



CHAI Study Information Brochure

What is this study about?

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is conducting this study of health and well-being to better understand and assist post-9/11 Veterans. The *Coming Home from Afghanistan and Iraq* (CHAI) Study will provide critical information on the effects of military service. The CHAI Study will focus on three groups of people: (1) Veterans who deployed to combat zones during the OEF/OIF/OND era; (2) Veterans who were in the military, but did not deploy to a combat zone during the OEF/OIF/OND era; and (3) civilians who considered military service, but did not join the military during the OEF/OIF/OND era.

Information from the study will help the VA learn about the effects of combat and military experiences; the effects of pre-military and post-military life experiences; and how the health and well-being of post-9/11 Veterans compares with the health and well-being of civilians.

How do I participate in this study?

An Abt Associates interviewer will contact you by telephone to administer the survey. Or, if you prefer, you can go to the Website [URL] to start the survey and enter the password included in the letter and complete the survey questions on your own. The questions ask about:

- Your health: your general physical and mental health as well as specific health conditions
- Your life situation: your education, your job, your marital status
- Your habits: cigarette smoking and other substances
- Your experiences before, during, and after your military service
- Your exposure to trauma and other hazards

The CHAI Web Survey will take about 60 minutes to complete. If you need help completing the survey, feel free to ask a family member or caregiver for help. You can skip any question you do not want to answer.

You might be contacted again to participate in an in-person Neurocognitive Assessment, and if you have children between the ages of 12-17, we may ask for your permission to do an in-person interview with your son or daughter. The VA wants to learn more about what it is like to grow up in a family where a parent is in the military.

What if I choose not to participate?

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or leave the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Are there any risks or discomforts?

Some of the questions are sensitive and could make you feel uncomfortable. However, we have tried to make the survey as easy as possible. If you feel any distress, please call the toll-free Veterans Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255 and press 1 to speak with qualified responders, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also contact the Veterans Crisis Line by the Internet at <http://www.Veteranscrisisline.net>, or by text (send to 838255).

Are there any benefits?

The results of this study will be used to help improve the lives of post-9/11 Veterans. While you may not benefit directly from being in this study, your participation may benefit other Veterans by contributing to researchers' understanding on how to prevent and treat certain health conditions.

Who will see my information?

Your information will be kept confidential. The Department of Veterans Affairs has hired an independent research company, Abt Associates, to help conduct this study. Abt Associates stores and processes all study information in a separate secure area that is only accessible to a small number of approved staff with security clearance from the VA. All researchers and staff working on this study have been trained in protecting privacy, confidentiality, and data and computer security.

To help protect the privacy of respondents we have obtained a **Certificate of Confidentiality** from the United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). With this Certificate, the VA cannot be forced (for example by court order or subpoena) to disclose information that may identify you in any Federal, state, local, civil, criminal, legislative, administrative, or other proceedings. The researchers will use the Certificate to resist any demands for information that would identify you, except to prevent serious harm to you or others, and as explained below.

The Certificate cannot be used to resist a demand for information from personnel of the United States Federal or state government agency sponsoring the project and that will be used for auditing or program evaluation of agency funded projects or for information that must be disclosed in order to meet the requirements of the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

You should understand that a Certificate of Confidentiality does not prevent you, or a member of your family, from voluntarily releasing information about yourself, your family, or your involvement in this study. If an insurer or employer learns about your participation, and obtains your consent to receive research information, then we may not use the Certificate of Confidentiality to withhold this information. This means that you and your family must also actively protect your own privacy.

You should understand that we will in all cases, take the necessary action, including reporting to authorities, to prevent serious harm to yourself, children, or others. A Certificate of Confidentiality does not represent an endorsement of the research study by the Department of Health and Human Services or the National Institutes of Health.

Will I receive any payment if I participate in this study?

You will receive **\$50** for completing the survey. A check will be mailed to you a few weeks after you complete the survey. If you do not receive the check within 5 weeks, please call [CHAI STUDY PHONE NUMBER] toll-free.

Who can I talk to about the study?

For more information, please contact the CHAI Study [CHAI STUDY EMAIL] or call [CHAI STUDY PHONE NUMBER] toll-free. You can also call the Principal Investigator, Aaron Schneiderman, at 202-266-4695 or 1-800-211-5272. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant or you want to make sure this is a valid VA study, contact the VA Central Institutional Review Board toll-free at 1-877-254-3130.

How long will my information be kept?

Congress has mandated that the VA conduct the CHAI Study. Understanding the health and other needs of Veterans who have separated from the military, as well as the health and well-being of their children is a long-term research effort. Your information will be used for research purposes only, and may be able to answer important research questions beyond what the VA needs to know today. So, the information you provide in the CHAI Study will be kept for future studies by the VA Post-Deployment Health Service in accordance with VA Record Control Schedule 10-1 (RCS 10-1).

Will I be asked to participate in other research studies?

At the end of the survey you may be invited to participate in one or both of two related studies: the CHAI Child Study and/or the CHAI Neurocognitive Assessment. Your participation in the CHAI Child Study or CHAI Neurocognitive Assessment is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in either or both studies without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you agree to participate in one or both of these studies, they will be conducted at with a trained interviewer in your home or other location that you choose. Each Child Study and Neurocognitive Assessment participant will receive a **\$100** check per study from the interviewer at the end of the interview or assessment.

If you are interested, you may also be contacted again to participate in future research studies. Your participation in any future study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in future studies without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. All future studies will be reviewed and approved by committees that oversee research, including the Institutional Review Board that oversees the safety and ethics of VA studies.

How do I agree to participate in the CHAI Study?

If you choose to complete the survey by telephone, the interviewer will explain the study to you and ask you if you agree to participate. If you agree, the interviewer will begin the survey. If you chose to complete the Web version of the survey, simply use your unique access code [YOURID] when you log into the CHAI Web Survey at [CHAI SURVEY URL] and hit the "I AGREE" button after you have read, and agree to the consent for the Web survey.