatigue syndrome • Fibromyalgia • Irritable bowel syndrome • Any diagnosed or undiagnosed illness that warrants a presumption of service connection, as determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs <p>Signs or symptoms of an undiagnosed illness include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatigue • Skin symptoms • Headaches • Muscle pain • Joint pain • Neurological symptoms • Sleep disturbance • GI symptoms • Cardiovascular symptoms • Weight loss • Menstrual disorders 	<p>Served any length of time in the qualifying area and a condition below becomes manifest to any degree within 10 years from the date of separation from military service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asthma • Rhinitis • Sinusitis, to include rhinosinusitis