

## Topic Page: [Gulf War Syndrome](#)

Definition: **Gulf War syndrome** from *Brewer's Dictionary of Modern Phrase and Fable*

A name for a disorder of the nervous system alleged to have been contracted by soldiers serving in the second Gulf War (1991). It was initially questioned whether such a syndrome actually existed, but when physical evidence was produced, a search for a possible physical cause began. Attribution was made either to anti-nerve-gas medication administered to troops before service in the Gulf or to exposure to harmful chemicals during such service.

### Summary Article: **Gulf War Syndrome**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Name given to the collection of psychological and physical illnesses suffered by soldiers who fought in the 1991 Gulf War. Symptoms include headaches, memory loss, listlessness, depression, respiratory problems, lethargy, muscle weakness, nausea, and pain. The symptoms and their severity vary with each sufferer and the specific cause of the condition is unknown, but is thought to be a toxic effect produced by combinations of factors unique to this conflict, including the use of depleted uranium ordinance, vaccinations against biological weapons and tropical diseases, exposure to organophosphate insecticides, and environmental pollution caused by the sabotage and burning of Iraqi oil wells. It is estimated that up to 250,000 of the 697,000 veterans of the conflict suffer from the syndrome.

After studying 10,000 troops who served in the Gulf War, the Pentagon stated in 1995 that Gulf War Syndrome did not exist. However, in 1997 President Bill Clinton appointed an independent panel to oversee Department of Defense research into possible links between the syndrome and chemical and biological exposure during the war. All US Gulf War veterans are now eligible for free comprehensive medical examinations and receive disability compensation if diagnosed with the condition.

The UK government took the position in 2005 that Gulf War Syndrome was a useful umbrella term to account for veterans' illnesses, but that it could not be classified as a single medical condition. However, the government does recognize that veterans suffer from illnesses originating from the conflict, and offers medical and financial support coordinated by the Ministry of Defence.

US animal research of 1995 showed that the drug pyridostigmine bromide that protects against the effects of nerve gas, and the insecticides DEET (sprayed on skin) and permethrin (used on clothes and bedding), whilst being safe separately, may together cause nerve damage.

In 1999, a US virologist discovered antibodies to squalene in the blood of 95% of sick veterans tested. Squalene is a component of many experimental vaccines, indicating that troops may have reacted to untested vaccines. Only in France, where troops were not vaccinated against anthrax and plague, have there been no cases of Gulf War Syndrome.

In 1999, US researchers discovered evidence of brain damage in the basal ganglia of US naval veterans with severe Gulf War Syndrome symptoms. In comparison with a control group, there was found to be a significant drop in the density of neurones, suggesting brain damage incurred during or as a direct result of the war.

### **weblinks**

## Gulf War Syndrome

**APA**

Chicago

Harvard

MLA

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Gulf War syndrome. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. Abington, UK: Helicon. Retrieved from [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/gulf\\_war\\_syndrome](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/gulf_war_syndrome)

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## APA

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## Chicago

"Gulf War Syndrome." In *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*, edited by Helicon. Helicon, 2018. [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/gulf\\_war\\_syndrome](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/gulf_war_syndrome)

## Harvard

Gulf War syndrome. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. [Online]. Abington: Helicon. Available from: [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/gulf\\_war\\_syndrome](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/gulf_war_syndrome) [Accessed 22 October 2019].

## MLA

"Gulf War Syndrome." *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*, edited by Helicon, 2018. *Credo Reference*, [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/gulf\\_war\\_syndrome](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/gulf_war_syndrome). Accessed 22 Oct. 2019.