



VA Blue Button: Exploring Your Mental Health Notes

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there computer requirements to use VA Blue Button?

To access VA Blue Button, your computer must have an active internet connection and a web browser (such as Internet Explorer or Safari). If you want to download your health information, you can save your information to your computer, or onto a CD/DVD, thumb drive, or mobile device. To print your health information, you will need a printer connected to your computer.

What are clinical notes?

Clinical notes are part of your permanent medical record. They document your health status and the care provided to you. Clinicians, nurses, consultants, therapists, and other VA staff may write notes in your medical report during or after a clinical visit or hospital stay. These notes may include diagnoses, clinical findings, opinions, treatment plans, as well as your response to the care that was provided.

Are all clinical notes available through VA Blue Button?

All clinical notes written after January 2013 are available through VA Blue Button. To access clinical notes written before January 2013, please contact your local Release of Information office.

Is it possible to download notes from a specific provider or specialty (e.g. mental health notes)?

No, it is not possible to download notes from a specific provider or specialty. When you download your notes through VA Blue Button by clicking "VA Notes," all clinical notes are included.

How soon are clinical notes available through VA Blue Button?

There is a three day hold on clinical notes. This means that clinical notes are available three calendar days after the note has been completed and signed by all required members of the VA health care team.

How can I customize my VA Blue Button report?

You can customize your VA Blue Button report by defining a date range and/or the specific types of information needed. This enables you to create a VA Blue Button report that meets your specific needs. For example, if you are looking for lab results from your last appointment, you can limit your search to the month of the appointment and only select "VA Laboratory Results."

How often is the information in VA Blue Button updated?

Your information is updated once a day. If your information is being updated, it will state, “Updates to your data are still in progress. Please refresh this screen or check back later.”

Can I update or change my information in VA Blue Button?

You can change the information that you self-enter into My HealthVet (e.g. Self-Reported Family Health History or Personal Information). To change or update your self-entered information, log into your My HealthVet account and make your updates. However, information that comes from VA and/or DoD (e.g. clinical notes written by a health care provider) cannot be changed in My HealthVet.

How do I correct a mistake, error, or inaccuracy in my VA and/or DOD health information?

Your VA health record, including mental health notes, is a permanent document. However, you have the right to request an amendment (correction) to your record if you find information that is inaccurate or incomplete. First, talk to your clinician about your concern to see if you can resolve the problem together. You may also ask to amend the information by submitting a written request to your VA facility Privacy Officer.

If I use VA Blue Button, can other people view my health information?

No. You are the only one who can view your information in My HealthVet and VA Blue Button. It is your choice to share that information. If you want someone else to view your information, you must personally share a copy of your VA Blue Button report.

What should I do if I think someone has accessed my health information?

First, check your Account Activity History in My HealthVet. There you will find a record of every download of your information. If you are concerned that your privacy rights have been violated, contact your local VHA health care facility's Privacy Officer.

Where can I learn more about a health condition or something I read in my note?

VA Notes may use medical terms that are unfamiliar to you. If you have questions, go to the Research Health tab on My HealthVet and select the Medical Library. From there you can go to the [Veterans Health Library](#) or [Medline Plus](#) to look up a term or to learn more about a specific health condition. You can also ask your clinician when questions arise.

What is the VA Health Summary?

The VA Health Summary, formerly called the VA Continuity of Care Document (VA CCD), is a summary of essential health and medical care information from your VA health record. The VA Health Summary contains critical information designed to allow Veterans to electronically share their VA health information between health systems and/or providers.

What is the difference between the VA Health Summary and VA Blue Button?

VA Health Summary contains a pre-selected summary of essential patient information from VA health record. It allows for information about the patient to be electronically exchanged with another health system, if requested by the patient. It cannot be customized.

VA Blue Button allows the patient to customize the types of information to print, save, and/or download. Through VA Blue Button, patients are able to access their self-entered information, their VA medications, key portions of their VA Electronic Health Record (e.g. clinical notes), and their DoD Military Service Information.

What if I have questions about using VA Blue Button?

VA Blue Button was created with Veterans in mind. No training is needed to use VA Blue Button, but you may have questions along the way. The [VA Blue Button User Guide](#) provides a step-by-step guide for using VA Blue Button. You can also call the My HealthVet Help Desk toll free number: 1-877-327-0022 or use the **Contact MHV** tab at the top of any page on My HealthVet. You may also contact the My HealthVet Coordinator at your local VA Medical Center.



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