

Apply for VA Health Care

This guide will help you apply for VA health care, which includes regular checkups, prescriptions, and access to specialists, such as cardiologists, gynecologists, and mental health providers.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

A checklist to help you apply for VA health care:

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PREPARATION

- Collect the following information:
 - Discharge papers** (DD214 member-4 or equivalent)
 - Your most recent **tax return**
 - Social security numbers** for yourself and your dependents
 - Account numbers** for insurance programs you are enrolled in
 - Your **VA Disability Rating Decision** (if applicable)

APPLICATION

- Apply** by completing the health care application form (VA Form 10-10EZ) in one of these ways:
 - Visit us **online** at <https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application>
 - Give us a **call** at 877-222-8387 (press 1); M–F, 8AM–8PM EST
 - Visit us **in-person** at a VA Medical Center
 - Print out and **mail** the completed form to the Health Eligibility Center (2957 Clairmont Road, Suite 200, Atlanta, GA 30329)

REVIEW AND DECISION

- Call** 877-222-8387 (press 0) if you haven't heard back from VA more than one week after you've submitted your application

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NEXT STEPS

If approved, take steps to access the benefits you are eligible for:

- Review priority group assignment** and personalized benefits handbook mailed by VA after enrollment
- Contact your local VA Medical Center to **set up an appointment**
- Make an appointment to obtain your **Veterans Health Identificaton Card (VHIC)**

WHERE CAN I FIND MY DISCHARGE PAPERS?

Visit <https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records> to request a copy of your DD214.

HOW WILL I FIND OUT ABOUT VA'S DECISION?

If **accepted**, you'll receive a phone call from VA and a personalized benefits handbook in the mail. If **denied**, you'll receive a letter indicating the reason.

WHAT ARE PRIORITY GROUPS?

During enrollment, each Veteran is assigned to one of eight priority groups based on different factors. Your priority group may affect how much (if anything) you will need to pay for those services.

WHAT IS A VHIC?

A **VHIC** is a photo ID that gives you access to VA Health Care facilities. When you're enrolled in VA Health Care, you can get a VHIC by making an appointment with your local VA Medical Center to get your picture taken for your VHIC.

Information you'll need to know to access VA Health Care:

Am I eligible for VA Health Care?

Eligibility for VA Health Care depends on a number of factors:

- VA has rated you for a service-connected disability
- You received a Purple Heart or are a former Prisoner of War
- You are a combat Veteran who separated within the last 5 years
- You are eligible for Medicaid benefits
- Your family income is below the income threshold
- You served in Vietnam, Southwest Asia during the Gulf War, or Camp Lejeune during certain periods of time

Note: Not all Veterans are eligible for VA Health Care. Work with VA to determine your eligibility as soon as possible.

What does it mean to be assigned to a priority group?

If you are eligible to enroll in VA Health Care, you will be assigned to a priority group based on your eligibility. **Your health care eligibility determines what type of VA Health Care services you can access and how much you will need to pay for those services.**

How do I schedule my first appointment?

- **On your health care application** you can ask VA to call you to schedule your first appointment
- **Call** your local VA Medical Center to schedule an appointment

What if I live far away or can't get an appointment?

VA provides health care for Veterans from providers in your local community outside of VA. Veterans may be eligible to receive care from a community provider when VA cannot provide the care needed. This care is provided on behalf of and paid for by VA. Community care is available to Veterans based on certain conditions and eligibility requirements, and in consideration of a Veteran's specific needs and circumstances. Community care must generally be authorized by VA before a Veteran can receive care from a community provider.

- **Visit** <https://www.va.gov/communitycare> to learn more

Will I be covered for emergency care?

The most important thing in an emergency is to get to the nearest hospital or emergency department. If this is a VA hospital, you may be covered under your priority group eligibility. VA is continuously reviewing and increasing appropriate services to cover, however will only pay for emergency care at non-VA facilities **under certain circumstances.**

- After receiving emergency care at a non-VA facility, **call** VA immediately to understand what VA may cover.

Where is my nearest VA Medical Center?

- To locate **your nearest VA facility**, visit <https://www.va.gov/find-locations>

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE:

What are my health care options for myself and my family?

VA Health Care is one of many health care options Veterans may have, including TRICARE, Medicare/Medicaid, and private insurance plans. In most cases, **family members and dependents are not eligible for VA Health Care.** It's important to figure out which option is best for you.

VA Health Care counts as your health insurance under the Affordable Care Act. However, **Veterans enrolled in VA Health Care are not eligible for health insurance subsidies.**

→ **Visit** <https://www.healthcare.gov/veterans> to learn more

How does VA support recent combat Veterans?

Combat Veterans **can get five years of cost-free health care** following separation and remain eligible for VA Health Care as long as they enroll within five years of separation.

How does VA support Military Sexual Trauma (MST) survivors?

VA offers cost-free **counseling and support services** that help Veterans recover from trauma. You don't have to be enrolled in VA Health Care to access MST services.

What services are included in VA Health Care?

- Preventive Care (e.g. check-ups)
- Outpatient care (e.g. mental health care and substance abuse counseling)
- Inpatient care (e.g. surgery)
- Medications and supplies
- Well-being services (e.g. peer groups, complementary and integrative classes such as acupuncture, yoga)