



**Australian Government**  
**Repatriation Medical Authority**

**Statement of Principles**  
**concerning**  
**CHRONIC PRURITUS ANI**  
**(Balance of Probabilities)**  
**(No. 32 of 2019)**

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The Repatriation Medical Authority determines the following Statement of Principles under subsection 196B(3) of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*.

Dated 1 March 2019

The Common Seal of the  
Repatriation Medical Authority  
was affixed to this instrument  
at the direction of:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Saunders'.

Professor Nicholas Saunders AO  
Chairperson

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**1 Name**

This is the Statement of Principles concerning *chronic pruritus ani (Balance of Probabilities)* (No. 32 of 2019).

**2 Commencement**

This instrument commences on 25 March 2019.

**3 Authority**

This instrument is made under subsection 196B(3) of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*.

**4 Repeal**

The Statement of Principles concerning chronic pruritus ani No. 76 of 2010 (Federal Register of Legislation No. F2010L02315) made under subsection 196B(3) of the VEA is repealed.

**5 Application**

This instrument applies to a claim to which section 120B of the VEA or section 339 of the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* applies.

**6 Definitions**

The terms defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary have the meaning given when used in this instrument.

**7 Kind of injury, disease or death to which this Statement of Principles relates**

- (1) This Statement of Principles is about chronic pruritus ani and death from chronic pruritus ani.

*Meaning of chronic pruritus ani*

- (2) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, chronic pruritus ani means intense itching of more than six weeks duration affecting the perianal skin.

*Death from chronic pruritus ani*

- (3) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, chronic pruritus ani, in relation to a person, includes death from a terminal event or condition that was contributed to by the person's chronic pruritus ani.

Note: *terminal event* is defined in the Schedule 1 – Dictionary.

## 8 Basis for determining the factors

On the sound medical-scientific evidence available, the Repatriation Medical Authority is of the view that it is more probable than not that chronic pruritus ani and death from chronic pruritus ani can be related to relevant service rendered by veterans or members of the Forces under the VEA, or members under the MRCA.

Note: *MRCA*, *relevant service* and *VEA* are defined in the Schedule 1 – Dictionary.

## 9 Factors that must exist

At least one of the following factors must exist before it can be said that, on the balance of probabilities, chronic pruritus ani or death from chronic pruritus ani is connected with the circumstances of a person's relevant service:

- (1) an inability to maintain adequate anal hygiene for at least the four weeks before the clinical onset of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *adequate anal hygiene* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (2) undertaking excessive cleansing of the perianal area for at least the four weeks before the clinical onset of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *excessive cleansing of the perianal area* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (3) having daily episodes of diarrhoea for at least the seven days before the clinical onset of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *diarrhoea* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (4) having faecal incontinence for at least the four weeks before the clinical onset of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *faecal incontinence* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (5) having a condition from the specified list of rectal, anal and perianal conditions at the time of the clinical onset of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *specified list of rectal, anal and perianal conditions* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (6) having a perianal or anal infection from the specified list of infections, at the time of the clinical onset of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *specified list of infections* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (7) having a perianal or anal infestation with an agent from the specified list of infestations, at the time of the clinical onset of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *specified list of infestations* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (8) having a pathological vaginal discharge at the time of the clinical onset of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *pathological vaginal discharge* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (9) having a dermatological disease from the specified list of dermatological diseases affecting the perianal or anal region at the time of the clinical onset of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *specified list of dermatological diseases* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (10) having a systemic disease from the specified list of systemic diseases at the time of the clinical onset of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *specified list of systemic diseases* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (11) undergoing a course of therapeutic radiation for cancer, where the perianal region was in the field of radiation, within the 30 days before the clinical onset of chronic pruritus ani;

- (12) having corticosteroid-related atrophy of the perianal skin at the time of the clinical onset of chronic pruritus ani;

