Secure Messaging — Feature Overview

Secure Messaging is an easy to use online messaging system available through My HealtheVet. It is for users who have a My HealtheVet Premium account and who have registered as a Veteran/VA Patient. Secure Messaging is safe and secure, because the messages you send and receive are all kept within My HealtheVet.

Secure Messaging improves the connection between you and your VA health care team and other VA Staff. You can use it to ask about your VA appointments, medications, and your lab results or to have routine questions answered. Similar to email, Secure Messaging allows you to write a message, save drafts, review your sent messages and maintain a record of your conversations. Since the lines of communication are open, it helps make your VA appointments more productive because your VA health care team has more than just notes from your last appointment.

You can set your preferences to notify you through your personal email when a Secure Message is waiting in your My HealtheVet inbox. Use Secure Messaging to keep your VA health care team informed. Secure Messaging is there when you need it - just as it should be. Start using Secure Messaging today to discuss your health with your VA health care team.

**Secure Messaging is not for emergency situations**
Secure Messaging should only be used for non-emergency and non-urgent matters

If you have already registered for a My HealtheVet account and need to check that you have registered as a **VA Patient**, you can do the following:

- Sign in to My HealtheVet
- Select the **PERSONAL INFORMATION** tab (Figure 1)
- Select the **My Profile** sub-tab (Figure 1)

![My Profile Link](image)

Figure 1: My Profile Link
Under **What is Your Relationship to VA**, if you use the VA Health Care System, make sure you select the **VA Patient** checkbox (Figure 2)

![Figure 2: What is Your Relationship to VA?](image)

Select the **Save** button at the bottom of the screen (Figure 3)

![Figure 3: Save/Cancel Buttons](image)

## Getting Started with Secure Messaging

### Step 1 – Sign in to Secure Messaging

1) Sign in to your My HealtheVet *Premium* account by selecting the **Sign in** button on the upper right side of the screen. You must have already registered as a Premium user. If you do not have a My HealtheVet account, please register by selecting the **Register** button and completing the registration form (Figure 4).  2) Enter your My HealtheVet User ID and Password on the Login page. Or, log in using a Sign-in Partner.

![Figure 4: Sign-in/Register Buttons](image)
Step 2 – Access Secure Messaging

After signing in, there are three ways you can access Secure Messaging (Figure 5):

1) Select **Messages** or the **Inbox** link on the dashboard, or
2) Select the **Secure Messaging** tab at the top

NOTE: You can also select the **Compose Message** and **Manage Folders** links to directly enter those folders.

Step 3 – Composing a Secure Message

Secure Messaging opens to your **Inbox**. From the **Inbox**, you can do several things:

1. **Compose a new message:**
   a) You can create a new message by selecting the **Compose a Message** button on the left side of the screen (Figure 6).
b) Select the VA health care team and other VA staff you wish to contact by selecting the drop-down arrow for **To**. Your participating VA Health Care Team and other VA staff will appear in the list. You can edit the list of groups listed in the **To** dropdown by selecting the **Edit List** link next to the **Select a group to send the message...** dropdown arrow (Figure 7).

![Figure 7: Selecting a Group](image)

**Note:** Check your preferences if the VA health care team you are expecting to see is not listed.

c) Select radio button associated with the related subject title for **Subject** (Figure 8):

**Note:** If the General subject title is selected you are required to add a Subject Line.

![Figure 8: Select a Subject Category](image)
d) Add Subject Line (Figure 9).

e) Add any attachments (Figure 9).

f) Type your message (Figure 9).

\[\text{g) When you have completed the message, select the \textbf{Send} button.} \]
\[\text{You also have the option to save the message as a draft (select the \textbf{Save as Draft} button) or cancel the message (select the \textbf{Cancel} button) (Figure 9).} \]

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**Step 3 (a) - Include an Attachment with Your Message**

A Secure Messaging Attachment is a file that you can include on a Secure Message to your VA health care team. Your attachment should relate to your message.

This feature allows you to share the results of tests, procedures, or health care summaries that you may have obtained from your non-VA providers with your VA health care team. It should not be used to send non-health related information. To include an attachment with your message:

2. Select the **Add Attachment** link (Figure 10) on a new **Secure Message** or on a **Secure Message** that you are replying to. The **File Attachment** folder opens (Figure 11).
Use the **Browse** button to select the file on your computer that you would like to attach.

3. Then select the **Attach** button (Figure 11).

To provide you with outstanding health care services, your VA health care team may decide to save some of your **Secure Messaging Attachments** in your VA medical record. Doing this allows them the ability to refer to the information later.
Step 4 - Open Messages from the Inbox

To open a message in your Inbox, select the name under the From column. The message displays on the View Message page (Figure 12).

