

War Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC) - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

A RESOURCE FOR VETERANS, SERVICE MEMBERS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

We've compiled a list of frequently asked questions to help WRIISC best respond to the concerns of Veterans and healthcare providers.



WHAT IS THE WRIISC?

- The War Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC) is a post-deployment tertiary care center that partners with VA referring providers and their health care teams to support the care of Veterans. The WRIISC is part of VA's Post-Deployment Health Services, a VA-delivery core Service.
- WRIISC provides clinical consultations for combat zone deployed Veterans who have medically unexplained symptoms lasting greater than six months requiring second opinions to evaluate if symptoms are possibly related to deployment(s).
- WRIISC also provides education and risk communication and conducts research. Learn more at www.warrelatedillness.va.gov
- WRIISC clinical services include comprehensive multidisciplinary evaluations, e-consults, and environmental exposure assessments. WRIISC evaluations are primarily conducted through telehealth evaluations. In some instances, on-site evaluations are done.



WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE WRIISC?

- Deployed Veterans with chronic, medically unexplained symptoms that last more than 6 months requiring second opinion consultations. All relevant work-ups (including non-VA evaluations) must be available in VA record for review.
- Veterans who are medically and psychiatrically stable with no recent substance abuse for the past 6 months.
- Veterans who do not have a combat zone deployment, are not medically or psychiatrically stable, and have not completed an initial evaluation of their health symptoms by their primary care physicians are not eligible for WRIISC services.



WHAT COMBAT DEPLOYMENTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR WRIISC SERVICES?

- Vietnam War (1962-1975)
- Gulf War I (Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm) (1990-1991)
- Somalia (1992-1994)
- Bosnia - Herzegovina (1995-1996)
- Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) – Afghanistan (2001 to present)
- Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)/Operation New Dawn – Iraq (2003 to present) OIF/OND
- Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) – Iraq (2014 to 2021) – Syria (2014 to present) – Libya (2015 to 2019)
- For deployments not listed, please provide specifics on deployment location and dates.



WHAT INFORMATION IS NEEDED TO COMPLETE A WRIISC CONSULT?

- Veterans without an initial evaluation for their symptoms may need to complete this step first.
- Local Environmental Health Registry exams are the first step in evaluating deployment environmental exposure concerns. VA registry exams are important surveillance tools and can be scheduled by contacting your local VA Environmental Health Coordinator at <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp>.
- If military environmental exposure concerns persist after Registry evaluation or are complex in nature, please list environmental exposure concerns on the WRIISC consult.
- If a Veteran has abused alcohol, illicit, or prescription drugs in past six months, please address this first as WRIISC is unable to evaluate Veterans if active substance abuse is present.



WHO CAN REFER A VETERAN TO WRIISC?

- Like many specialty consultations, WRIISC asks that Veterans' VA Primary Care Providers (PCP) make the WRIISC referral-details available at <https://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/WARRELATEDILLNESS/referral/index.asp>
- WRIISC referrals from a Veteran's VA primary care provider optimize the likelihood that Veterans will benefit from the WRIISC referral and that recommendations are communicated to the Veteran's VA PCP.
- If a VA Environmental Registry Coordinator or Environmental Health Clinician believes a Veteran may be an appropriate referral for WRIISC, please discuss a WRIISC referral with Veteran's VA primary care provider.



HOW ARE WRIISC CONSULTS TRIAGED?

- Once a WRIISC Inter-Facility Consult (IFC) is placed in VA's Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS), the consult is triaged to one of 3 WRIISC sites based on location of the referring VA facility. The 3 WRIISC sites are East Orange NJ VAMC, the Washington DC VAMC, and Palo Alto VAMC - see <https://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/WARRELATEDILLNESS/contact.asp>
- Once an IFC consult is received, WRIISC staff conduct medical record reviews to evaluate deployment status, workups for symptoms, and eligibility for WRIISC services.
- Each WRIISC consult receives a medical record review, and WRIISC consults are completed initially as econsults with clinical recommendations provided to the referring provider.
- As appropriate, additional WRIISC services, such as comprehensive, interdisciplinary evaluations, environmental exposure assessments, and integrative health and wellness services, may be offered to Veterans.



WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO VETERANS WHO WERE NOT DEPLOYED?

These Resources may be helpful to Veterans who were not deployed.

- VA's A to Z Military Exposure Index: Provides information about various military exposure topics. Available at VA Post-Deployment Health - <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/index.asp>
- Information about Camp Lejeune's past water contamination, Department of Defense (DoD) Camp Lejeune Registry, Camp Lejeune VA Presumptive conditions and Family Eligibility Information - <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune/index.asp>
- DoD Defense Health Agency Public Health provides information on various military exposures, including garrison exposures - <https://ph.health.mil>
- The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry has helpful resources about various exposure topics - <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/>

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