



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Benefits Administration

Roadmap to Spina Bifida & Birth Defects

Compensation and Health Care Services and Supplies

A guide to help you understand the Spina Bifida & Birth Defects Benefit Program under 38 U.S.C Chapter 18 and explain the different responsibilities of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the Veterans Hospital Administration (VHA)

How to File a Claim for Monetary Benefits (VBA)

A claimant, guardian, or VSO completes and files VA Form 21-0304, *Application for Benefits for Qualifying Veteran's Child Born With Disabilities*, located here:

<https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-0304-ARE.pdf>

- For Spina Bifida - claimant must be a child of specific Vietnam Era, Thailand, and Korean Veterans as defined by Title 38, U.S.C 18, Sections 1811 and 1831
- For Birth Defects - claimant's biological mother must be a Vietnam Veteran

Mail: Department of Veterans Affairs

Evidence Intake Center

PO Box 4444

Janesville, WI 53547-4444

Fax: 844-531-7818

Documentation and Eligibility Determinations (VBA)

- Claimant receives an additional letter from the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)
- Claimant has 30 -days to procure missing or supplemental documentation. Note: A denial notice will be sent for incomplete applications or ineligible claimants under the law
- Claimant's eligibility level is determined by VBA

- VBA will review medical documentation
- The claimant's eligibility and the monthly monetary allowance is determined based on level of disability
- The claimant is notified of medical and Vocational Readiness and Employment (VR&E services)

How to Enroll for Health Care and Benefits (VHA)

Upon VBA approval, Veterans Health Administration, Office of Community Care (VHA/CC) in Denver, CO initiates health benefits/pharmacy. An ID Card and informational package is issued to the claimant

Health Care	Pharmacy Benefits	Reimbursement of Certain Out-of-Pocket Expenses
Present ID card to medical provider for services not requiring pre-authorization	Present prescription and ID card to pharmacy. Eligible claims are paid directly to the provider and EOB is sent to beneficiary. See link below for information on pharmacies	The claimant submits VA Form 7959e, Claim for Miscellaneous Expenses, to VHA/CC
In most cases, provider will submit claims directly for reimbursement	Meds by Mail is available for most non-urgent maintenance medications	Eligible claims are reimbursed directly, and an EOB is mailed or faxed
Copy of Explanation of Benefits (EOB) is mailed to beneficiary and provider	Meds by Mail claim form and instructions are located at: www.va.gov/communitycare/programs/dependents/spinabifida/	Mail: VHA Office of Community Care SB/CWVV/Attn: CLAIMS PO Box 469065 Denver CO, 80246-9065 Fax: 3030398-7114

Covered Health Services (VHA)

Covered health services may require pre-authorization and are submitted by your Medical Provider, below is a list of common covered services. For a full list of covered services, please contact VHA.

- For pre-authorization questions, call 800-424-4018
- Send pre-authorization faxes to 303-331-7807

- Attendant travel
- Ambulatory surgery
- Case management
- Day health care provided as outpatient care
- Nursing home care
- Durable medical equipment (in excess of \$2,000) Home-maker services (must be health-related services) Outpatient mental health services (in excess of 23 visits in a calendar year)
- Pharmacy
- Respite care
- Training of family members, guardians, and members of the child's household
- Organ transplants
- Habilitative/rehabilitative services
- Hospital care
- Home care
- Travel (other than mileage for local travel) in private automobiles at the GSA rate. Reimbursable as long as it is not available within 50 miles of your home
- Orthotics
- Prosthetics

Common Questions about the Program:

Question	Answer
How does one qualify for monetary, healthcare and vocational benefits for spina bifida ?	The following conditions must be met: -The claimant's mother or father has qualifying military service dates and covered service to indicate exposure to Agent Orange (character of discharge is not considered to determine qualifying service) -The claimant is the biological child of the exposed adult and was conceived after exposure -The claimant has spina bifida excluding spina occulta -A complete application for benefits is submitted (VA Form 21-0304)

<p>How does one qualify for monetary, healthcare, and vocational benefits for birth defects?</p>	<p>The following conditions must be met: -The biological mother has qualifying service in Vietnam -Duty assignments to indicate exposure to Agent Orange (character of discharge is considered to determine qualifying service) -Complete VA Form 21-0304</p>
<p>I am not sure if I (or my adult child) is entitled to spina bifida benefits. I have never been diagnosed with the condition.</p>	<p>Spina bifida, a defect which affects the column, is typically diagnosed at birth. Myelomeningocele, a cystic swelling of the dura of the spinal cord, and Syringomeningocele, the presence of cavities in the spinal cord, are included in this diagnosis. These conditions would be recognizable in a newborn.</p> <p>It is possible for someone to have spina bifida occulta, which may exist in a large number of healthy adults, and not be aware of their condition. However, VA benefits are not payable for spina bifida occulta.</p>
<p>My grandchild was born with spina bifida or covered birth defect and I have qualifying Vietnam, Thailand, or Korean service. Is he/she entitled to benefits?</p>	<p>No. Current law (38 U.S.C. §§ 1831 and 1811) does not make provisions for grandchildren of Veterans to receive the Chapter 18 benefits. Congressional action is required to allow eligibility of benefits to multi-generational claimants.</p>
<p>Does VA conduct or request diagnostic examinations for claimants to rule out spina bifida or other birth defects?</p>	<p>No. VA accepts birth and medical records in support of the diagnosis.</p>
<p>I would like to request an increase for my conditions. How do I do that?</p>	<p>Submit VA Form 21-0304. It will expedite the process if recent medical documentation is submitted to support that the condition has worsened.</p>
<p>Are there any additional benefits that a person with spina bifida or other birth defects may be entitled to receive?</p>	<p>Yes. If certain criteria are met, a person with spina bifida or certain birth defects may be eligible to be recognized as a "helpless child" for VA purposes, which could result in additional benefits. It is highly encouraged that you work with a VSO to determine all of the benefits you and your family may be entitled to.</p>
<p>Can a Veteran receive both a dependency payment and spina bifida/birth defect payment for the child concurrently?</p>	<p>Yes, until the child reaches 18. At age 18, the dependency payment will terminate and the spina bifida or birth defect payment will be addressed to the claimant.</p>
<p>What percent of allowable expenses are covered by the Spina Bifida Health Care Benefits Program?</p>	<p>100% of allowable charges are covered. There are no co-pays or deductibles.</p>

Contact Us:

VBA	VHA
Call the Benefits Office: 303-914-2900	Call VHA for health information: 1-888-820-1756
Email the Benefits Office: BDEFECTS.VBADEN@va.gov	Email VHA: SB.HAC@va.gov

Need Additional Help?

Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) can assist and directly upload your claims. A list of VSOs can be found here <https://www.va.gov/vso/>