

Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022 – Toxic Exposure Screening

November 2022



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U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Purpose

This presentation provides an overview of the Toxic Exposure Screening, implemented as part of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022.

The following topics will be covered:

- Definition of toxic exposure
- Toxic exposure screening introduction
- Toxic exposure screening availability



Toxic Exposure

The PACT Act defines the term “toxic exposure,” but generally, “toxic exposure” refers to a subset of Military Environmental Exposures. Whether an exposure is “toxic” is determined by the substance, the concentration of exposure, route of exposure (inhalation, ingestion, transdermal or intradermal, intravenous, etc.), and duration of exposure.

Chemicals	Herbicides (Agent Orange) used during Vietnam era, burn pits, sulfur fire in Iraq, Camp Lejeune water supplies, pesticides used during Gulf War, depleted uranium, industrial solvents
Air Pollutants	Burn pits, oil well fire during Gulf War, sulfur fire in Iraq, Atsugi (Japan) waste incinerator, sand, dust, and very small, fine particles or liquid droplets
Occupational Hazards	Asbestos, industrial solvents, lead, radiation, vibration, noise, fuels, polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs), and special paint used on military vehicles
Radiation	Nuclear weapons and testing, x-rays, depleted uranium
Warfare Agents	Chemical weapons, Project 112/Project Shipboard Hazard and Defense (SHAD), herbicide tests and storage, and chemical experiments



VA Toxic Exposure Screening

- Starting November 8, 2022, enrolled Veterans will receive an initial Toxic Exposure Screening and a follow-up screening at least once every 5 years.
- Veterans who are not enrolled and who meet eligibility requirements will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.
- Veterans will be asked questions about potential exposure to an open burn pit or other hazards commonly associated with military environmental exposure.



VA Toxic Exposure Screening Quick Facts


- **Who:** All Veterans enrolled in VA health care
- **What:** A quick, 5-10 minute screening to identify and document any potential exposures to toxins during military service
- **When:** At least once every 5 years.
- **Where:** At VA medical centers or clinics
- **Why:** To support the long-term health plan of the Veteran—ensuring they receive informed, whole-health care—and connect them with follow-up resources as requested.



Toxic Exposure Screening Resource

After Veterans have completed their Toxic Exposure Screening, they will receive complementary print materials that provide information about:

- Types of toxic exposures
- How to participate in health registries
- How to submit a claim
- Presumptive conditions
- Connecting with VA health care team



The screenshot shows a document titled "TOXIC EXPOSURE SCREENING INFORMATION" with the VA logo. It includes a commitment statement, a definition of toxic exposures, a list of exposure types (Open Burn Pits, Gulf War related, Agent Orange, Radiation, Camp Lejeune, and Other), and sections for managing health, talking with a provider, and enrolling in VA care. A QR code and the VA logo are at the bottom.

TOXIC EXPOSURE SCREENING INFORMATION
VA is committed to providing screening, health care, and resources to Veterans with toxic exposure concerns from military service.

TOXIC EXPOSURES
While toxic exposure is defined by law, generally there are several types of possible exposures or hazards Veterans may have experienced during their military service. Some common examples appear below.

- » **Open Burn Pits/Airborne Hazards:** Contaminants or substances in the air including smoke and fumes from open burn pits and fine particulate matter.
- » **Gulf War related exposures:** Veterans may have been exposed to a variety of environmental hazards including pesticides and oil well fires.
- » **Agent Orange:** An herbicide used to thin-out thick foliage commonly found in jungles and fields.
- » **Radiation:** Exposure from sources such as nuclear weapons.
- » **Camp Lejeune contaminated water exposure:** Between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987, Veterans and their families may have been exposed to contaminated drinking water.
- » **Other exposures:** There are other potential toxic exposures that may occur during military service.

MANAGE YOUR HEALTH
Proactively developing a long-term health care plan with your care team can help detect conditions early and treat or lessen the effect of complications resulting from exposure(s).

TALK WITH A VA PROVIDER:

- » Call 1-800-MyVA411 then press 8, or a local VA clinical care team
- » Send a secure message to your clinical care team through your patient portal: My HealthVet at: www.myhealth.va.gov or My VA Health at: patientportal.myhealth.va.gov
- » Discuss exposure concerns at your next VA appointment

ENROLL IN VA CARE:

- » Online www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction
- » Call 877-222-VETS (8387)
- » Visit your nearest VA medical center and enroll in person: www.va.gov/find-locations

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Toxic Exposure Screening (TES) Navigator



- TES Navigators will be identified at each VHA facility to assist in screening Veterans and to disseminate information about the Toxic Exposure Screening
- They will serve as the point of contact for Veteran concerns and ensure swift response without overburdening clinicians
- TES Navigators will be able to:
 - Administer the TES to Veterans
 - Enter a consult for follow-up care
 - Enter diagnosis code into the health record



Getting a Toxic Exposure Screening

Beginning November 8, Veterans can ask about the Toxic Exposure Screening at their next VA primary care provider appointment or they can:

- Contact their local VA health care team through Secure Message
- Call 1-800-MyVA411 and press 8.

