VA Appointments User Guide

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Definitions

Introduction to VA Appointments

VA Appointments is a new tool on My Health***e***Vet. It gives VA patients a detailed view of their VA clinic appointments 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you are a Veteran enrolled at a VA health care facility, are registered on My Health***e***Vet and have an upgraded account*, you have the option to see your **VA Appointments**. You will be able to find **VA Appointments** in the **GET CARE** section, under **APPOINTMENTS**.

My Health***e***Vet **VA Appointments** is simple, easy to use, private and secure. You do not have to call your VA health care clinic for information about upcoming clinic appointments. Anytime, anywhere you are, as long as you have Internet access, you can view your **VA Appointments**.

VA Appointments:

- Lets you see at a glance your upcoming **VA Appointments**
- Lets you see at a glance your **VA Appointments** for the past two (2) years
- Allows you to **view and print** your **VA Appointments**
- Gives you appointment details to help you plan your arrival time (for example, you may need to have an x-ray, blood drawn, or an EKG)
- Lets you set your **Health Calendar Preferences** so you receive an email notice of your upcoming **VA Appointments**
- Shows your **VA Appointments** information on your personal **Health Calendar**

You may want to share your **VA Appointments** information with family members or caregivers. With this information, they can help you manage your appointments. Use the **Blue Button** as another way to download or print your **VA Appointments.** You can also use **Secure Messaging** to send a message to your participating health care team requesting, canceling or rescheduling a VA clinic appointment.

VA Appointments is a My Health***e***Vet tool that gives you control over your health care. It helps you plan and focus on what is important to you.

What Is Needed to Use VA Appointments and What You May See

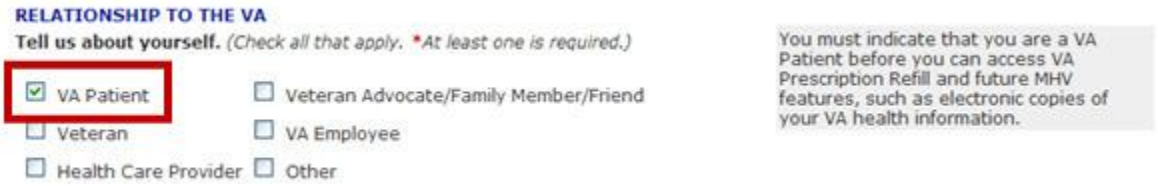
To use ***VA Appointments*** you must:

1. be a Veteran enrolled at a VA health care facility
2. be a registered My Health***e***Vet user
3. have an upgraded account

To get an upgraded account you must complete a one-time process called In-Person Authentication or "IPA." For more information on how to upgrade your account, visit **Quick Links.** You can upgrade your account at your medical center or Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC).

Have a My HealtheVet Account - Registration is quick and easy.

- When you register, enter your First Name, Last Name, Date of Birth, Gender and Social Security Number. If you use the VA health care system, it is important that this information match your VA electronic health record information. **TIP:** Use your Veterans Identification Card (VIC) information to match your VA electronic health record information.
- If you use the VA health care system, make sure you select the **"VA Patient"** checkbox when you register.



With an upgraded account you will:

- see medication names in **VA Prescription Refill**
- view **Wellness Reminders**
- view **VA Appointments**
- use **Secure Messaging** when it is available in your area
- receive copies of key parts of your VA electronic medical record as they become available

To check your account:

- Login to My Health***e***Vet
- Select the **PERSONAL INFORMATION** tab
- Select the **Profiles** sub-tab
- Under **Relationship to the VA,** if you use the VA health care system, make sure you select the **"VA Patient"** checkbox (see red box above)
  - If **"VA Patient"** is not checked and you use the VA health care system, select this box
  - This will put a checkmark in the box
- Select the **Save** button at the bottom of the screen

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Upgraded Account (In-Person Authenticated) Users

My Health***e***Vet created a way to confirm a Veteran user's identity. The process is called In-Person Authentication. You must complete this process to have an upgraded account. My Health***e***Vet users who are VA patients and have an upgraded account may be able to view, print and download parts of their official VA electronic health record.

There are things you must do before In-Person Authentication can occur:

- Be registered as a "VA Patient" in your My Health***e***Vet account
- View the My Health***e***Vet Orientation Video (available online or at your local VA facility)
- Read and sign VA Form, 10-5345a-MHV (available online or at your local VA facility)

To have your identity verified:

- Present a government issued photo identification (a Veterans Identification Card (VIC) or driver's license is acceptable) to a qualified VA staff member at your VA health care facility.

For questions about using My HealtheVet, use the Contact MHV link at the top of every My HealtheVet page.

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General Information

NOTES:

- If you use the VA health care system and want to see parts of your official VA electronic health record, you must complete In-Person Authentication.
- To use **VA Appointments**, you need a computer with a browser and Internet access. Some people have Internet access in their home. Public libraries and Internet cafés also provide Internet access.
- You can set your **Health Calendar Preferences** so you receive email notices of upcoming **VA Appointments.**
- You can see a reminder of your **VA Appointments** on your personal **Health Calendar**. This makes it easy to see at a glance all your upcoming appointments.
- You can use the **Secure Messaging** feature in My Health***e***Vet to send a message to your participating health care team to request, change or cancel a **VA Appointment**.
- You can use the **Blue Button** to print or download your **VA Appointments** information. When you use the **Blue Button**, you can view and print your selected My Health***e***Vet personal health information (data). You can also download your My Health***e***Vet data to a computer or other device (such as a CD or thumb drive). This lets you take your data with you. You can choose to share this with your health care team, caregivers or any other person.
- You are the only one who sees your health information in My Health***e***Vet. You choose with whom to share your information. If you want someone else to see your health information, you must give it to that person.
- You are responsible for protecting the personal health information you print out or download. *It is important to protect your information.* Protect this information the same way you would protect your banking or credit card information. Do not leave your printed information in a printer. Do not save your downloaded information to a public computer. When using a public computer, save your health information to a CD or a thumb drive. Remember to take the CD or thumb drive with you when you finish.

