

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What health care services are available to women Veterans?**

A full continuum of health care, including comprehensive primary care (care for acute and chronic illness and gender-specific care), specialty care, mental health care, disease prevention and screening, emergency care, and women's health specialty care (e.g., advanced breast and gynecological care, maternity care, and some infertility treatments). In addition, VA offers services such as inpatient medical/surgical/mental health care, physical rehabilitation, substance abuse treatment, long-term care, and pharmacy benefits. For more information on VA services provided to women Veterans, call 1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636).

2. **How can I learn about eligibility and enroll for VA health care?**

Veterans can apply for VA health care enrollment and other Veterans benefits by completing VA Form 10-10EZ. Apply online at www.1010ez.med.va.gov or visit, call, or write to any VA health care facility or Veterans' benefits office. You can also call the VA Health Benefits Call Center toll free at 877-222-VETS (8387), or get more information online about VA benefits (www.vba.va.gov) and eligibility (<http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/>).

3. **How do I get started with getting my health care in VA?**

After you have enrolled for benefits (see #2 above), contact your local VA health care facility (found online at www.va.gov/directory) to arrange a primary care appointment.

4. **How do I get a clinic appointment? What if there is a waiting list for an initial appointment?**

It is the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) goal that every new patient be scheduled for a non-urgent appointment within 14 days. If you have an urgent or emergent medical condition, contact your local VA health care facility (found online at www.va.gov/directory) or visit their walk-in (urgent care) clinic or emergency room.

5. **Does VA provide gynecologic care for menstrual problems and services such as Pap smears and birth control? What about breast care such as mammograms and breast cancer treatments?**

VA provides women Veterans with a full range of

reproductive health services necessary for optimal health throughout their lives, including the services above and more. Gynecology and maternity care are available either at your VA facility or through referrals to appropriate providers in the community. This referred care is covered by VA.

6. **Does VA provide pregnancy care?**

VA covers pregnancy care typically through arrangements with community providers. VA can pay for prenatal care, delivery, and postnatal care for eligible women Veterans.

7. **If VA covers pregnancy care, why aren't babies delivered in VA hospitals?**

VA covers pregnancy care through arrangements with community providers. VA can pay for prenatal care, delivery, and postnatal care for eligible women Veterans, as well as care to newborns for the first seven days after birth for all eligible women Veterans. Many details are involved with pregnancy care. Contact a Women Veterans Program Manager as early in pregnancy as possible to discuss local processes regarding prenatal care and to explore your options. If a pregnant Veteran has a permanent, total disability resulting from a service-connected injury, and the child is not otherwise eligible for medical care under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS), then the child could receive care under VA's Civilian Health and Medical Program (CHAMPVA), which is different from VA's routine, seven-day newborn coverage.

8. **Does VA cover newborn care?**

Yes, VA covers care to newborns for the first seven days after birth, for eligible women Veterans who are receiving VA maternity care.

9. **Does VA provide health care for my children?**

The provision of health care to children who are not Veterans is limited to those instances where specific authority is given to VA by law. Contact your nearest VA health care facility (found online at www.va.gov/directory) and ask to speak with the Women Veterans Program Manager. Also, to find out if your child qualifies for health care through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in your state, see <http://www.insurekidsnow.gov/state/index.html> or call 1-877-543-7669.

10. Where can I get inpatient psychiatric care as a woman Veteran?

Most VA Medical Centers have inpatient mental health programs. Contact your VA Primary Care Provider, Women Veterans Program Manager, or the local Mental Health Program Office for assistance. If you already have a therapist and need inpatient care, please discuss your concerns with your therapist. If you have urgent or emergent needs, you can contact your local VA health care facility (found online at www.va.gov/directory) or emergency center.

11. Where can I get inpatient medical/surgical care as a woman Veteran?

Most VA Medical Centers have inpatient medical units and surgery departments. Contact your VA Primary Care Provider or Women Veterans Program Manager for more information. If you have urgent or emergent needs, you can contact your local VA health care facility (found online at www.va.gov/directory) or emergency center.

12. How do I get evaluated for nursing home care?

If you have never been seen at a VA health care facility, you must first enroll for benefits (see #2 above). Then you must enroll in a primary care clinic (see #3 above) and ask to be evaluated for nursing home care. The evaluation will be done either by the primary care provider or a geriatric care team.

Under the Millennium Health Care Act of 1999, VA must provide or pay for nursing home care for Veterans who require it and who meet the following criteria:

- Have a service-connected disability rating of 70 percent or more
- Need nursing home care for a service-connected disability
- Are rated 60 percent service-connected and are either unemployable or have an official rating of "permanently and totally disabled."

Veterans enrolled in the VA healthcare system who require nursing home care for any other reason must meet income and asset criteria to be eligible. Placement is made based on nursing home availability and the Veteran may be assessed a co-payment for such services. Specific eligibility and admission criteria are unique to each nursing home. Learn more about long term care eligibility:

<http://www.va.gov/GERIATRICALS/Guide/LongTermCare/Eligibility.asp>

13. How can I get help if I am in crisis or to help another Veteran who is?

The Veterans Crisis Line is available 24/7. Call 1-800-273-8255 and press "1" to talk with someone immediately. Or text "838255" for a confidential chat.

14. How do I contact a coordinator for women Veterans who are homeless with children?

Contact your nearest VA health care facility (found online at www.va.gov/directory) and ask for the VA Homeless Coordinator, the Social Work Services department, or the Women Veterans Program Manager. Any of these contacts can discuss the options available in your area. VA's 24/7 National Call Center for Homeless Veterans is staffed by VA counselors trained to help homeless Veterans or Veterans at-risk for homelessness. The call center can be reached by calling 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838).

15. What is the process for getting quality of care issues addressed?

Contact the Women Veterans Program Manager or Patient Advocate at your nearest VA facility (found online at www.va.gov/directory). During normal business hours you can also contact the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Women Veterans Health Group at 202-461-1070 or the VA Center for Women Veterans at 202-461-6193.

16. Are VA services authorized for women Veterans who were involuntarily discharged from the military for pregnancy prior to May 1974? If not, how does one get this issue addressed?

The provision of health care services to Veterans is established by certain eligibility criteria and discharge status requirements. Learn more about your eligibility for services: <http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/>, or contact your nearest VA health care facility (found online at www.va.gov/directory).

17. How and where do I find historical information on women Veterans?

Contact the Women in Military Service for America Memorial (www.womensmemorial.org or 800-222-2294), or read a VA report on the History of Military Women and their use of VA Benefits and Services: http://www.va.gov/VETDATA/docs/SpecialReports/Final_Womens_Report_3_2_12_v_7.pdf.



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