



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

ChooseVA

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.

A checklist to help you apply for VA Health Care:

1

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)

WHERE CAN I FIND MY DISCHARGE PAPERS?

Visit eBenefits.va.gov to request a copy of your DD214 records.

2

APPLICATION

- Apply by completing the healthcare application form (VA Form-10 EZ) in one of these ways:
 - Visit us **online** at va.gov and click on “Health Care”
 - 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)

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.

3

REVIEW AND DECISION

- Call** (877)-222-8387 (press 2) if you haven't heard back from VA more than one week after you've submitted your application

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 what type of VA Health Care services you can access and how much you will need to pay for those services.

4

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 Identification Card (VHIC)**

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?

Some factors that VA may consider when determining eligibility include:

- 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?

The **Veterans CHOICE Program** allows Veterans who live far from VA facilities or who face long wait times for a VA appointment to seek the care they need from an approved private doctor in their community.

- You are eligible if you live more than 40 miles from the nearest VA Medical Center or you have to wait more than 30 days for a VA appointment, or you face one of several specific travel burdens
- **Visit** www.va.gov/opa/choiceact to learn more

Will I be covered for emergency care?

The most important thing in an emergency is to get to the nearest hospital. If this is a VA hospital, you may be covered under your priority group eligibility. VA 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 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, so you won't have to pay a tax penalty. However, **Veterans enrolled in VA Health Care are not eligible for health insurance subsidies.**

- **Visit** 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 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?

- Preventative Care (e.g., check-ups)
- Outpatient care (e.g., mental health care and substance abuse counseling)
- Inpatient care (e.g., surgery)
- Medications and supplies