IMPORTANT: Please note that any information entered in your My HealtheVet account is for you only and is not shared with your VA facility. If you need to update the information in your official VA record, including the mailing address for your VA prescriptions, please contact the appropriate office at your local VA facility.

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How to Find VA Appointments

Remember, to use **VA Appointments** you have to be a Veteran enrolled at a VA health care facility, have registered on My Health***e***Vet and have an upgraded account (completed the In-Person Authentication process).

1. You can **Login** to your personal account from any page in My Health***e***Vet. Enter your **User ID** and **Password** in the **Member Login** area and then select the Login button.

2. To access **VA Appointments**, select the **GET CARE** tab at the top of the page. This will take you to the **GET CARE** page.

When you select the **GET CARE** tab, you will see this page

3. To access **APPOINTMENTS** select the **APPOINTMENTS** tab at the top of the page

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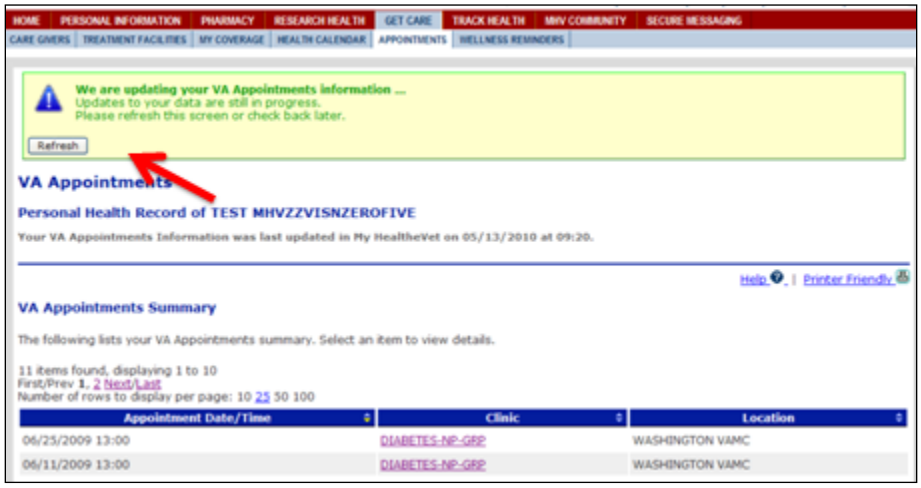
Viewing VA Appointments

When you select the **APPOINTMENTS** tab on the **Get Care** page, it takes you to the **VA Appointments Summary** page.



When you open **VA Appointments**, you may see at the top of the page a yellow message box with a blue triangle.

My Health**e**Vet gives you a message when your **VA Appointments** are being updated in My Health**e**Vet.

Select the **Refresh** button to view current information.

Under your name, you will see the date and time your **VA Appointments** information was last updated.

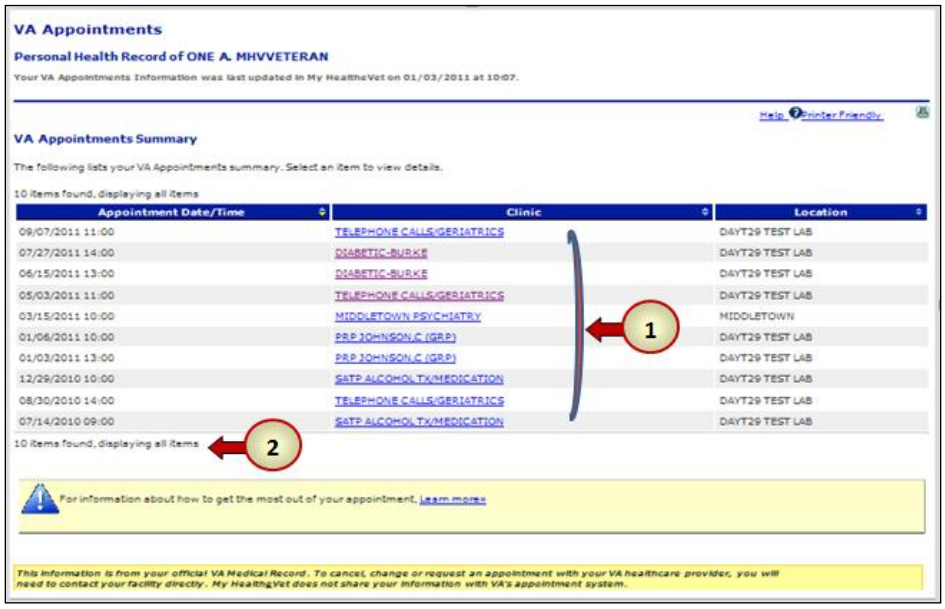
VA Appointments Summary

The **VA Appointments Summary** page gives you a table that shows all your **VA Appointments** for the past two (2) years. It also displays your future **VA Appointments**.

Appointment Date/Time	Clinic	Location

The table shows the date and time of your appointment, the name of the clinic, and the facility name or location of your VA clinic appointment. You can use the up and down arrows to display how you would like to see your appointment information. For example under **Appointment Date/Time,** you can display your future appointments first, followed by those in the past. Or you can display your past appointments first, followed by your future appointments.

