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# Coronavirus FAQs: What Veterans need to know

Our call centers and some VA health facilities are currently experiencing very high numbers of calls. To help us address the most urgent needs first, we ask that you use our online tools and frequently asked questions (FAQs) for routine or non-urgent questions. We'll continue to update this page as the situation changes.

## **i** Visit the CDC for general coronavirus COVID-19 questions

For general questions about the coronavirus COVID-19, such as symptoms, prevention steps, guidance for travelers, and more, [visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

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## Questions Veterans are asking most

### What should I do if I have symptoms?

If you have a fever, coughing, and shortness of breath, call your VA medical center before going to a clinic, urgent care, or emergency room. You can also [send your doctor a secure message](#) through My HealthVet.

Contacting us first helps us protect you, medical staff, and other patients.

[Visit the CDC](#) to learn more about the symptoms of COVID-19.

### What's VA doing to deal with COVID-19?

We have activated VA's emergency management coordination cell (EMCC), and have started clinical screenings at all VA facilities. [Learn about VA's public health response](#)

### Can I be tested for COVID-19?

Testing is based on many factors, including the severity of symptoms, other existing illnesses or conditions, possible exposure, and other criteria. VA health facilities have been testing Veterans who meet the [testing criteria provided by the CDC](#). There's no charge for testing.

### What should I do if I have an upcoming VA health appointment?

For routine appointments, we recommend using telehealth (phone or video) for your scheduled appointment. You can also cancel and reschedule your appointment for a later date.

If you have a non-urgent elective procedure scheduled, we may contact you to cancel or reschedule for a later date. **Note:** Urgent and emergent procedures will

continue as scheduled.

### To change your in-person appointment to a telehealth visit:

- [Use Secure Messaging](#) through My HealtheVet to send a message to your provider.
- [Use the VA appointments tool](#) to request a telehealth appointment online. (Available only for some types of health services.)

Once your provider schedules a telehealth appointment, you'll receive a VA Video Connect link (or another approved video meeting tool). [Learn more about VA Video Connect](#)

## How do I reschedule or cancel my upcoming VA appointment?

Sign in to your VA.gov account to reschedule or cancel your appointments online.

**Note:** Some clinics are advising patients to not reschedule or schedule new appointments for some types of routine care, as they develop more guidance on safely providing care to protect patients and staff. Because this is a rapidly changing situation, the best way to get the most up-to-date facility information is to check your local VA health facility's website. [Find a VA location](#)

## View, schedule, or cancel a VA appointment online



### Please sign in to use this service

Try signing in with your **DS Logon**, **My HealtheVet**, or **ID.me** account. If you don't have any of those accounts, you can create one.

[Sign in or create an account](#)

## What should I do if I need to refill or renew my prescription?

If you currently get your prescription sent to you by mail, you'll continue to receive your refills as normal. If you usually pick up your prescription in person, use one of these other ways to get your medicine refilled or renewed.

To make sure you have your medicine in time, request your refill or renewal at least 10 days before you'll run out of your current prescription.

- **Online.** Use our [online prescription refill and tracking](#) tool to refill or renew your prescription.
- **By phone.** The phone number of your VA pharmacy is on your prescription label. To renew or refill by phone, have your RX number on the prescription label and your Social Security number ready. For many prescriptions that are no longer refillable, this automated phone line may allow you to send a request for more of this medication to be sent to you. For some medications, your health care team may contact you first.
- **By mail.** To refill by mail, [complete the prescription refill form](#) for each medication, and mail it to your VA pharmacy. The pharmacy address is listed on paperwork that came with your prescription.

For questions about your prescriptions, [send a secure message](#) to your provider through My HealtheVet or call your local VA medical center.

## Will my COVID-19 stimulus check lower my VA payments?

No. We won't count any money received as part of the COVID-19 stimulus package as income for VA pension or parent Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) beneficiaries. This means your payments will stay the same.

## Will my benefit payment be delayed because of COVID-19?

We're currently processing all benefit payments as normal. Benefit payments include payments for disability, pension, education payments to your school, and more.

[View your VA benefit payments online](#)

## My school changed all classes to online. Will I still qualify for my GI Bill benefits?

Yes. If you're currently receiving GI Bill benefits, payments will continue automatically. You don't have to do anything. We know that many schools have changed to online classes in response to COVID-19. You'll continue to receive the same monthly housing allowance payments you received for resident training until December 21, 2020, or until your school resumes normal operations.

We're working closely with schools to ensure enrollments are accurately certified and processed.

If you have specific questions, you can contact the Education Call Center toll-free at [888-442-4551](tel:888-442-4551), Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET.

## **Is VA still doing claim exams (also called compensation and pension, or C&P, exams)?**

Yes, we're still doing exams to rate potential disabilities, diagnose health conditions, and determine service-connected disabilities. We're doing many exams virtually by phone, videoconference, or online. We're also doing more records reviews using Acceptable Clinical Evidence (ACE). This means we'll review your existing medical records instead of requiring an in-person or telehealth exam.

