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Planning for Transportation after Medical Services

A Guide for Service Members, Veterans & Their Family Caregivers



Transportation plays an essential role in the maintenance of good health and participation in community life.

Use the information in this guide to help you and your caregivers talk with your VA healthcare team, such as your patient aligned care team social worker, VA physician, or Caregiver Support Coordinator about your transportation needs and options.

Why plan for transportation?

Appropriate, accessible transportation is key to living a quality life that meets your personal, family and social needs. Making smart transportation decisions helps you maintain control of your daily life, so you can take care of your health and remain active in your community.

- Transportation is necessary for daily living activities, such as:
 - Grocery shopping and running errands
 - Visiting family and friends
 - Going out, recreation, and entertainment
 - Attending worship services
 - Getting to medical appointments
- Planning for transportation fees in advance helps you stay within your budget and meet your basic needs.
- Planning ahead helps assure you have someone to travel with you, if necessary.
- Transportation alternatives give family and other caregivers a break, if needed.

What kind of transportation assistance do you need?

Answering the following questions may help you choose the best way to meet your transportation needs:

- What is your ability to climb stairs, use ramps, elevators, or escalators in buildings, stations, and at stops?

- Will it be safe for you to drive, walk, or bicycle to your destination by yourself?
- Do you feel comfortable asking family and friends to help you?
- If a relative or caregiver gives you a ride, can you get into the vehicle on your own or will you need assistance, will you need a stepstool or other assistive device, and/or will you need a grab handle near the vehicle door?
- Are you familiar with public or private transportation options (such as buses, rail or taxi services) in your area?
- How well do you tolerate crowds and loud noise? Riding public transportation may involve moving among crowds, motion of scenery passing by the windows of a vehicle, and flashing lights. Will any of these startle you or affect your ability to ride in a vehicle?
- Do you have health issues that might affect your use of public transportation? For example:
 - Are you able to ride sitting or standing next to others?
 - Can you ride for up to an hour? Will you need a seat? Will you need to take medication?
 - Are you able to travel alone? Do you have a caregiver that will be traveling with you?
- Are you familiar with ride sharing or veteran driver programs as alternatives to public transportation?



MILITARY & VETERANS SERVICES

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Additional considerations when making transportation choices.

Consider your health.

- Will you need to use a cane, walker, crutches or wheelchair?
- Do loud noises or flashing lights significantly bother you? Do you startle easily?
- Will you need curb-to-curb, door-to-door or door-through-door service?
- Follow up with your VA physician or healthcare provider about whether the change in your health is temporary or permanent.

Consider public or private transportation options.

- Ask your VA patient aligned care team (PACT) social worker, Caregiver Support Coordinator (CSC) or other members of your VA treatment team if they can suggest transportation options.
- Contact your local County Veterans Service Agency or a Veterans Service Organization such as a Disabled American Veterans chapter to see if they can help arrange transportation to VA medical appointments.
- Explore whether your local VA has volunteers available that may be able to offer assistance with transportation.

- Conduct internet search for public and private transportation options. Search keywords: transit, transportation, transportation assistance, volunteer drivers, Veteran drivers, local public transit agency, taxi companies and volunteer driver programs.
- Consider whether your local religious/spiritual community may be able to help.
- Download a Find a Ride or Ride Sharing app on your smartphone
- Use Google Transit to help identify bus and rail routes and schedule options.
- Dial local 211 or 311 telephone service. Follow the instructions for transportation options.

Discuss your transportation needs.

After you review your transportation assistance needs, talk with your VA physician, social worker, Caregiver Support Coordinator or any member of your VA healthcare team about the type of transportation you would prefer and that is the best option(s) following your medical procedure or medical visit.

Talk with your family, friends, or Caregivers about how they may be able to help you with your transportation needs.

Keep a record of contacts you've made.

Collecting useful names, phone numbers, and email addresses of people or organizations as you come across them can save time later. Be persistent. It may take several calls or messages to find what you need and get your questions answered.



Credit: WMATA photo by Larry Levine

Contact Information

VA Caregiver Support Line

- call 855-260-3274
- online: www.caregiver.va.gov

Veterans Crisis Line

- 800-273-8255 (Press 1)

Easter Seals Community One Source

- call: 866-423-4981
- email: veterans@easterseals.com
- online: www.easterseals.com/our-programs/military-veterans/community-onesource.html

VA Social Worker/Caregiver Support Coordinator: _____

VA Patient Aligned Care Team: _____

Appointment Notes: _____