The table lists your past, present and future **VA Appointments**



1. You can view the details of a **VA Appointment** by selecting the link to a specific clinic
2. The top and bottom of the table shows the number of appointments displayed. You can choose to view 10, 25, 50 or 100 items per page. If you select 10 per page and you have more than 10 items, it puts the information on a second page. For example, if you have 12 items you will see the following:

12 items found, displaying 1 to 10
First/Prev 1, 2 Next/Last
Number of rows to display per page: 10 25 50 100

There are two ways to go to the second page:

- Select the number **2** or
- Select Next

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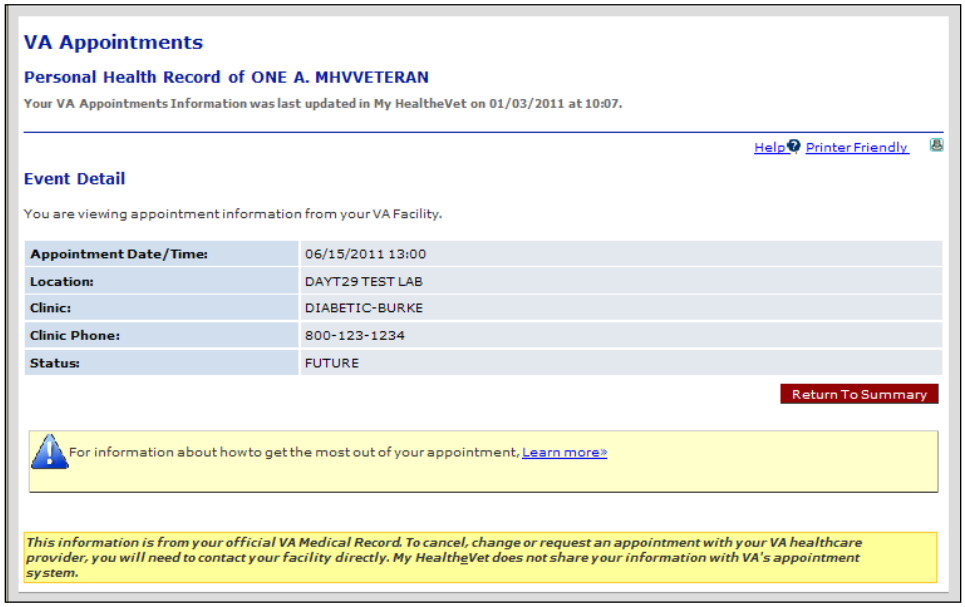
Event Detail

When you select a link to a specific clinic from the **VA Appointment Summary** page, it will bring you to this page. The **Event Detail** page shows specific information about the **VA Appointment** you selected.



The **Event Detail** page displays:

- **Appointment Date/Time –** shows the date and time of the clinic appointment you selected
- **Location** – shows the name of the VA facility where your appointment is scheduled
- **Clinic** – shows the name of the clinic where your appointment is scheduled
- **Clinic Phone –** many VA facilities use a 1-800 call number for patients to address clinic appointment or scheduling questions
- **Status –** shows how your appointment is viewed by the clinic

The **Status** of your appointment lets you know the standing of your appointment with the clinic. The Cancelled status displays if the clinic or you cancelled an appointment. You do not need to show up for an appointment with the status Cancelled.

Past Appointment Status

- Appointment Kept
- Appointment Not Kept

Current Appointment Status

- Status Update in Progress
- Not Applicable (this is a temporary status and will change)

Future Appointment Status

- Future

Appointments that require no action for the patient

- Cancelled (by patient or by clinic)

When you are an Inpatient

- Inpatient Appointment (Note: After you are discharged, please check your appointments because the status may have changed.)

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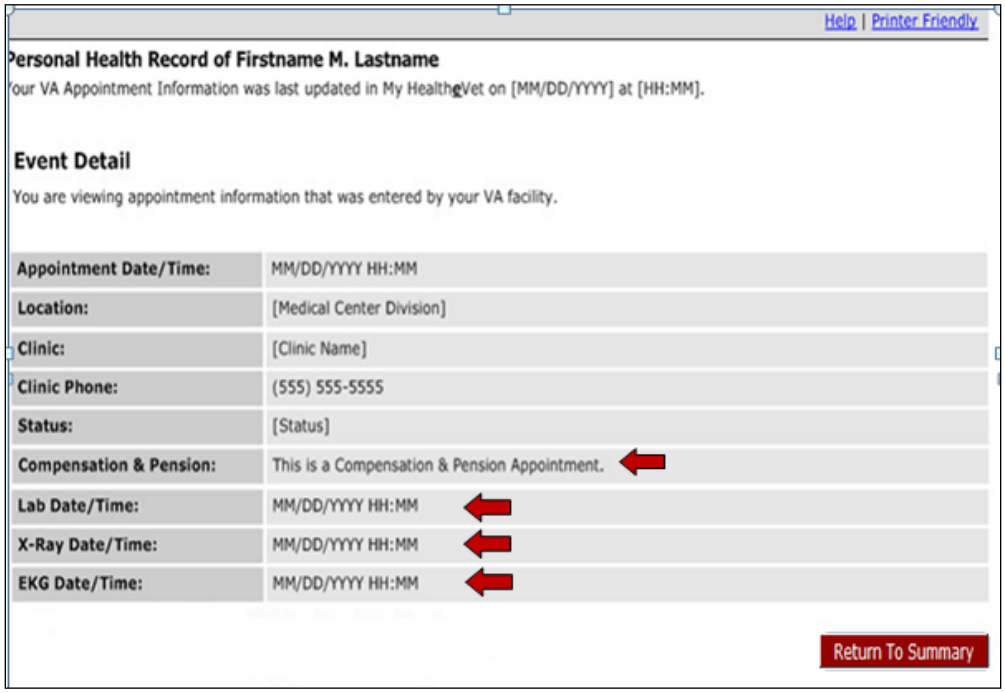
Additional Event Details

The **Event Detail** page may show added details about your appointment that can help you plan your arrival time (for example, you may need to have an x-ray, blood drawn, or an EKG).



