

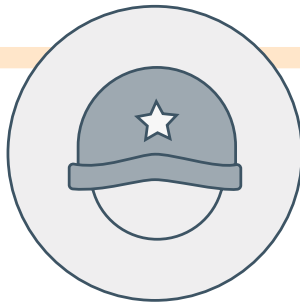


THE MICHAEL J. FOX FOUNDATION  
FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH

# Five Facts for Veterans *About Parkinson's*

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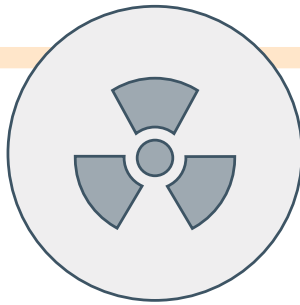
An estimated 110,000 veterans in the United States are living with Parkinson's disease (PD), according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Researchers believe that PD is caused by a combination of factors, including age, genetics and environment. Many environmental factors may be linked to military service. Here are five things to know if you're a veteran with Parkinson's.



## Studies Link Head Trauma and Injury to Parkinson's

Not everyone who experiences a head injury will develop PD. However, several **recent studies** have shown an association between head or brain injury and Parkinson's. Today, scientists are investigating ways to measure how traumatic brain injury links to disease risk, onset and progression, which may lead to new treatment options. Recognition of the issue is a first step, and taking steps to prevent and potentially reduce risk of PD is critical. If you've had a traumatic brain injury, it's important that you see your doctor regularly and live a healthy lifestyle (exercising regularly, eating a balanced diet and wearing a seatbelt, to name a few).





## Exposure to Agent Orange Is Associated with Increased Risk of PD

Agent Orange is an herbicide that was used by the U.S. military to destroy unwanted plants, particularly in Vietnam and the Korean demilitarized zone. Research links Agent Orange to the development of Parkinson's pathology and symptoms. The Michael J. Fox Foundation (MJFF) **advocated for the passage of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019.**

This legislation allows veterans with PD related to Agent Orange exposure to file a disability claim with the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) to receive benefits. In December 2020, Congress passed legislation adding parkinsonism to the VA list of illnesses presumed to be linked to Agent Orange. Many other herbicides (such as paraquat) and pesticides also are believed to play a role in increasing Parkinson's risk.



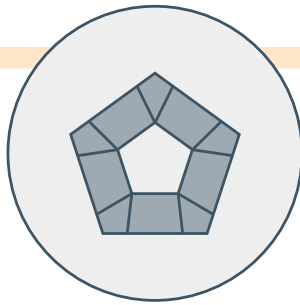


## Veterans Can Make Important Contributions to Parkinson's Research

MJFF advocates for federal funding of Parkinson's research, and funds novel approaches to better define, measure and treat PD — this includes investigating environmental causes of disease. Veterans have valuable experience to contribute to research.

**The Parkinson's Progression Markers Initiative** (PPMI) welcomes new volunteers, including individuals with and without a Parkinson's diagnosis. PPMI follows participants over time to better understand changes linked to Parkinson's risk, onset and progression. This information could lead to new therapies to prevent and treat Parkinson's.

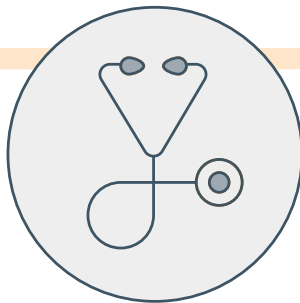




## The Department of Defense Studies PD and Military Service

The Parkinson's Research Program at the Department of Defense (DoD) is a government-funded research program specifically dedicated to PD. It is key to advancing important research progress by filling research gaps and investigates links between PD and military service — including those that might arise through head trauma or herbicide exposure. Right now, **MJFF and the Parkinson's community are asking Congress to increase funding** for the Parkinson's Research Program at the DoD.






## The VA System Offers Specialized Care Options for Veterans Living With Parkinson's

The Parkinson's Disease Research, Education, and Clinical Centers (PADRECCs) are part of the VA system and provide comprehensive medical and surgical care to veterans with PD and other movement disorders. When traveling to a specialized center isn't possible, VA doctors can provide virtual visits (using video on a computer or smartphone) — even across state lines — via telemedicine. This helps make Parkinson's care more accessible, efficient and personalized, which could lead to improved quality of life. For everyone living with PD, veteran or not, building the right care team is an important part of navigating life with the disease. This always includes **a movement disorder specialist** — a neurologist with specialized training in PD — and, depending on your needs, might include allied care professionals such as speech therapists, mental health counselors and physical therapists.





**He doesn't  
have Parkinson's.  
But he can help  
end it.**

Join the study  
that could change  
everything.



Parkinson's  
Progression  
Markers  
Initiative

More research is needed to deepen understanding of Parkinson's disease in the veteran community. To contribute your experience to research — whether you have Parkinson's or care about someone who does — **join MJFF's Parkinson's Progression Markers Initiative.**