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Substance Use Treatment for Veterans

If you're struggling with substance use problems, you're not alone. Many Veterans have problems with the use of alcohol, tobacco, street drugs, and prescription medicines. We're here to help. Find out how to get support for substance use problems through VA.

How do I talk to someone right now?

Find out how to get support anytime, day or night.

If you're a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, connect with our caring, qualified Veterans Crisis Line responders for confidential help. Many of them are Veterans themselves. This service is private, free, and available 24/7.

To connect with a Veterans Crisis Line responder anytime day or night:

- Call 988.
- Text 838255.
- [Start a confidential chat.](#)
- If you have hearing loss, call TTY: 800-799-4889.

You can also:

- Call 911.
- Go to the nearest emergency room.
- Go directly to your nearest VA medical center. It doesn't matter what your discharge status is or if you're enrolled in VA health care.

[Find your nearest VA medical center](#)

What services does VA provide for Veterans with substance use problems?

We provide many options for Veterans seeking treatment for substance use problems ranging from unhealthy alcohol use to life-threatening addiction. The

services we offer you depend on your specific needs.

We offer proven medication options, like:

- Medically managed detoxification to stop substance use safely, and services to get stable
- Drug substitution therapies and newer medicines to reduce cravings (like methadone and buprenorphine for opiate addiction)
- Nicotine replacement or other medicines for stopping tobacco use

We offer counseling and other therapy options, like:

- Short-term outpatient counseling
- Intensive outpatient treatment
- Marriage and family counseling
- Self-help groups
- Residential (live-in) care
- Continuing care and relapse prevention (making sure you don't slip back into the same substance use problems)
- Special programs for Veterans with specific concerns (like women Veterans, returning combat Veterans, and homeless Veterans)

We also offer treatment and support for health conditions that can be related to substance use problems, like:

- Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Depression

[Learn more about treatment programs for substance use problems](#)

[Learn more about treatment programs for PTSD](#)

[Learn more about treatment programs for depression](#)

How do I access VA services for substance use problems?

The VA health care program covers services to treat substance use problems. To access these services, first apply for VA health care.

[Apply for VA health care](#)

After you apply

If you have a VA primary care provider, talk to them about your substance use. Your provider can help you get screened for substance use problems and related issues (like PTSD or depression)—and can offer treatment and support as needed.

If you don't have a VA primary care provider or have never been seen in a VA hospital or clinic:

- [Find a Substance Use Disorder \(SUD\) program near you](#), **or**
- Call our general information hotline at [800-827-1000](tel:800-827-1000), **or**
- Contact your local VA medical center.
[Find a VA medical center near you](#)

If you served in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), or Operation New Dawn (OND), call your local VA medical center, and ask to speak to the OEF/OIF/OND coordinator.

[Find a VA medical center near you](#)

What if I don't have VA health care benefits?

If you don't have VA health care benefits, you may still be able to get care.

If you've served in a combat zone, get free private counseling, alcohol and drug assessment, and other support at one of our 300 community Vet Centers.

[Find a Vet Center near you](#)

If you're homeless or at risk of becoming homeless:

- Visit our website to learn about VA programs for Veterans who are homeless.
[Learn about our homelessness programs](#)
- Contact the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-424-3838 for help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A trained VA counselor will offer information about VA homeless programs, health care, and other services in your area. The call is free and confidential (private).
- Call or visit your local VA Community Resource and Referral Center. Even if you don't qualify for VA health care, our staff can help you find non-VA resources you may qualify for in your community. [Find your local Community Resource](#)

[and Referral Center](#)

Where can I find more information and support?

- [Download our Guide to VA Mental Health Services \(PDF\)](#)
- Go to our Make the Connection website to hear stories from Veterans about their own experiences with overcoming drug and alcohol problems, and to get access to more resources and support.
[Get support for substance abuse problems on the Make the Connection website](#)
- Visit our self-help resources guide to get links to books, web resources, and mobile applications that have been reviewed and recommended by VA experts.
[Get self-help resources to help with substance abuse](#)
- Visit the resources section of our VA website to find more trusted resources outside VA that can offer information and support.
[Find resources outside VA to help with substance abuse](#)
- Download our Stay Quit Coach mobile app—designed to help Veterans with PTSD quit smoking. We based this app on steps proven to work to help people quit smoking. It includes tools to control cravings and manage smoking triggers, messages to keep you going, medication reminders, and more.
[Get the Stay Quit Coach app to help you quit smoking](#)

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