The **Event Detail** page may display things you need to do before your clinic appointment.

- **Lab –** shows the date and time you have been scheduled for lab work*
- **X-Ray –** shows the date and time you have been scheduled for an X-Ray*
- **EKG –** shows the date and time you have been scheduled for an EKG*

If your appointment is for a **Compensation & Pension** exam, it will show here.*

*** Lab, X-Ray, and EKG information is only seen if you have pre-appointment activities**

To return to the **VA Appointments Summary** page select the button Return To Summary

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Health Calendar

Viewing VA Appointments

You can view your **VA Appointments** in your **Health Calendar**

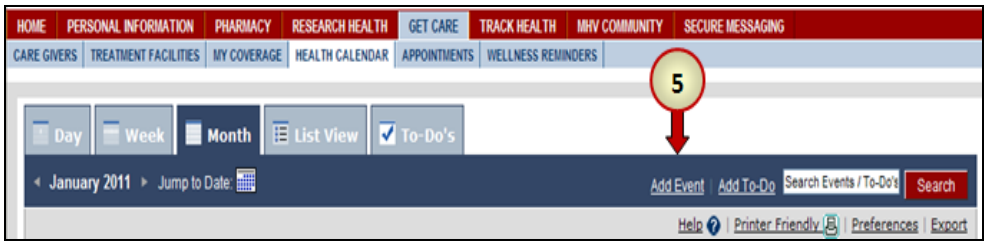
1. Select the **Get Care** tab
2. Select the **Health Calendar** tab

To view your ***VA Appointments***:

3. Check the "***VA Appointments***" box
4. Select **Update Views**

Your upcoming **VA Appointments** will be displayed in your calendar

Adding Non-VA Appointments to Your Health Calendar



You can add your non-VA appointments to your **Health Calendar.** On the upper right corner of the **Health Calendar** page:

5. Select the **Add Event** link and fill in the form, then select **Save**

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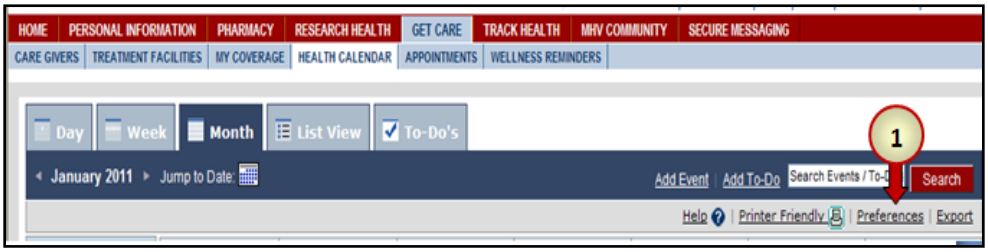
Receiving Email Reminders about Your VA Appointments

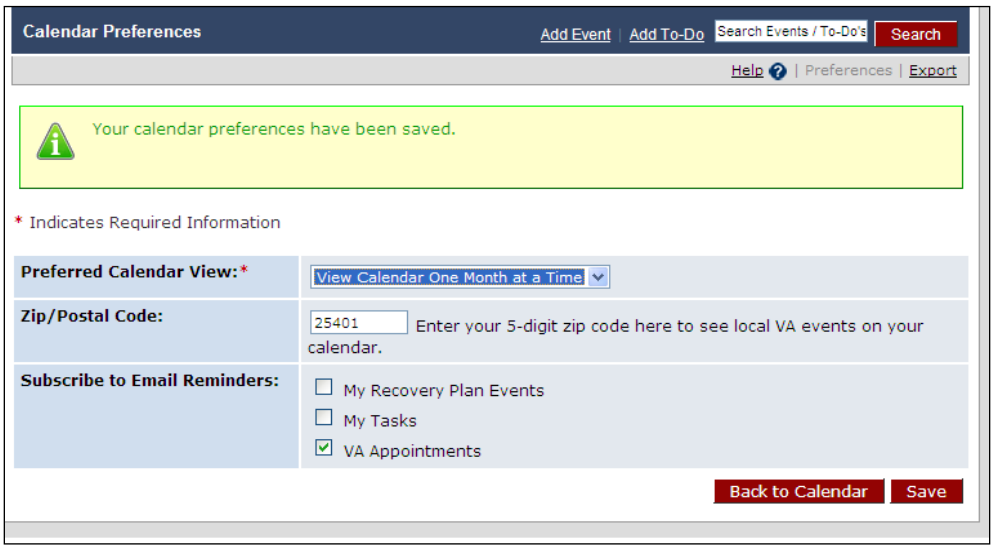


You can receive an email reminder about your appointments by setting your **Preferences**