- (13) an inability to maintain adequate anal hygiene for at least the four weeks before the clinical worsening of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *adequate anal hygiene* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (14) undertaking excessive cleansing of the perianal area for at least the four weeks before the clinical worsening of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *excessive cleansing of the perianal area* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (15) having daily episodes of diarrhoea for at least the seven days before the clinical worsening of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *diarrhoea* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (16) having faecal incontinence for at least the four weeks before the clinical worsening of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *faecal incontinence* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (17) having a condition from the specified list of rectal, anal and perianal conditions at the time of the clinical worsening of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *specified list of rectal, anal and perianal conditions* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (18) having a perianal or anal infection from the specified list of infections, at the time of the clinical worsening of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *specified list of infections* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (19) having a perianal or anal infestation with an agent from the specified list of infestations, at the time of the clinical worsening of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *specified list of infestations* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (20) having a pathological vaginal discharge at the time of the clinical worsening of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *pathological vaginal discharge* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (21) having a dermatological disease from the specified list of dermatological diseases affecting the perianal or anal region at the time of the clinical worsening of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *specified list of dermatological diseases* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (22) having a systemic disease from the specified list of systemic diseases at the time of the clinical worsening of chronic pruritus ani;

Note: *specified list of systemic diseases* is defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

- (23) undergoing a course of therapeutic radiation for cancer, where the perianal region was in the field of radiation, within the 30 days before the clinical worsening of chronic pruritus ani;
- (24) having corticosteroid-related atrophy of the perianal skin at the time of the clinical worsening of chronic pruritus ani;
- (25) inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for chronic pruritus ani.

## **10 Relationship to service**

- (1) The existence in a person of any factor referred to in section 9, must be related to the relevant service rendered by the person.
- (2) The factors set out in subsections 9(13) to 9(25) apply only to material contribution to, or aggravation of, chronic pruritus ani where the person's chronic pruritus ani was suffered or contracted before or during (but did not arise out of) the person's relevant service.

## **11 Factors referring to an injury or disease covered by another Statement of Principles**

In this Statement of Principles:

- (1) if a factor referred to in section 9 applies in relation to a person; and
- (2) that factor refers to an injury or disease in respect of which a Statement of Principles has been determined under subsection 196B(3) of the VEA;

then the factors in that Statement of Principles apply in accordance with the terms of that Statement of Principles as in force from time to time.

# Schedule 1 - Dictionary

Note: See Section 6

## 1 Definitions

In this instrument:

**adequate anal hygiene** means the personal maintenance of cleanliness of the perianal area by wiping with paper or washing with water.

**chronic pruritus ani**—see subsection 7(2).

**chronic renal failure** means:

- (a) having a glomerular filtration rate of less than 15 mL/min/1.73 m<sup>2</sup> for a period of at least three months; or
- (b) a need for renal replacement therapy (dialysis or transplantation) for treatment of complications of decreased glomerular filtration rate which would otherwise increase the risk of morbidity and mortality; or
- (c) undergoing chronic dialysis.

**diarrhoea** means predominantly liquid faecal discharge.

**excessive cleansing of the perianal area** means vigorous scrubbing of the perianal skin resulting in mechanical trauma to the skin, or the excessive use of soap or wipes containing alcohol or other astringents, irritants or allergens.

**faecal incontinence** means the involuntary discharge of liquid or solid faeces.

Note: Causes of faecal incontinence include, but are not limited to, constipation with overflow, laxative effects of drugs, and abnormalities of the anal sphincter muscles, rectum, puborectalis muscle, pudendal nerve, central nervous system, spinal cord and autonomic nervous system.

**iron deficiency** means having a serum ferritin level of less than 20 micrograms per litre.

**MRCA** means the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*.

**pathological vaginal discharge** means a discharge of fluid from the vagina due to one of the following diseases: vulvovaginal candidiasis, trichomonal vaginitis, bacterial vaginosis, *Chlamydia trachomatis* cervicitis or gonorrhoea of the lower genitourinary tract.