Figure 12: View Message
Step 5 - Print a Message

You can print messages. 1) Select the name under the From column of the message you want to open. 2) On the View Message page, select the Print button. 3) Select the Print button on the Print Message page. The print window opens in your browser. 4) Select the Print button (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Print a Message
Step 6 - Reply to Messages

After reading a message in your Inbox, you can reply by selecting the Reply button. On the Reply to Message page, type your message in the Message box. Select the Reply button. Your reply message moves to your Sent folder (Figure 14).

Message Management

Secure Messaging allows you to communicate with your participating VA Health Care Team and other VA staff in a secure environment within the My HealtheVet portal. You can send and receive messages from your VA Health Care Team, as well as manage and maintain your messages within your Secure Messaging account.

Open your Inbox, Drafts, Sent, and Deleted folders for your Secure Messaging account: Under the Compose a Message button, select the quick link for the desired folder. Secure Messaging will open the folder you selected. *Notice* the number in parenthesis ( ) next to the links illustrated above; this number tells you how many messages are currently in this folder (Figure 15).
Create your own folders: Under Manage Folders (Figure 16), enter a name for your folder and select the Add button (Figure 17).
Later, if you want to make changes to a folder you have created (for example rename the folder), select the desired link under the **I want to...** column and then make the desired changes (Figure 18).

**Rename a Folder:** 1) Select the **Rename** link under the **I want to...** column.

2) In the **Rename a Folder** window, enter the new name of the folder. 3) Select the **Rename** button. The new name of the folder will display as a quick link (Figure 19).

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**Figure 18: Editing Folders**

**Rename a Folder:** 1) Select the **Rename** link under the **I want to...** column.

2) In the **Rename a Folder** window, enter the new name of the folder. 3) Select the **Rename** button. The new name of the folder will display as a quick link (Figure 19).

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**Figure 19: Renaming a Folder**
Move a Message: 1) Under Manage Folders, select the View/Move Message link (Figure 20). 2) Select the check box for all messages you desire to move. 3) Move the selected messages to a folder by selecting the drop-down arrow under Move Selected Messages to... 4) Select from the list where you want to move the message (Deleted or one of your other personal folders under My Folders) and then select the Move button (Figure 21).

![Figure 20: View/Move Messages](image1)

![Figure 21: Move Selected Messages to...](image2)

Note: Secure Messages stay in all your folders (including the Deleted folder) until they are permanently deleted by you. The most recent Secure Messages displays at the top of the Inbox. You may choose to move older messages to Personal folders. You can also change the default date range of Secure Messages to display via the Message Display Setting on your Preference page.

VA Patients cannot reply to messages older than 120 days.
Search for messages: You can search for a particular message. 1) Enter text in the search box. 2) Click on the Search button. The Reset button clears the text in the search box. The Cancel button cancels the search (Figure 22).

An advanced search is available. Select the Advanced Search link and enter the criteria on the next page Figure 23().

User Preferences

My HealtheVet Secure Messaging allows you to set various preferences within your account. To access the Preferences section, select the Preferences link. On the Preferences page, select your preferences for 1) New Secure Message Notifications sent to your personal email, 2) Signature Settings for a signature block, 3) Message Display Settings to set a time period of messages to display in the inbox, and 4) My Secure Messaging Contact List to select which Triage Groups display on your Compose Message To dropdown list. When you are finished selecting your preferences, select the Save button (Figure 24).
Additional Information on Secure Messaging

**Remember**: Secure Messaging should be only used for non-urgent, non-critical communication.

If you need help while using Secure Messaging, select the User Guide (Secure Messaging>Compose a Message>User Guide) link located at the top left of the screen to review this guide (Figure 25).
Protecting Your Personal Information

The Department of Veterans Affairs takes safeguarding and protecting your information very seriously. You should, too. You control access to your personal information. It is your responsibility to keep your information private and protected. To help protect your privacy, My HealtheVet provides some important points to remember. Visit Protecting Your Personal Information to learn more.
Where to Find Help

Frequently Asked Questions, Help and Contact MHV

1. Select FAQ to go to Frequently Asked Questions and get commonly asked questions and answers about Secure Messaging.

2. Select Help & User Guides for general guidance on using My HealtheVet and User Guides for My HealtheVet features (Figure 26).

3. Select Contact (Figure 27) to send a message to the My HealtheVet Help Desk or contact them at (877) 327-0022 or for TTY dial 711.