

# Apply for VA Health Care



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

ChooseVA

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:

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### PREPARATION

- Collect the following information:
  - Discharge papers (DD214)**
  - 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** <https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records> to request a copy of your DD214.

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### 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, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. 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 **enrolled and registered**, 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.

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### 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

#### 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 your co-payment responsibilities (if any) you will need to pay for those services.

For more information, visit <https://www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility/priority-groups>.

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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
- 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 secured photo ID used to check-in for VA medical appointments. When you're enrolled in VA health care, you can get a VHIC by making an appointment with your local VA Medical Center.

# 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, such as whether:

- 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 ten 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
- You were exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances during service in certain locations and 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 priority group may affect your copayment responsibilities (if any).**

## 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 their specific health care needs or circumstances, and if they meet specific eligibility criteria. 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. If this is a non-VA emergency care provider, VA can only pay the cost of care **under certain circumstances**.

- After receiving emergency care at a non-VA facility, **call** VA immediately at 844-724-7842 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>
- Visit [https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Emergency\\_Care.asp](https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Emergency_Care.asp) to find out more about VA coverage for emergency care provided at non-VA facilities.

## 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, which may also include 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 constitutes minimum essential coverage under the Affordable Care Act. However, Veterans enrolled in VA health care are not eligible for premium tax credits.

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

### How does VA support recent combat Veterans?

Combat Veterans **can get ten years of VA health care** without certain copayment requirements following separation and thereafter remain eligible for VA health care as long as they enroll within ten years of separation.

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

VA provides free treatment for any physical or mental health conditions related to experiences of sexual assault or sexual harassment during military service. You may be able to receive MST-related care even if you are not eligible for other VA care. For more information, visit [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/mst](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/mst).

### What services are included in VA health care?

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