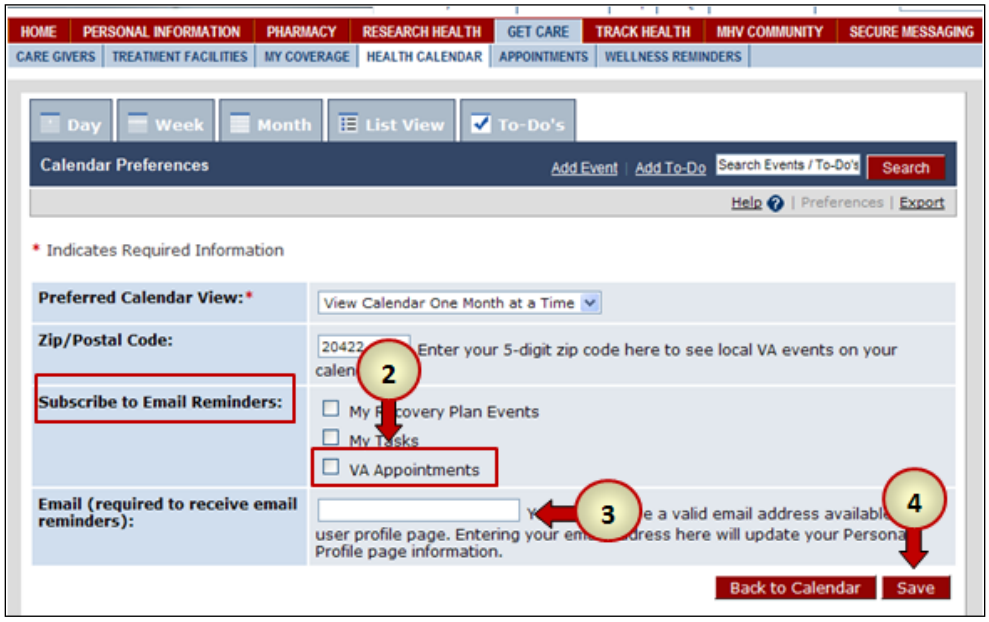
To set up an email reminder:

1. On the upper right corner of the **Health Calendar** page Select the **Preferences** link

If you already listed your email address in the **PERSONAL PROFILE** section of My Health*e*Vet, you will see this page. On this page you will ***not*** see the box **Email (required to receive email reminders).**



If you get this page just check the **VA Appointments** box and Select the **Save** button.



If you have not entered your email address in the **PERSONAL PROFILE** section of My Health*e*Vet you will see this page:

2. In the "Subscribe to Email Reminders" section, check the "***VA Appointments***" box
3. Enter your email address. This will also update your **Personal Profile** page information
4. Select the Save button

Email Reminders:

When you **Subscribe to Email Reminders** you will get an automatic reminder.

Email Reminders

- ***Do*** give the date and time of your **VA Appointments**
- ***Do*** give the name of the VA facility

Email Reminders

- ***Do not*** show the name of the clinic where you have your **VA Appointments**
- ***Do not*** contain any personal health related information

The following is a sample of what **Email Reminders** may look like:

Email Reminders:

1. Your email address will show by **To** in the address section
2. Your name will show in the Name box

When you **Subscribe to Email Reminders**, you will get your email reminder two weeks before your **VA Appointments**. Plus, you will also get a reminder three days before your appointment

The reminder is sent to the email address on file in your My Health***e***Vet account

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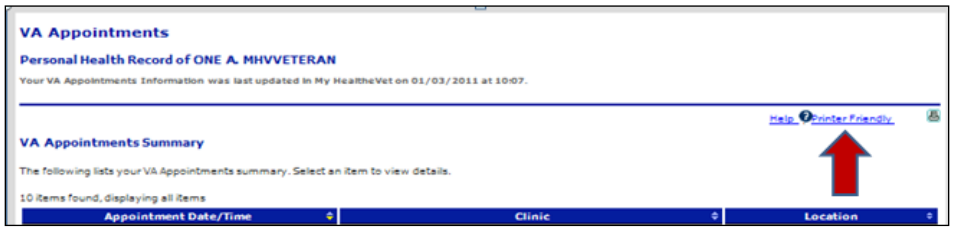
Printing VA Appointments

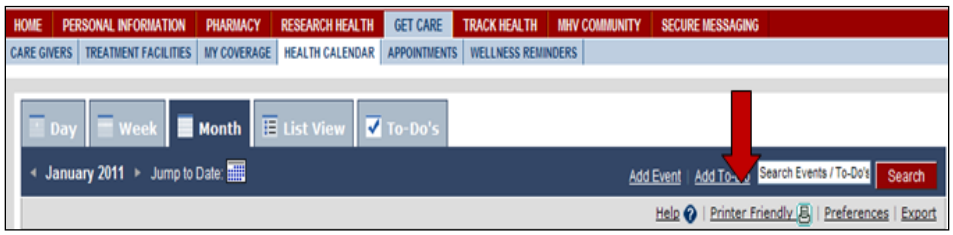
There are three ways you can print your **VA Appointments:**

- **Appointment** tab (select Printer Friendly)
- **Health Calendar**
- **Blue Button** custom download of your **VA Appointments**



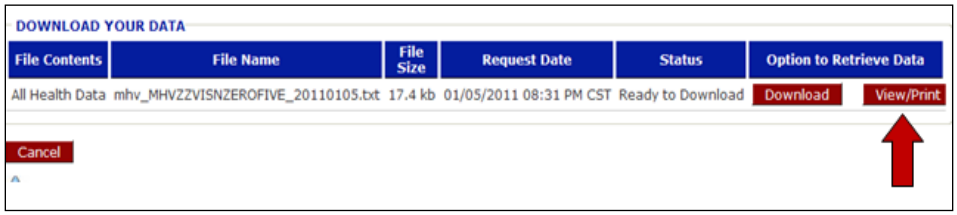
To print your list from the Appointment tab:

Select the **Printer Friendly** link at the top right hand corner of the page



To print your list from the Health Calendar:

Select **Printer Friendly** link at the top right hand corner of the page



To print your list from the Blue Button

Select the View/Print button at the lower right hand corner of the page

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Blue Button and VA Appointments

To download your data using the **Blue Button Download My Data** feature**:**

- Log into your My Health***e***Vet account
- Select **Download My Data**
- Select **Download Only My Selected Data from My HealtheVet**
- Select **Continue**
- Select **VA Appointments (Future)*** (one year forward)
  or
- Select **VA Appointments*** (limited to past 2 years)
- **Select Submit**
- Select **Download** if you want an electronic copy
- Click on **View/Print** if you want a printed list,
- Select **Print**

* Date limitations: in the **Blue Button, VA Appointments** is limited to two years past and one year forward

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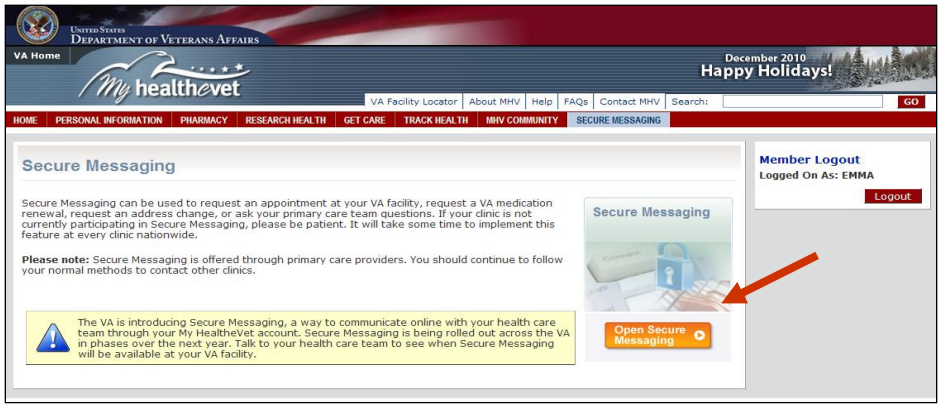
Secure Messaging and VA Appointments

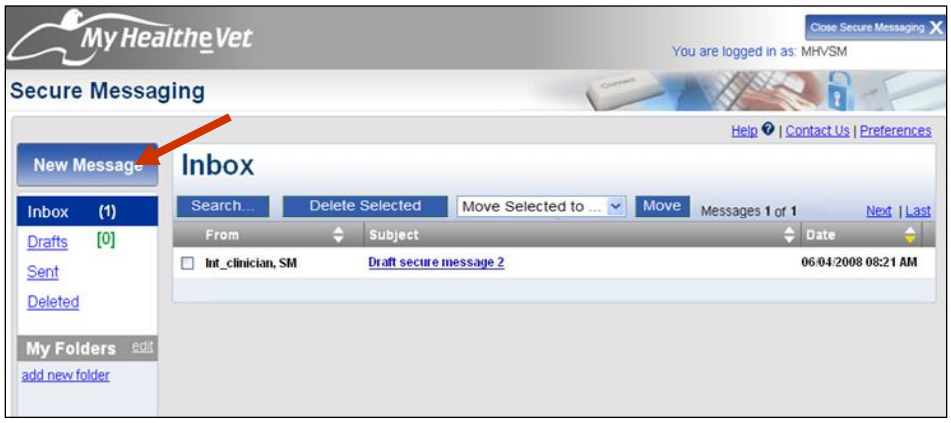
You can use **Secure Messaging** to send a message to your participating health care team to request, cancel or reschedule a VA clinic appointment. **Secure Messaging** allows you to communicate in a secure environment within My Health***e***Vet. You have the ability to send and receive messages from your health care team, as well as manage and maintain your messages within your **Secure Messaging** account.

To access My Health***e***Vet Secure Messaging, go to www.myhealth.va.gov, login to your personal account (Member Login box on right side of the screen), and select the **SECURE MESSAGING** tab.



Select the orange **Open Secure Messaging** button to use **Secure Messaging**.

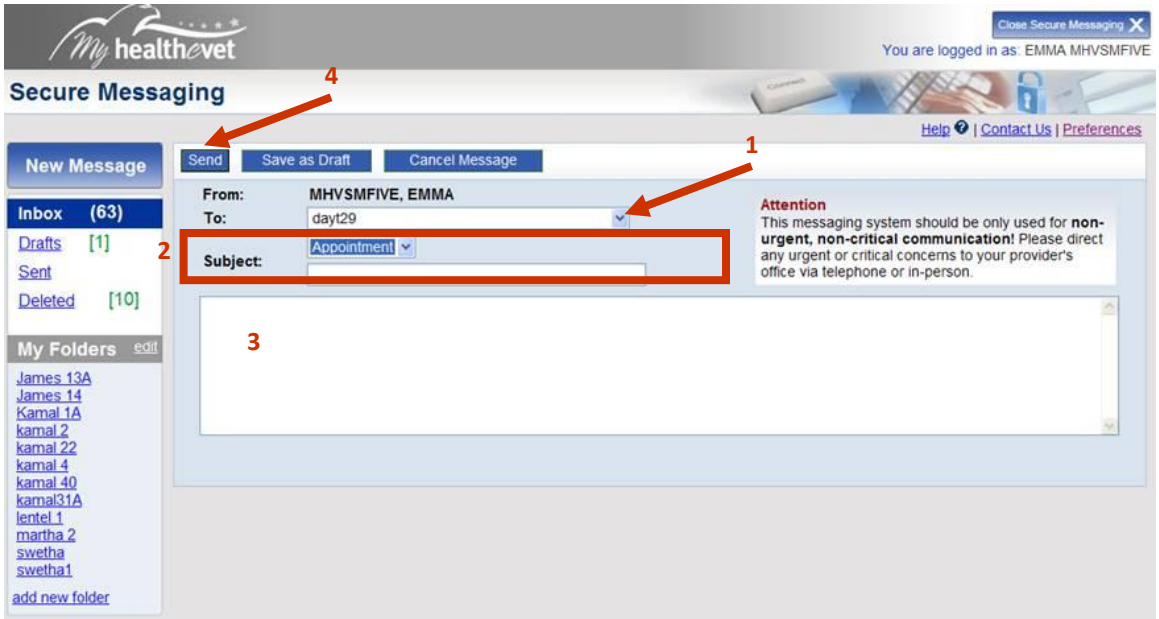
Note: If you do not see the orange button, you will see information about what you need to do in order to use **Secure Messaging**.