### **If your claim requires an in-person exam and we can't conduct the exam in person**

We'll contact you to reschedule the exam for a later date. Please make sure we have your up-to-date mailing address, phone number, and email address.

[Update your contact information online](#)

If you have questions or would like to proactively reschedule your exam, please contact your VA medical center or health facility, or [send a secure message](#) to your health care provider through MyHealthVet as soon as possible.

### **If you have an in-person exam scheduled with a non-VA provider we've contracted with to do your exam**

In order to increase our ability to do more claim exams, we've contracted with certain trusted health care providers across the country to conduct exams in non-VA locations.

If you have an exam appointment with a contracted provider, the provider may still conduct the exam while taking added steps to ensure your safety and the safety of the clinical staff. If you feel unsafe going to an in-person exam at this

time, we can put your exam on hold until it can be rescheduled. We won't deny a claim solely for failure to report for an exam at this time. If you have questions or need to request a hold on your exam, please contact the non-VA provider directly.

### **If you've completed your claim exam**

You can sign in to track the status of your claim online.

[Track your VA claim status](#)

## **What if I had or need an in-person appointment for VA benefits or services?**

We've temporarily closed our regional offices to the public and stopped in-person appointments. But we're using virtual services to hold appointments by telephone or online video through [VA Video Connect](#) or other approved video meeting tools. Once your video appointment is scheduled, you'll receive a VA Video Connect link.

We'll work with you to change your in-person appointment to a virtual appointment for benefits and services such as:

- Home loans
- Specially Adapted Housing grants
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E)
- Chapter 36 educational counseling
- Fiduciary
- Military service coordinators

Please work with your VA representative to reschedule appointments. If you have questions, you can also call us at [800-827-1000](tel:800-827-1000). We're here Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET.

## **What if I can't pay my existing VA debt?**

As of April 3, 2020, we've taken action to stop collection on newly established Veteran debt and make it easier for Veterans to request extended repayment plans and address other needs during this time. Please check back regularly for updates.

## **If you have VA debt that we've already transferred to the U.S. Department of the Treasury**

The U.S. Department of the Treasury won't take any more action on your debt during this time. This means they won't add more fees or interest, reduce or withhold part of your federal or state payments or job wages to pay your debt, or refer your account to a private collection agency.

## **If you have VA debt being managed by VA**

We'll work with you to decide whether you'd prefer us to temporarily stop collection action, including stopping the addition of fees and interest, during this time or extend your repayment terms.

- **If you have debt related to VA benefits**, please contact the VA Debt Management Center at [800-827-0648](tel:800-827-0648) to make arrangements. We're here Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET.
- **If you have debt related to VA health care**, please contact the Health Resource Center at [888-827-4817](tel:888-827-4817) to make arrangements. Be sure to have your account number ready.

# **More health care questions**

**What's coronavirus COVID-19?**

**Can I get a referral to see a community care provider if I can't be seen at VA?**

**What should I do if I have a community care appointment?**

**What if I tried to call my clinic, and I can't get through?**

**I don't have symptoms, but I feel anxious and overwhelmed. What can I do?**

**How do I know if my VA health facility is still open for regular appointments?**

**Can I visit a patient at a VA facility?**

## **More benefit, claims, and claim exams questions**

**Are VA regional offices closed?**

**How can I stay updated on regional office closures or service interruptions?**

**How do I contact my local regional office?**

**What if I need to turn in paperwork for my claim or appeal?**

**What if I need to sign paperwork for my VA claim or other documents?**

## **More debt, copays, and financial questions**

**Can I use emergency care?**

**What if I'm having trouble paying my VA-backed home loan during this time?**

**Will I still have to pay my VA copays during the pandemic?**

**What if I've been diagnosed with COVID-19 and need immediate action on my VA appeal?**

**How do I get help if I'm homeless or at risk of becoming homeless?**

## **More VA national cemeteries and burials questions**



## **Are VA national cemeteries open?**

## **Can I still schedule a burial at a national cemetery?**

## **Can I schedule a committal service or a military funeral honors service?**

# **Helpful online tools**

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## **Send a secure message**

Sign in to My HealthVet to send a message to your VA provider.

## **Refill your VA prescriptions online**

Refill your prescriptions online through My HealthVet and track delivery of your medicines.

## **View your VA payments**

View your past payment information for benefits like disability, pension, education payments, and more.

## **Check your VA claim or appeal status**

Check the status of a VA claim or appeal for benefits, including disability compensation, pension, VA health care, and more.

## **Change your address on file with VA**

Update your address and other contact information for VA benefits and services.

## **Reschedule, cancel, or view your VA appointment**

Request, reschedule, or cancel your VA health care appointments online.

# **More information**

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## **How to apply for VA health care**

Find out how to prepare and apply for VA health care online, by phone, or by mail.

## **Visit the CDC's COVID-19 website**

Get guidance for high-risk groups, travelers, COVID-19 resources for the community, and more at the CDC.

## **Watch Dr. Stone's YouTube message for Veterans**

Dr. Richard Stone, VHA Executive in Charge, speaks about how VA is here for Veterans during COVID-19.

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