

Accessing Urgent Care



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

This guide will help you understand how to access urgent care services from a provider in VA's contracted network. The urgent care benefit provides eligible Veterans with greater choices and access to timely, high-quality care.

What is the urgent care benefit?

VA offers eligible Veterans an urgent care benefit for the treatment of minor injuries and illnesses at retail and urgent care providers who are part of VA's contracted network. **The urgent care benefit is offered to Veterans in addition to urgent care and same-day services VA provides through its medical facilities.**

What type of care do urgent care providers provide?

Urgent care providers treat injuries and illnesses that require immediate attention but are not life-threatening, such as influenza, minor burns and skin infections.

Am I eligible for urgent care?

To be eligible for the urgent care benefit, you must (1) be enrolled in the VA healthcare system, AND (2) have received care through VA, from either a VA or a community provider, within the last 24 months.

How do I access urgent care?

If you're eligible, look up the nearest urgent care provider in VA's contracted network by using VA's facility locator at <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/> and click on the link entitled "Find VA-approved urgent care locations and pharmacies near you." You can also call your local VA medical facility to find an in-network urgent care provider.

What do I do when I arrive?

Tell the urgent care provider you would like to use your VA urgent care benefit and confirm that they are part of VA's network. They will confirm your eligibility for the benefit. If there is an issue verifying your eligibility, call 1-833-4VETNOW (1-833-483-8669) or your local VA medical facility for assistance.

HOW DO I CONFIRM I AM ELIGIBLE?

To check eligibility, contact your local medical facility or call 1-833-4VETNOW (1-833-483-8669).

HOW CAN I CONFIRM THAT THE PROVIDER IS IN VA'S NETWORK?

Call 1-833-4VETNOW (1-833-483-8669) or your local VA medical facility for help. The urgent care provider may also have a sign posted that they are part of the VA network.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

If you believe your life or health is in danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

You do **NOT** have an insurance card for this benefit.

Do **NOT** pay a copayment at the time of visit—if you are eligible for this benefit, VA will bill you separately for any applicable copayment.

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

Will I have to pay any fees and/or copayments out-of-pocket?

You may be charged a copayment that is different from other VA medical copayments. Copayments depend on your assigned priority group and the number of times you visit an urgent care provider in a calendar year.

| Priority Group | Copayment Amount (per calendar year) |
|----------------|--|
| 1 – 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First three (3) visits: \$0• Fourth and > visits: \$30 |
| 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If related to combat experience, *special authority or exposure:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ First three (3) visits: \$0▪ Fourth and > visits: \$30• If not related to combat experience, special authority or exposure:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ \$30 per visit |
| 7 – 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$30 per visit |
| 1 – 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$0 copay for visit consisting of only a flu shot |

There is no limit on the number of times you can access urgent care.

Copayments are NOT paid out-of-pocket at the time you receive care—they are billed separately by VA.

Can I use urgent care as a replacement for my primary care needs?

No, urgent care is not a replacement for preventive health care or management of chronic and/or complex health conditions. You should work with your primary care provider for this type of care. **If you go to an urgent care provider and receive non-covered services, you are responsible for the full cost of care.**

Is urgent care prescription medication covered by VA?

VA will pay for or fill prescriptions resulting from your urgent care visit.

Urgent care prescriptions for medication longer than a 14-day supply must be sent to VA to be filled.

You can fill a 14-day supply of medication written by an urgent care provider at (1) a contracted pharmacy within the VA network, (2) a non-contracted pharmacy that is not part of the VA network, or (3) directly at VA.

If a non-contracted pharmacy is used, you must pay for the prescription and then file a claim for reimbursement with your local VA medical facility.

Do I have to pay a copayment for urgent care prescription medication?

You may be required to pay a copayment for medication. These will be billed separately to you, by VA, as a part of VA's normal billing process.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

WHAT SERVICES ARE COVERED?

Find a list of services at:

https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Urgent_Care.asp

HOW DO I FIND AN IN-NETWORK PHARMACY?

Use VA's facility locator at

<https://www.va.gov/find-locations/> and click on the VA-approved urgent care locations and pharmacies near you.

HOW DO I FIND A VA MEDICAL FACILITY?

Use VA's facility locator at

<https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>.

DOES VA REIMBURSE BENEFICIARY TRAVEL FOR AN URGENT CARE VISIT?

VA reimburses beneficiary travel (BT) for eligible Veterans that must travel to receive community care. Payment is made for the distance to either the nearest VA or community medical facility that could have provided the care or services.