

VA PRESUMPTIVE ILLNESSES: CHRONIC DISEASES

Osla A. McKercher; Updated 08-16-2021; page 1/3

FAQ TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Who Is Eligible?
2. What Are Presumptive Illnesses (or Presumptive Conditions)?
3. What Are the Criteria for Chronic Disease Presumptive Illnesses?
4. What Are the Chronic Diseases Considered Presumptive Illnesses?

1. WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Any veteran is eligible. Specific criteria are noted below.

2. WHAT ARE PRESUMPTIVE ILLNESSES (OR PRESUMPTIVE CONDITIONS)?

The overall goal of creating lists of “presumptive illnesses” (or “presumptive conditions”) is to try to ease the burden of proof and make it easier for veterans to file claims for the benefits they deserve. When a veteran files a claim with the VA and seeks to establish a “service connected” disability, normally the veteran must show three things: (1) evidence of an in-service event, (2) evidence of a current disability, and (3) evidence that the two are linked (sometimes a “nexus” letter is used to establish this link if the evidence is not readily apparent).

Sometimes it is difficult to establish the “link” between the in-service event and the current disability. For instance, Vietnam veterans had great difficulty establishing service connection for conditions they developed many years after active duty exposure to an herbicide called “Agent Orange.” Many of these veterans began to develop many of the same sorts of conditions that science was able to link to their exposure to the herbicide. Congress and the VA eventually recognized that these conditions were at the very least very likely related to Vietnam veterans’ exposure to Agent Orange. The VA created a list of “presumptive illnesses” (or “presumptive conditions”) for Vietnam veterans who were exposed to the herbicide. These veterans did not have to go through the normal process of establishing the “link” between the in-service event and their current illness in order to win their VA claims. The VA conceded that the in-service event had occurred and simply “presumed” that the veterans’ conditions were service connected.

3. WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA FOR CHRONIC DISEASE PRESUMPTIVE ILLNESSES?

In general, the symptoms must manifest to the same extent as the criteria listed for a VA rating of 10% disability within the first year after discharge. Exceptions are noted below.

4. WHAT ARE THE CHRONIC DISEASES CONSIDERED PRESUMPTIVE ILLNESSES?

The Blood

Anemia, codes 7716-7723

Hodgkin's disease, code 7709

Leukemia, code 7703

Thrombocytopenia, code 7705

Cardiovascular System

Arteriosclerosis, code 7005

Hypertension, code 7101

Endocarditis, code 7001

Valvular heart disease, code 7000

Raynaud's syndrome, code 7117

Buerger's disease, code 7115

Digestive System

Gallstones, code 7314

Cirrhosis of the liver, code 7312

Gastric ulcer, code 7304

Duodenal ulcer, code 7305

Endocrine System

Diabetes, code 7913

Diseases of the thyroid, parathyroid, pituitary, or adrenal glands

Genitourinary System

Calculus of the bladder, code 7515

Kidney stones, code 7508

Nephrosclerosis, code 7507

Nephritis, code 7502

Infectious or Immune Diseases

Hansen's disease (Leprosy), code 6302 (must manifest to 10% within 3 years)

Lupus, code 6350

Tuberculosis (must manifest to 10% within 3 years)

Mental Disorders

Any Psychotic Disorder

Musculoskeletal System

Arthritis, degenerative, code 5003, or systemic, code 5002

Osteitis deformans (Paget's disease), code 5016

Osteomalacia, code 5014

Nervous System

Progressive Muscular Atrophy, code 8023

Brain hemorrhage, code 8009

Brain thrombosis, code 8008

Encephalitis, code 8000

Epilepsy

Myasthenia gravis, code 8025

Myelitis, code 8010

Bulbar palsy, code 8005

Parkinson's disease, code 8004

Amotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), code 8017 (this condition will qualify at any time after discharge unless it is a result of misconduct)

Multiple Sclerosis, code 8018 (must manifest to 10% within 7 years)

Syringomyelia, code 8024

Malignant cancer of the brain, code 8002

Malignant cancer of the spinal cord, code 8021

Malignant cancer of the nerves, code 8540

Any other "organic" Nervous System Diseases, like Huntington's Disease or Athetosis.

Respiratory System

Bronchiectasis, code 6601

Coccidioidomycosis, code 6835

Sarcoidosis, code 6846

The Skin

Collagen-vascular disease, code 7821