

U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine

A SOLDIER AND FAMILY GUIDE TO REDEPLOYING

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INTRODUCTION

This guide is intended to provide information that can help address issues or concerns associated with redeployment. The reuniting process involves changes for both you and your family. Knowing what to expect, how to deal with the changes, and where to seek help can make your homecoming enjoyable and free of stress for all concerned.

OVERVIEW

Redeployment involves reuniting with your loved ones and getting reacquainted as a family, taking care of your emotional and spiritual health, and making sure your health concerns are adequately addressed. Basic information about these important topics is provided in this guide, including information about locating resources to assist you and your family.

ASSESSING YOUR MEDICAL STATUS

It is very important to take the time to complete all required medical processing upon redeployment.

This includes—

- Filling out a Post-Deployment Health Assessment Form (DD Form 2796). Be sure to inform the health care provider about any health concerns you may have.
- Depending on the area of your deployment, you may need to take medicine to protect against malaria. Malaria medicines need to be taken for several weeks **AFTER** leaving areas where malaria is found. If you have been given medicine to protect against malaria, be certain that you take it according to directions. Ask your health care provider for details on any medicines you may need.
- Receiving a post-deployment tuberculosis (TB) skin test (usually 90 days after returning from deployment) and providing the results to your unit. See your Community Health Nurse, Public Health Department, Reserve unit medical support or private health care provider for details and testing

POTENTIAL CHANGES IN YOUR HEALTH

Most soldiers experience minor, temporary changes in their health after redeployment, mostly due to the stress of the mission, deployment travel, jet lag, and adapting to a different schedule and diet. You may feel tired, with sore or achy muscles, and may experience a change in your appetite. These effects should be temporary, and should diminish as the days go by.

If these effects do not improve, or if they seem to be getting worse with time, be sure to see your health care provider. The first symptoms of some illnesses, especially some infections, may not appear until days, weeks, or even months after your contact. For this reason, it is very important that you tell your physician or health care provider that you were deployed.

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT YOUR HEALTH

WHAT WERE THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS WHERE I WAS DEPLOYED, AND WILL THEY AFFECT MY HEALTH?

The Army has performed in-depth assessments at many of the base camps in countries throughout the world. The environmental conditions in some countries can affect your health. For example, desert areas of Southwest Asia have higher levels of particles in the air, such as sand. Other countries may have contaminated drinking water. The Army documents information pertaining to the quality of the water, soil, and air and uses this information to employ preventive medicine procedures to keep you healthy while you are deployed and after you return home. The Army continues to conduct research to minimize the effects of these conditions and prevent impairment of your health.

COULD I HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO ANY DISEASES AND, IF SO, WHICH ONES?

Preventive medicine practices, such as vaccinations and physicals, are used to protect your health. If you have concerns, are feeling sick, or have a specific condition, be sure to talk to your health care provider.

Some conditions, such as malaria, TB, and sexually transmitted diseases, can produce their first symptoms after weeks to months. If you have been given medicine for these conditions, you should continue to take your medicine as directed. Everyone should obtain a TB skin test 90 days after returning. You should discuss the results and any concerns with your health care provider.

IS MY FAMILY AT RISK FROM ANY OF THESE DISEASES?

The Army is committed to providing both you and your family the best health care available. Certain infections, such as TB and some sexually transmitted diseases, can be passed directly from one person to another. You should contact your health care provider if you have any health concerns.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE HEALTH CONCERNS?

Your chain of command, chaplain, and health care provider are all excellent sources of information for you and your family.

I AM IN THE RESERVE/GUARD. WHAT ABOUT MY HEALTH CONCERNS?

The post-deployment activities described in ASSESSING YOUR MEDICAL STATUS apply to Active, Guard, and Reserve alike. Any health issues identified then or after you have returned home should be referred to appropriate medical channels. Completion of a Line of Duty/Notice of Eligibility determination and coordination with your parent unit are essential parts of this process.

REUNION WITH YOUR LOVED ONES

It is essential that you arrange to spend time with your family and loved ones soon after you return from deployment. You will probably find it helpful to resume family routines and personal spiritual routines that are effective, but remember to proceed slowly in reestablishing your place in the family. Be prepared to make some adjustments. The following suggestions are intended to help you and your loved ones get reacquainted with as little stress as possible.

Soldiers

- Take time to listen and talk to your loved ones.
- Make time for each child and for your spouse.
- Support the good things your family has done.
- Remember - romantic conversation can make re-entering love relations easier.
- Manage your money carefully.
- Do not overdo the "reunion parties."
- Be prepared to make some adjustments.

Spouses

- Avoid a busy schedule.
- Go slowly in making adjustments.
- Remind your spouse that he or she is still needed in the family.
- Discuss division of the family chores.
- Stick to your financial budget until you have had time to talk with your spouse about money matters.
- Make time to be alone with your spouse and to talk.
- Be patient in rebuilding your relationship.

Children

- Slowly resume the old rules and routines.
- Be available to your child, with both time and emotions.
- Let the child be the first to renew the bond.
- Expect some changes in your child.
- Focus on your child's successes and limit all criticisms.
- Encourage your child to tell you everything that happened while you were away.

EXPECTATIONS FOR SOLDIERS

- Even though you may want to talk about your experiences, your family may not.
- Roles may have changed with regard to managing basic chores and household duties.
- Face-to-face communication may be difficult after a separation.
- Closeness may be awkward at first.
- Children grow up during separations; they may seem different in some ways.
- Spouses sometimes become more independent, and may need more space.
- You may have to change your outlook regarding priorities in the household.

EXPECTATIONS FOR SPOUSES

- Soldiers may have changed.
- Soldiers may feel "closed-in" or claustrophobic on some days and may need space to feel comfortable.
- Soldiers often feel overwhelmed by the everyday noise and confusion of home life.
- Soldiers may need time to resume sleeping patterns.
- Soldiers often feel left out at first and need time to adjust.
- Soldiers may feel hurt when small children are slow to hug them and show emotions.

WHAT CHILDREN MAY FEEL

- Babies less than 1 year old may cry when you hold them.
- Toddlers may not know you at first and may hide.
- Preschoolers 3-5 years old may be afraid of you.
- School-aged children 6-12 years old may demand more of your time than other children.
- Teenagers may seem moody, and may act as if they do not care.
- Some children may be anxious, fearing your expectations of them.
- Children may have symptoms of minor illnesses.
- Children may be torn by loyalties to the spouse who remained at home.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, try the following websites:

- Military deployment health information: <http://www.pdhealth.mil/>
- Staying Healthy Guides and additional deployment health information: <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/>
- Information from The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (good information on many health topics): <http://www.cdc.gov/>
- For TRICARE National and Regional toll-free contact numbers, go to: <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/>.
- For civilian health care services for Active Duty personnel outside a Military Treatment Facility 1-888.MHS.MMSO. <http://mmsso.med.navy.mil/>

Contact your Preventive Medicine or Medical Support Unit for more information.



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