If your facility is using Secure Messaging and you are associated with a triage team, you can create a new message by clicking on the **New Message** button in your Inbox.

To create a new message, fill in the appropriate information:

1. Select the health care team for whom the message is for by clicking the drop-down arrow for **To**. Note: only your participating VA health care team will appear in the list.
2. Select the **Subject** of your message by selecting the drop-down arrow for **Subject**: then select **Appointment** to ask about a future or existing appointment.
3. Type your message.
4. When you have completed the message, select the **Send** button.



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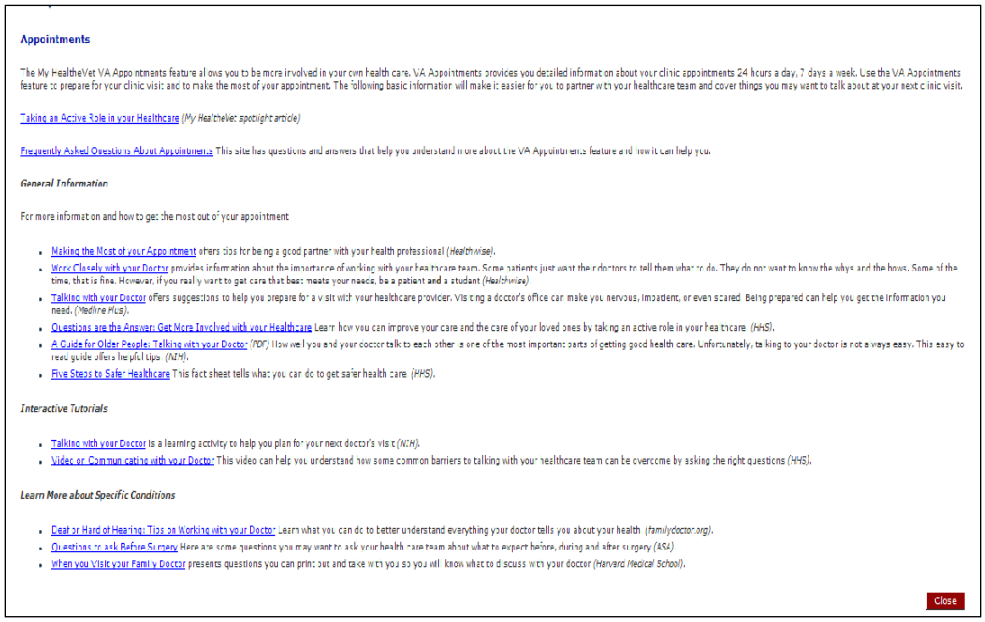
Learn More



Appointments

The My HealtheVet VA Appointments feature allows you to be more involved in your own health care. VA Appointments provides you detailed information about your clinic appointments 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Use the VA Appointments feature to prepare for your clinic visit and to make the most of your appointment. The following basic information will make it easier for you to partner with your healthcare team and cover things you may want to talk about at your next clinic visit.

Taking an Active Role in your Healthcare *(My HealtheVet spotlight article)*

Frequently Asked Questions About Appointments This site has questions and answers that help you understand more about the VA Appointments feature and how it can help you.

General Information

For more information and how to get the most out of your appointment

- Making the Most of your Appointment offers tips for being a good partner with your health professional *(Healthwise)*.
- Work Closely with your Doctor provides information about the importance of working with your healthcare team. Some patients just want their doctors to tell them what to do. They do not want to know the whys and the hows. Some of the time, that is fine. However, if you really want to get care that best meets your needs, be a patient and a student *(Healthwise)*
- Talking with your Doctor offers suggestions to help you prepare for a visit with your healthcare provider. Visiting a doctor's office can make you nervous, impatient, or even scared. Being prepared can help you get the information you need. *(MedlinePlus)*.
- Questions are the Answer: Get More Involved with your Healthcare Learn how you can improve your care and the care of your loved ones by taking an active role in your healthcare *(HHS)*.
- A Guide for Older People: Talking with your Doctor *(PDF)* How well you and your doctor talk to each other is one of the most important parts of getting good health care. Unfortunately, talking to your doctor is not always easy. This easy to read guide offers helpful tips *(NIH)*.
- Five Steps to Safer Healthcare This fact sheet tells what you can do to get safer health care *(HHS)*.

Interactive Tutorials

- Talking with your Doctor is a learning activity to help you plan for your next doctor's visit *(NCH)*.
- Video on Communicating with your Doctor This video can help you understand how some common barriers to talking with your healthcare team can be overcome by asking the right questions *(HHS)*.

