

Veterans Administration MISSION Act: Answers to the top five questions about urgent care

Urgent care is one of the new benefits offered as part of the VA MISSION Act that gives Veterans greater choice in their health care. The benefit is offered in addition to the opportunity to receive care from a VA provider, as VA also offers same-day services. Below are the answers to some common questions about the new urgent care benefit.

1. What is urgent care? Urgent care is a type of walk-in health care for situations where you need help but don't have an emergency, such as colds, ear infections, minor injuries, pink eye, skin infections, and strep throat.
2. Why are there different urgent care locations? There are two types of urgent care network locations: Retail and Urgent: (1) Retail locations such as CVS or Walgreens are places where you can get care for minor ailments like a sore throat or earache. (2) Urgent locations provide more comprehensive walk-in care for illnesses or injuries that are not life threatening, like splinting, casting, lacerations, or wound treatment. Both retail and urgent locations are staffed with healthcare professionals who are licensed and credentialed.
3. Are there urgent care providers near me? VA launched the urgent care benefit on June 6, 2019, and we are working to expand our network of urgent care providers, adding more every week. Urgent care providers are vetted and must meet strict standards of care and other requirements before they are added to VA's network. To find a location, use the VA facility locator at <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>. Select the link entitled "Find VA approved urgent care locations and pharmacies near you". If you arrive at an urgent care network location and have difficulty receiving care, call 866-620-2071 for assistance.
4. How does a veteran get prescription medication with the urgent care benefit? Veterans can get up to a 14-day supply of prescription medication through VA, a VA-contracted pharmacy, or a non-contracted pharmacy. An urgent care prescription filled at a non-contracted pharmacy will require payment for the prescription when picked up and a claim filed for reimbursement at a local VA medical facility. Prescription medication for longer than a 14-day supply must be filled by a VA pharmacy.
5. Are copayments required for urgent care? Copayments for urgent care depend on the assigned priority group and the number of times a veteran visits an urgent care provider in a calendar year. Urgent care copayments are not charged when care is from an urgent care provider, but are billed separately by VA. For additional information about the VA MISSION Act, visit <https://missionact.va.gov/>