



PAIN, VEIN &
WELLNESS

VETERANS AND PAIN

STATS AND FACTS

U.S. veterans are about **40%** more likely to suffer from severe pain compared to nonveterans, especially younger, middle-aged, and female veterans.

65.5% of veterans report experiencing pain, compared to **56.4%** of nonveterans, while **9.1%** of veterans endure severe pain, compared to **6.4%** of nonveterans.

Veterans face **MORE INTENSE** levels of severe back, joint, neck, and jaw pain, along with migraines.

VETERANS' PAIN

may stem from spinal cord injuries, blast injuries, burns, amputations, traumatic brain injuries, cancer, musculoskeletal conditions, and others.

Chronic and untreated pain can lead to depression, anxiety, poor sleep, reduced quality of life, substance abuse disorder, and an **ELEVATED RISK FOR SUICIDE**.



VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) AND CHRONIC PAIN WHEN APPLYING FOR BENEFITS

Veterans Affairs provides various levels of benefits depending on the type and severity of a veteran's disability and how closely it is linked to their military service.

- **Direct service connection:** Chronic pain (whether or not linked to a specific medical diagnosis) directly associated with a military event, injury, or illness.
- **Secondary service connection:** Chronic pain associated with or resulting from another condition directly connected to a military event, injury, or illness.
- The chronic pain must lead to impairment or a loss of function.

VA'S 6 ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF GOOD PAIN CARE

- Educate veterans and families and provide access to resources.
- Educate and train team members.
- Incorporate non-pharmacological approaches into care plans. Implement evidence-based medication prescribing, pain procedures, and safe opioid practices.
- Unite the veteran's entire team and promote continuous communication.
- Create metrics to track pain care and outcomes at both the individual and population levels.

VA TIPS FOR DECREASING PAIN

- Take it slow.
- Practice relaxation and stress reduction techniques.
- Engage in exercise and physical activity.
- Discover activities that you enjoy.
- Work with physical therapy.
- Work on communication skills.
- Make healthy lifestyle choices (limit caffeine and alcohol, enhance sleep habits, choose nutritious foods).



TREATMENT OPTIONS TO MANAGE PAIN

Traditional Medical Treatments

- Physical medicine or rehabilitation.
- Medication.
- Intervention (injections, surgery, implantable devices).

Complementary Treatments

- Acupressure and acupuncture.
- Trigger point injections.
- Chiropractic care.
- Meditation.
- Yoga, Pilates, or tai chi.
- Relaxation treatments.

Restorative Therapies

- Therapeutic exercises include treatments such as cold or heat therapy, gentle stretching, muscle strengthening, proper body mechanics, vibration therapy, and traction.
- Aqua therapy.
- Massage therapy.
- Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation.
- Therapeutic ultrasound.

Behavioral Health Treatments and Therapies To Supplement Pain Management

- Cognitive behavioral therapy.
- Mindfulness-based stress reduction.
- Emotional awareness and expression therapy.
- Self-regulatory or psychophysiological approaches.
- Acceptance and commitment therapy.
- Biofeedback.
- Clinical hypnosis.
- Guided imagery.



WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT

Find a Veterans Affairs Location Near You

- Locate a nearby Veterans Affairs office [va.gov/find-locations](https://www.va.gov/find-locations).

Mental Health Support for Veterans

- Access VA mental health support: [mentalhealth.va.gov](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov).

Integrative Pain Management for Veterans

- Explore the Defense and Veterans Center for Integrative Pain Management.

Support for Veterans in Pain

- VA nonprofit connecting veterans with physicians and funding: [veteransinpain.org](https://www.veteransinpain.org).

Suicide Prevention

- Stop Soldier Suicide offers support and resources: [stopsoldiersuicide.org](https://www.stopsoldiersuicide.org).

Veteran Crisis Line

- Call 1-800-273-8255 (press 1) or text 838255 for help: [veteranscrisisline.net](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net).