

HYPERTENSION AND THE PACT ACT

Passed into law in August 2022, the Honoring our PACT Act added hypertension (high blood pressure) to the VA's list of diagnoses presumed to be caused by exposure to Agent Orange (AO), making it much easier for affected Veterans to qualify for disability benefits.

While many other health conditions, like Type 2 diabetes and prostate cancer, have long had presumptive condition status, the Honoring Our PACT Act represents a major victory for Vietnam War Veterans who have maintained that hypertension should also be considered presumptive.

This decision is so important because of the scope of its impact. The CDC estimates that 47% of Americans have hypertension; in 2020, it was a primary or contributing cause of more than 670,000 deaths in the United States.

In high blood pressure (hypertension), excessive pressure is exerted against the walls of the arteries and veins. To understand why this is harmful, imagine a hose subjected to pressure much higher than it is rated for: eventually, the hose, its connectors, and the pump supplying the pressure will all experience damage. The same concept applies in the human body, where arteries sustain inflammation as a precursor to

Hypertension has a reputation as a “silent killer.”

blockages and heart attacks, the heart grows too large and becomes ineffective, and the kidneys suffer slow, quiet damage, among many other negative effects. Hypertension has a reputation as a “silent killer.”

Health issues associated with high blood pressure include:

- Heart attack
- Aneurysms
- Heart failure
- Disease of the arteries in the heart, arms or legs
- Stroke
- Chronic kidney disease
- Vascular dementia
- Sexual dysfunction
- Brittle bones

VA presumes service connection for hypertension if you received a diagnosis within one year of your release from



Letter From Jan

Summer is finally here! School is out and many of us will soon head out for road trips. Many tourists will vacation in our beautiful state, and the roads will be crowded. Please put your cell phones away while driving and be mindful of others on the road — particularly those on

two wheels. Share the road. *It's the law.*

Members of our armed forces bravely face many external dangers, challenges and risks. What they may not realize is that they face an internal danger as well. Hypertension is a silent killer that affects millions of Americans, and it is found in higher-than-average rates among active-duty military and Veterans. PTSD and high blood pressure have been linked to chronic exposure to military aircraft

noise as well as exposure to Agent Orange. Have your blood pressure checked by a medical professional and follow their instructions. Hypertension can be managed with simple lifestyle changes and medication.

Last, but certainly not least, while we were enjoying our Memorial Day weekend, we paid tribute to our fallen service members. They made the ultimate sacrifice so we could have the many freedoms we enjoy today. *Thank a Veteran for their service.*

Recreational Spotlight

Register Now for the 2023 Freedom 5K Fun Run

Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, will host our annual Freedom 5K Fun Run on Saturday, July 8, 2023, beginning at 8:00 a.m. Race sign-in begins at 7:00 a.m. This year's race includes an in-person 5K as well as a virtual option.

The Virtual 5K Event will be held Saturday, July 1 from 12:01 a.m. to Friday,



July 7, 11:59 p.m. Participants who wish to participate in the Virtual 5K *must* use a fitness tracker to record their time and submit a photo of proof along with their timed results.

Make your run/walk even more fun and win one of this year's special awards:

- **Best "Furry Running Partner" Award.** Bringing a furry running partner? Dress them up, too!
- **Best Scenic Race Route Photo Award.** If you participate virtually, show us where you're running — whether in your house, on the beach, or in the woods.
- **Most Patriotic Selfie Award.** Dress in your most patriotic colors, costume or outfit.
- **Best Family Fun Photo Award.** Is your entire family participating? Even better!

To submit your photo(s), be sure to use the hashtag #JanDils5K on Facebook or Instagram.

For more information and to register for either event, please visit the Freedom Fun Run link on our home page at JanDils.com. Online registration for the in-person event closes at 11:59 p.m. Friday, July 7. Online registration for the virtual event closes at 11:59 p.m. Friday, June 30.

One hundred percent of the Freedom Fun Run 5K proceeds will benefit local Veteran organizations such as We Have Your Six — Parkersburg Division, Operation Transportation, and the Jan Dils Foundation Scholarship for Veteran Recipients.

Employee Spotlight

Nicole Straughter

Meet Nicole Straughter, an Intake Specialist at our office in the bustling capitol city of Charleston, who celebrated her sixth year with the firm in February.

Although she claims she "can't sing a lick," she loves music and will not hesitate to break out in song at the drop of a hat. Nicole also dabbles in digital art: church family and friends often ask her to make flyers and programs. Nicole, we love having you on our team, and appreciate your talents — even the singing!



Our previous events have been very successful, and we expect to draw record numbers of participants to support the men and women who have served our country. Hope we see you there!



ankle issues, spinal issues/damage, and nerve damage.

How the VA rates knee conditions

Traditionally, VA ratings for knee pain range from 0% to 20%. Some Vets can be rated at 30% for each knee, particularly if they need a knee replacement. It's important to note that pain is not paramount when a medical professional evaluates your knees: knee conditions are rated on range of motion, not pain. In other words, you may be in a lot of pain, but if you can flex your knee to some extent in either direction, your claim could be denied.

VA disability benefits may increase if a Veteran experiences pain in both knees. The "bilateral factor" allows a Veteran to receive a higher rating if the same joint or limb on both sides of the body has sustained service-related injuries.

If you have knee problems related to your military service, you deserve VA compensation. If your service-connected knee problems have resulted in other injuries or conditions, you may deserve more compensation than you are currently receiving. The team at the Jan Dils Foundation is here to help you navigate the process. Give us a call today at **833.534.3577** or email us at

Contact@JanDilsFoundation.org.