Learn More about Specific Conditions

- Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Tips on Working with your Doctor Learn what you can do to better understand everything your doctor tells you about your health *(familydoctor.org)*.
- Questions to ask Before Surgery Here are some questions you may want to ask your health care team about what to expect before, during and after surgery *(ASA)*
- When you Visit your Family Doctor presents questions you can print out and take with you so you will know what to discuss with your doctor *(Harvard Medical School)*.

Close

To get more information on VA Appointments select **Learn More**.

The **Learn More** page gives you a brief summary of what **VA Appointments** is and the benefits of using **VA Appointments.**

If you select **Learn More**, this is what you will see.

To leave the **Learn More** page, select the **Close** Close button

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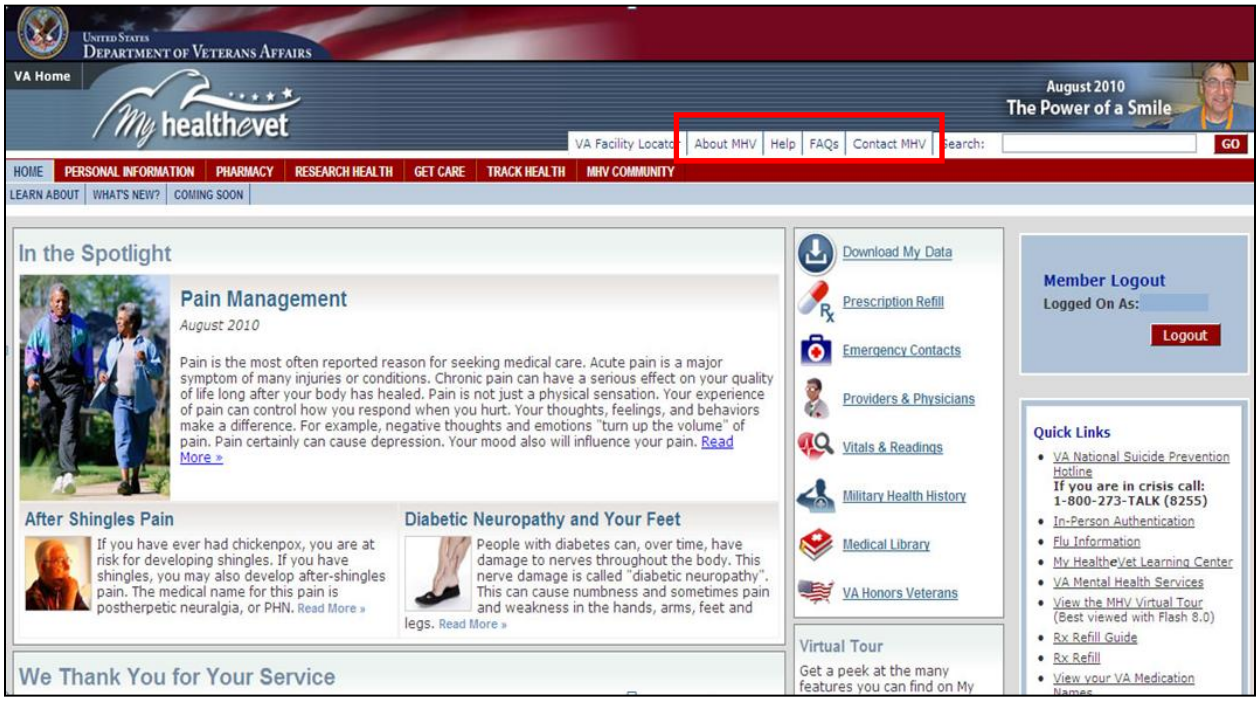
Frequently Asked Questions, Help and Contact MHV

At the top of every page is a white bar where you can get support.

Select **FAQs** to take you to **Frequently Asked Questions** and get answers to common questions about **VA Appointments**.

Select **Help** to find more information about the page you are viewing.

Select **Contact MHV** to send a message to the My Health**e**Vet Help Desk.



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Definitions

Data

Data is your health information in words and numbers. **VA Appointments** refers to copies of your scheduled **VA Appointments** from your official VA electronic health record as your data.

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Compact Disc (CD)

A Compact Disc (also known as a CD) is a round disc used to store information from your computer. A CD is portable and requires special handling to prevent damage to the recording. A CD is one of the most common ways to store information.

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Thumb drive

A thumb drive is a small electronic device used to store information from your computer. It is also known as a flash drive or pen drive. A thumb drive is lightweight, portable and easy to use for moving information. It fits into the USB slot on a computer. Then the computer can read your transferred information.

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In-Person Authentication (to get an upgraded account)

In-Person Authentication is a process used to verify a My Health***e***Vet user's identity and upgrade a basic account. Registered My Health***e***Vet users, who are VA patients and have completed the In-Person Authentication process, are able to:

- view the names of their VA prescriptions
- view Wellness Reminders
- view VA Appointments
- use Secure Messaging (when available), with their participating provider
- access additional information from their VA electronic medical record when it becomes available

Before In-Person Authentication can occur, several requirements must be met:

- The user must be registered as a VA patient in their My Health***e***Vet account
- The user must view the My Health***e***Vet Orientation Video
- The user must download, read and sign the VA Form, 10-5345a-MHV (PDF)
- The user must present a form of government issued photo identification to a qualified VA staff member at their VA health care facility to have their identity verified

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Quick Links

Quick Links is located on the right side of the My Health***e***Vet Homepage. **Quick Links** provides easy access to important information in My Health***e***Vet. There are links that take you to information about In-Person Authentication, My Health***e***Vet Learning Center, VA Mental Health Services, Rx Refill Guide, and much more.

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