

Department of Veterans Affairs

# Medication Copayments



Facts You Should Know

## Medication Copayments

Veterans in Priority Group 1 or other exempted Veterans do not pay for medications.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) charges a copayment for each 30-day or less supply of medication provided on an outpatient basis for the treatment of a non-service connected condition. Effective early 2017, the copayment amounts are:

Priority Group	Outpatient Medication Tier	Copayment amount		
		1-30 day supply	31-60 day supply	61-90 day supply
2-8	<b>Tier 1</b> (Preferred Generics)	\$5	\$10	\$15
	<b>Tier 2</b> (Non-Preferred Generics and some OTCs)	\$8	\$16	\$24
	<b>Tier 3</b> (Brand Name)	\$11	\$22	\$33
	\$700 Medication Copayment Cap			

## Why VA Requires a Medication Copayment Annual Cap on Medication Copayments

An annual cap was established to eliminate financial hardship for Veterans enrolled in Priority Groups 2 through 8, who might require an unusually large amount of medications. Beginning in early 2017, the annual cap that can be charged is \$700. Veterans who exceed the annual cap will continue to receive medications without having to make further copayments.

### Medication Copayments apply to you if:

**1** You are a Veteran receiving outpatient treatment for a non-service connected condition and your annual income exceeds the applicable National Income Threshold

(found at [www.va.gov/healthbenefits](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits)). This threshold changes on an annual basis. For the current threshold amount, contact the Enrollment Coordinator at your nearest VA health care facility.

**2** You are a Veteran with a service-connected condition rated less than 50 percent disabled but are receiving outpatient treatment for a non-service-connected condition and your annual income exceeds the specified threshold.

### Exemptions from Medication Copayments:

- 1** Veterans rated 50 percent or more disabled with a service-connected condition.
- 2** Medication dispensed for service-connected conditions.
- 3** Veterans who are former Prisoners of War (POWs).
- 4** Medication for Vietnam-era herbicide-exposed, radiation-exposed, combat or Camp Lejeune Veterans, as authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1710(e).
- 5** Medication for treatment of military sexual trauma, as authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1720D.
- 6** Medication for treatment of cancer of the head or neck, as authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1720E.
- 7** Medication provided as part of a VA-approved research project, as authorized by 38 U.S.C. 7303.
- 8** Veterans with a low income (annual income lower than the applicable VA pension).
- 9** Veterans who VA determines to be catastrophically disabled, as defined in 38 CFR 17.36(e).
- 10** Veterans receiving care for psychosis or a mental illness other than psychosis pursuant to §17.110.

## Applying for Low Income Exemption

Veterans who have a service-connection rating of 40 percent or less and whose income is at or below the applicable National Income Threshold (found at [www.va.gov/healthbenefits](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits)) may complete a medication copayment exemption test.

## Payment Options

Payment is encouraged, but not required, when you pick up your medications at your VA health care facility. If you are unable to pay at that time an account will be established for you to be billed monthly. Prescriptions dispensed after hours, on weekends and on holidays, in emergency situations or through the Consolidated Mail Out Pharmacy (CMOP), will be billed to your account. Please do not send in requests for prescription refills with your payment. If you do, your prescription refill will be delayed.

To avoid interest and administrative charges, make payments before your next monthly billing statement. We encourage you to pay by check, money order or credit card. You should not send cash through the mail. The national payment address is printed on the monthly billing statement. If you would like to pay your VA patient copayment balance electronically, you may log into [www.pay.gov](http://www.pay.gov) and find "Department of Veterans Affairs" on the agency list. This service is available to you at no cost.

**Billing Questions:** If you receive a bill that you believe to be in error, please contact the toll-free number listed on your billing statement.

Reimbursements received from your health insurance carrier will be used to offset or eliminate your copayment on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The unpaid VA copayment remains your responsibility.



## Commonly Asked Questions

**If I am required to make a copayment and can't, will VA withhold my treatment or medications?**

No. VA will not withhold treatment or medication. An account is automatically established when you are required to make a copayment. However, if you are having financial difficulties and are unable to pay assessed copayment charges, you may apply for a waiver, compromise or repayment plan.

**Will the amount of the medication copayment and the annual cap ever change?**

The amount of the medication copayment and the cap may be changed on an annual basis. The VA health care facility will inform the Veteran of any medication copayment and/or annual cap change.

**Will my insurance company be charged for medication for my service-connected condition?**

No, VA is not authorized to bill your insurance company for medication related to treatment of your service-connected conditions.

**Who decides if a medication is for treatment of a non-service connected condition?**

A VA health care provider makes this determination. If the medication prescribed is for treatment of a service-connected condition or special authority, no copayment is required.

**Can I get prescriptions from my private health care provider filled at the VA pharmacy?**

No, VA will only provide medications that are prescribed by authorized providers in conjunction with VA medical care. VA health care providers are under no obligation to prescribe a medication recommended by a non-VA provider.



## How can I transfer my prescriptions prescribed in the community to the VA System?

VA will fill prescriptions prescribed by a non-VA provider only if **all** the following criteria are met:

- You are enrolled in VA health benefits
- You have an assigned Primary Care Provider
- You have provided your VA health care provider with your medical records from your non-VA provider
- Your VA health care provider agrees with the medication prescribed by your non-VA provider. VA health care providers are under no obligation to prescribe a medication recommended by a non-VA provider.

Patients are encouraged to bring a current list of medications, dose, and frequency for every visit.

## How do I pay for my prescriptions?

You may provide payment via the following methods:

Online: <https://pay.gov>

By mail: PO Box 530269  
Atlanta, GA 30353-0263

In person: A VA Medical Center

By Phone: 1-888-827-4817

Pay by check, money order, or credit card payable to "VA." Include Account Number. Please do not send in requests for prescription refills with your payment. If you do, your prescription refill will be delayed.

## Will I be charged for over-the-counter medications?

Medication copayments are charged for all over-the-counter medications, such as aspirin, cough syrup, and vitamins that are

dispensed from a VA pharmacy. You are not charged a medication copayment for medical supplies (syringes, alcohol wipes, etc.) or for medications administered during treatment.

## How do I know if my medication is on the VA Formulary?

Please visit the Pharmacy Internet Formulary at <http://www.pbm.va.gov/apps/VANationalFormulary/> to learn more.

## How do I know what tier my medication is in?

Please visit the Health Benefits site at <http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/> to learn more.

## How do I change my medication(s) to a lower tier?

A VA health care provider must make this determination. They will review any prescriptions and determine if the type of medication being taken can change to a lower tiered medication.

## How do I refill my prescription?

Prescriptions can be refilled online, by mail, or by phone. Please visit <http://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/access/prescriptions.asp> for more information. Note: Please do not send in requests for prescription refills with your payment. If you do, your prescription refill will be delayed.

## Where does the Money Go?

Funds collected from medication copayments, other VA copayments, and health insurance reimbursements are used to provide additional health care services to Veterans.





For more information about medication copayments, call 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or visit our website: <http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/>

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