It won't cost you anything to see if we can help.

Knee pain is one of the most common health issues among Veterans. Service members are constantly conditioning to stay prepared for action. They also wear shoes that don't have the best support, carry bulky rucksacks, jump out of airplanes, and do a lot of heavy lifting. From boot camp and beyond, Veterans are susceptible to knee damage.

Service connection for knee conditions

Vigorous training, active-duty combat and manual labor can contribute to knee problems during military service. Veterans with knee pain may have a knee condition or injury that is eligible for VA disability benefits. It's extremely important to get treatment if you have pain in one or both

knees, both during service and after discharge, as the VA may deny your claim if you have not received treatment.

Knee conditions common among Veterans include:

- Partial dislocation of the knee (subluxation)
- Instability of the knee
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Osteoarthritis
- Stiffness that prevents movement (ankylosis)
- Bone infection (osteomyelitis)
- Active tuberculosis of the knee
- Water on the knee (effusion)
- Hyperextended knee (a knee that bends backwards)

Knee pain can also cause other health problems, including musculoskeletal issues such as hip and back problems,

Source: <https://fight4vets.com/knee-issues-veterans-disability-claim/>



SOUTHERN PIMENTO CHEESE

Try this summertime staple from **Rebecca Bugg**, VA Leads and Intake Specialist.



INGREDIENTS

2 cups shredded extra-sharp Cheddar cheese

8 oz. cream cheese, softened

½ cup mayonnaise

1 4 oz. jar diced pimento, drained

¼ tsp. garlic powder

1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and minced (optional)

¼ tsp. ground cayenne pepper (optional)

¼ tsp. onion powder

salt and black pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS: Place Cheddar cheese and cream cheese in a large bowl and mix well. Add mayonnaise, pimento, minced jalapeño, garlic powder, cayenne pepper and onion powder. Mix thoroughly until combined. Season to taste with salt and black pepper. Refrigerate for at least two hours before serving.

It's Game Time

COMMONYMS

What's a commonym, you ask? A commonym is a group of words that have a common trait in the three words/items listed. For example, the words: A car - A tree - An elephant... they all have trunks. These will make you think!

1. Help - Yesterday - Revolution
2. Moth - Meat - Medicine
3. Robert Kennedy - Julius Caesar - John Lennon
4. Orchestras - Ears - Brakes
5. Cliff - Springboard - Platform
6. Radio - Brain - Tidal
7. Shag - Red - Magic
8. Snow - Corn - Dandruff
9. Tennis - Small Claims - Supreme
10. Surprise - Search - Slumber

Answers: 1. Songs by the Beatles 2. Balls 3. All were assassinated 4. They have drums 5. Dives 6. Waves 7. Carpets 8. Flakes 9. Courts 10. Parties

JUNE 2023

P.O. Box 112
Parkersburg, WV 26102

PERSONAL INJURY | VETERANS DISABILITY | SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY

Want to keep up with all the latest news or get to know us better? Like us on Facebook!



Connect with us on our social networks!

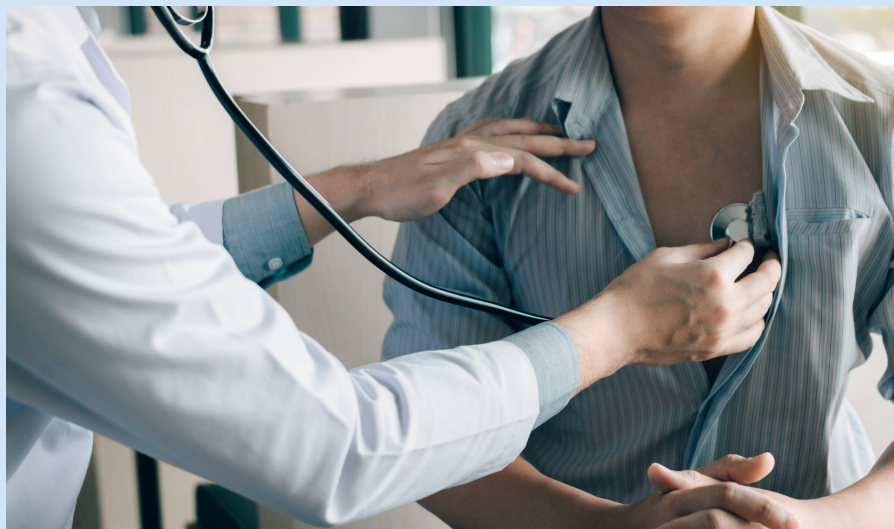


Continued from cover article >>

active duty. If you received your diagnosis after the one-year mark, then the burden is on you, the Veteran, to prove service connection. In this case, evidence such as a medical opinion is essential.

If you've been denied disability for

**If you've been denied
disability for hypertension as
a service-connected condition
in the past, now is a great time
to consider refiling.**



hypertension as a service-connected condition in the past, now is a great time to consider refiling. Also, if you are granted disability benefits under the PACT Act, and if your claim was pending prior to the law change in August of 2022, that is the earliest date you will receive. However, if there are different ways to link hypertension to other conditions you may have, you may be entitled to an earlier effective date.

If you are a Vietnam Veteran and suffer from hypertension, consider filing a claim. If you need help with filing your initial claim or with an appeal, contact us today at **833.534.3577** or email us at **Contact@JanDilsFoundation.org**. Our team will listen to your story and advise you on how to get the compensation you deserve. Your first consultation is always free.

Source: <https://www.va.gov/health/newsfeatures/2016/november/research-on-vietnam-veterans-and-blood-pressure.asp>