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Department of Veterans Affairs



# Million Veteran Program: A Partnership with Veterans



Veterans Health Administration  
**Research & Development**  
Improving Veterans' Lives - [www.research.va.gov](http://www.research.va.gov)

DISCOVERY — INNOVATION — ADVANCEMENT

## What is the Million Veteran Program?

The Department of Veterans Affairs' Million Veteran Program (MVP) is a national, voluntary research program. MVP is designed to help researchers better understand how genes affect health and illness, with the goal of improving health care for Veterans.

## What will MVP study?

MVP aims to be one of the largest programs on genes and health in the United States. With an expected enrollment of one million Veterans over the next five to seven years, MVP provides an important opportunity to understand genes and health. An increasingly common way to gain knowledge in this area is to collect genetic samples and health information from large groups of people. Researchers may use this information to learn how genes, lifestyle, and military experiences affect health and disease.

## Why is it important to study genes?

Genes carry instructions for building and maintaining our bodies. They determine the color of our eyes and hair, our height, and other personal features. Small differences in our genes may also explain why some people get diseases and others do not. In addition, genes interact with our lifestyle factors and environment to influence our risk for common illnesses, such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. Genes may also affect how people respond to certain medications and treatments. Having a better understanding of how genes work may help to prevent and improve treatment of disease.

MVP is a research program that could allow current Veterans to help transform health care, not only for themselves, but for future generations of Veterans.



## What is involved in MVP participation?

Any Veteran receiving care in the VA health care system can participate. Participation includes:

- Filling out surveys through the mail
- Completing a **one-time** study visit to provide a blood sample for genetic analysis at a participating VA Medical Center
- Permitting authorized MVP staff to access information in your medical record on an ongoing basis
- Agreeing to future MVP contact

Participation takes about 20 minutes. For your convenience, **MVP study visits may be scheduled on the same day as other VA health care appointments.**

## What are the potential benefits of MVP?

Research findings based on MVP may lead to new ways of preventing and treating illnesses in Veterans and all Americans.

This research will help answer questions like:

- Why does a treatment work well for some Veterans but not for others?
- Why are some Veterans at a greater risk for developing an illness?
- How can we prevent certain illnesses in the first place?

While your participation may not immediately benefit you, over time what we learn from MVP will benefit all Veterans and the population at large.

**Participation in MVP is entirely voluntary and will not in any way affect Veterans' access to health care or benefits.**

## Are there any risks in participating?

- The risks of a blood draw include pain, bleeding, bruising, or infection.
- Filling out the survey may result in distress if you discover family health conditions of which you were not aware.
- There is a slight risk of a breach of confidentiality. The next section describes how VA will minimize this risk.

## What confidentiality and privacy protections are in place?

**Patient safety and information security are the top priorities in MVP and all VA research.** If you participate in MVP, your privacy and confidentiality are protected in the following ways:

- All samples will be stored in a secure VA biorepository.
- All samples and health information will be labeled with a code so that no one can directly identify participants. Only a few authorized VA employees will have access to the key to the code.
- Researchers who are approved access to analyze samples and data will not receive name, date of birth, address, or social security number of participating Veterans.

If you have questions about your rights as an MVP participant, or you want to make sure this is an approved VA project, you may contact the VA Central Institutional Review Board (IRB) toll-free at 877-254-3130.

### Contact Information:

For more information about MVP, visit [www.research.va.gov/mvp](http://www.research.va.gov/mvp) or call toll-free 866-441-6075.