

# WHAT IS AGENT ORANGE?

Agent Orange is a herbicide made from a combination of two compounds: 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T which are chlorinated phenoxy acids. The most dangerous element of Agent Orange is an impurity present in the 2,4,5-T. That impurity is known chemically as 2,3,7,8-tetrachloro-dibenzo-p-dioxin, or more commonly, dioxin.

Agent Orange, so named because it was shipped in orange-striped 55-gallon drums, was sprayed from fixed and rotary wing aircraft. Agent Orange was also sprayed from trucks and backpacks to defoliate base perimeters, landing zones and other areas.

Between 1962 and 1971, the United States sprayed more than 10.6 million gallons of herbicide in Southeast Asia in order to deprive the enemy forces of ground cover provided by dense jungles and foliage. This massive defoliation project was called "Operation Ranch Hand," and was successful in defoliating an area about the size of Massachusetts.

## EXPOSURE TO AGENT ORANGE

Three million veterans served in Southeast Asia. No one knows for sure how many veterans were exposed to Agent Orange, but it is estimated that as many as 2.4 million Americans were in Vietnam during "Operation Ranch Hand." Some of these personnel were in areas during and immediately after they were sprayed, while others actually handled Agent Orange and did the spraying. It may never be known how many people were exposed to Agent Orange due to incomplete records, but VA presumes all veterans who served in the Vietnam Theatre of Operations to have had such exposure.

## PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

Veterans concerned about their possible exposure to Agent Orange can obtain a comprehensive Agent Orange examination at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center nearest them. While the examination will not determine if a veteran has been exposed to Agent Orange, it will assess the current health of the veteran. If any problems are found, the veteran will be notified to seek immediate medical care.

## RESEARCH

Ongoing research by the government and private agencies continues to determine the effects of exposure to herbicides and developments will be used to determine possible future additions of disabilities that may be presumed to be a result of exposure to "certain herbicide agents."

## DISABILITIES FROM EXPOSURE TO AGENT ORANGE

It is important to remember that exposure to Agent Orange while serving in Southeast Asia is not a disability in itself. In order to make application for compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs, a veteran must have one of the disabilities which have been determined to be associated with exposure to herbicide agents or any disability the veteran believes is service-connected.

## Agent Orange Helpline: 1-800-749-8387

### DISEASES PRESUMED TO BE SERVICE-CONNECTED

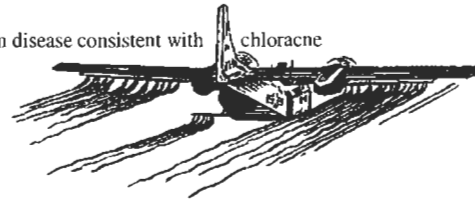
If a veteran develops certain diseases, it may be presumed that they are service-connected disabilities based on exposure to herbicide agents while serving in Southeast Asia. There are also time limits for certain diseases during which the diseases must have manifested for the presumption to apply in a claim for VA compensation.

Currently, only the following diseases are presumed to be service-connected specifically for veterans who were exposed to herbicides during their military service, even though there is no record of such disease during service:

Chloracne or other acneform disease consistent with chloracne  
Hodgkin's disease  
Diabetes Mellitus Type II  
Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma  
Prophyria cutanea tarda  
Soft-tissue sarcoma  
Multiple Myeloma  
Cancers of the Lung, Bronchus, Larynx and Trachea  
Prostate Cancer  
Acute and sub-acute peripheral neuropathy  
Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL)

*Note: The term "soft-tissue sarcoma" includes the following:*

Adult fibrosarcoma  
Dermatofibrosarcoma protuberans  
Malignant fibrous histiocytoma  
Liposarcoma  
Leiomyosarcoma  
Epithelioid leiomyosarcoma (malignant leiomyoblastoma)  
Rhabdomyosarcoma  
Ectomesenchymoma  
Angiosarcoma (hemangiosarcoma & lymphangiosarcoma)  
Proliferating (systemic) angioendotheliomatosis  
Malignant glomus tumor  
Malignant hemangiopericytoma  
Synovial sarcoma (malignant synovioma)  
Malignant giant cell tumor of tendon sheath  
Malignant schwannoma, including malignant schwannoma with rhabdomyoblastic differentiation (malignant Triton tumor), glandular and epithelioid malignant schwannomas  
Malignant mesenchymoma  
Malignant glandular cell tumor  
Alveolar soft part sarcoma  
Epithelioid sarcoma  
Clear cell sarcoma of tendons and aponeuroses  
Extraskeletal Ewing's sarcoma  
Congenital and infantile fibrosarcoma  
Malignant ganglioneuroma



## Q&A

**Q:** How do I know if I was exposed to Agent Orange?

**A:** You may never know for sure if you were actually exposed. Records of spray missions and troop movements in those areas are incomplete. If you served in Southeast Asia between 1962 and 1971, you may have been.

**Q:** I don't have any of the listed diseases at this time and I seem to be in pretty good health, but I still worry. What should I do?

**A:** You could have an Agent Orange exam to determine your current health. You are added to the Agent Orange Registry which will be used for future contact, if necessary, based on new discoveries.

**Q:** I've been diagnosed with a cancer that's not on the list of "Agent Orange disabilities". What can I do?

**A:** You are entitled to apply for compensation for any condition that you feel may be related to your military service. File a claim and allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to make a determination in the matter. It is also possible that further conditions/diseases may be added to the list of presumed diseases in the future.

**Q:** I'm not a veteran, but my spouse was. He died of cancer of the lungs. Is there anything I can do?

**A:** Yes. File a claim for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), payable based on a veteran's death from service-connected causes or, in certain circumstances, when the veteran died while 100% service-connected disabled. VA will determine if your spouse's death was related to military service and you may be entitled to monthly compensation and other benefits based on such a service-connected death.

**Q:** My child was born with Spina Bifida. Is there any connection between Agent Orange and this?

**A:** Based on a March, 1996 National Academy of Science Institute of Medicine's report, there is suggestive evidence showing an association between veterans' Agent Orange exposure and spina bifida in their children. The natural child of the veteran must have been conceived and born after service in Vietnam. Compensation payments to the child may be possible based on current legislation. Children of female Vietnam veterans, born with certain birth defects, may also qualify for compensation.

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
FACILITIES IN OHIO**

Brecksville VA Medical Center  
10000 Brecksville Rd., Brecksville, Ohio 44141  
440-526-3030

Chillicothe VA Medical Center  
17273 State Route 104, Chillicothe, Ohio 45601  
740-773-1141

Cincinnati VA Medical Center  
3200 Vine St., Cincinnati, Ohio 45220  
513-861-3100

Cleveland VA Medical Center  
10701 East Blvd., Cleveland, Ohio 44106  
216-791-3800

Dayton VA Medical Center  
4100 W. Third St., Dayton, Ohio 45428  
937-268-6511

Canton VA Outpatient Clinic  
221 Third St., S.E., Canton, Ohio 44702  
330-489-4600

Columbus VA Outpatient Clinic  
543 Taylor Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43203  
614-257-5200

Toledo VA Outpatient Clinic  
3333 Glendale Ave., Toledo, Ohio 43614  
419-259-2000

Youngstown VA Outpatient Clinic  
2031 Belmont, Youngstown, Ohio 44505  
330-740-9200

Cleveland VA Regional Office  
1240 E. Ninth St., Cleveland, Ohio 44199  
1-800-827-1000 (TDD 1-800-829-4833)

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