**radiation recall dermatitis** means an acute inflammatory skin reaction in an area that has undergone a course of therapeutic radiation at least seven days earlier, and develops following the administration of a systemic antineoplastic agent or other drug.

**relevant service** means:

- (a) eligible war service (other than operational service) under the VEA;
- (b) defence service (other than hazardous service and British nuclear test defence service) under the VEA; or
- (c) peacetime service under the MRCA.

Note: **MRCA** and **VEA** are also defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

***specified list of dermatological diseases*** means:

- (a) acanthosis nigricans;
- (b) allergic contact dermatitis;
- (c) atopic dermatitis;
- (d) hidradenitis suppurativa;
- (e) irritant contact dermatitis;
- (f) lichen planus;
- (g) lichen sclerosus;
- (h) neurodermatitis;
- (i) psoriasis;
- (j) radiation dermatitis;
- (k) radiation recall dermatitis;
- (l) seborrhoeic dermatitis; or
- (m) systemic contact dermatitis.

Note 1: Various forms of contact dermatitis may be precipitated by irritants or allergens, including, but not limited to, foods, chemicals, drugs and faeces.

Note 2: Neurodermatitis is also known as lichen simplex chronicus.

Note 3: *systemic contact dermatitis* and *radiation recall dermatitis* are also defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

***specified list of infections*** means:

- (a) *Candida albicans*;
- (b) *Corynebacterium* spp.;
- (c) *Epidermophyton* spp., *Microsporum* spp. or *Trichophyton* spp. (tinea);
- (d) herpes simplex virus;
- (e) human papilloma virus;
- (f) molluscum contagiosum virus;
- (g) *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (gonorrhoea);
- (h) *Staphylococcus* spp.;
- (i) *Streptococcus* spp.; or
- (j) *Treponemum pallidum* (syphilis).

***specified list of infestations*** means:

- (a) *Enterobius vermicularis* (pin worm);
- (b) *Phthirus pubis* or *Pediculus humanus* (lice);
- (c) *Sarcoptes scabiei* (scabies);
- (d) *Strongyloides stercoralis* (strongyloides); or
- (e) *Taenia saginata* or *Taenia solium* (tapeworm).

***specified list of rectal, anal and perianal conditions*** means:

- (a) anal fissure;
- (b) anal fistula;
- (c) anal skin tag;
- (d) anal sphincter incompetence;
- (e) familial adenomatous polyposis;
- (f) haemorrhoid;
- (g) inflammatory bowel disease;
- (h) perianal wart;
- (i) perianal abscess;



- (j) proctitis;
- (k) rectal prolapse; or
- (l) any benign or malignant neoplasm of the rectum, anus, anal canal or perianal skin.

***specified list of systemic diseases*** means:

- (a) aplastic anaemia;
- (b) cholestatic liver disease;
- (c) chronic renal failure;
- (d) diabetes mellitus;
- (e) hyperbilirubinaemia;
- (f) hyperthyroidism;
- (g) hypothyroidism;
- (h) human immunodeficiency virus;
- (i) iron deficiency;
- (j) leukaemia;
- (k) lymphoma; or
- (l) polycythaemia vera.

Note: *chronic renal failure* and *iron deficiency* are also defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary.

***systemic contact dermatitis*** means an inflammatory skin condition in a person who has experienced allergic contact dermatitis from cutaneous contact with an allergen at the affected site, and subsequently experiences a reactivation at that site following systemic exposure to that same allergen or a cross-reacting allergen.

Note: Systemic contact dermatitis may occur following systemic exposure to a range of contact allergens, including, but not limited to, chemicals and drugs found in topical medications.

***terminal event*** means the proximate or ultimate cause of death and includes the following:

- (a) pneumonia;
- (b) respiratory failure;
- (c) cardiac arrest;
- (d) circulatory failure; or
- (e) cessation of brain function.

***VEA*** means the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*.