



Ask a Pharmacist App

User Manual



User Manual

Table of Contents

Overview	1
The Basics	2
Prerequisites.....	2
Setting up a My HealthVet account for seamless connection with the app.....	2
Logging in.....	2
Getting to know the screen.....	3
Learning about the app.....	4
Accessing help for the app.....	4
Accessing the VA Launchpad.....	5
My HealthVet Pharmacy Services	6
Accessing My HealthVet Services.....	6
Pill and Bottle Information	7
Accessing Pill and Bottle Information.....	8
VA Trusted Medication Resources	8
Accessing trusted medication resources.....	9
About VA Pharmacies	10
Accessing information about VA pharmacies.....	10
Send a Secure Message	11
Accessing VA's Secure Messaging feature.....	11

Help and Additional Information 12

Additional Training Materials for the Ask a Pharmacist App 12

Help Desk Information 12

Emergencies..... 12

Appendices 12

Appendix #1: Project References..... 12

Appendix #2: Glossary 12





Overview

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Ask a Pharmacist mobile application (app) allows Veterans to access information about pharmacies and medications easily – with the comfort of knowing the information is valid and from trusted sources. If Veterans also have a verified My HealthVet account (credentials for VA’s personal health record), they can link to pharmacy and Secure Messaging services via the app, allowing them to quickly go to their personal medication and health information as well as learn about pharmacy-related topics.

This app is available for iOS, Android and Windows operating systems, and is supported by these Internet browsers:

1. Google Chrome 17 and higher
2. Mozilla Firefox 12 and higher
3. Internet Explorer 9 and higher
4. Safari 5 and higher
5. Safari iOS 5 and higher
6. Android 2.3 and higher

This user manual provides an in-depth, step-by-step guide for using the Ask a Pharmacist App.

The Basics

Prerequisites

Any Veteran can access the informational resources about medications in the Ask a Pharmacist App. However, to use some of the features the Ask a Pharmacist App helps you learn about – such as the ability to send a Secure Message or refill and track your VA prescriptions – you must have a My Health^eVet Premium account (which requires you to have a DS Logon), as well as be a VA patient and register your account as a “VA Patient.” You will then have to log into My Health^eVet with your My Health^eVet username and password and then use the features within the site. The Ask a Pharmacist App easily allows you to link to these features within My Health^eVet, but does not duplicate them or allow them to operate within the app itself.

Setting up a My Health^eVet account for seamless connection with the app

Some Ask a Pharmacist App features conveniently connect you to special tracking or messaging features in My Health^eVet where you can access your health information. However, you have to be a VA patient and have a Premium My Health^eVet account to use these special features. To take full advantage of VA’s health care tools and ensure your app seamlessly connects to My Health^eVet, be sure your My Health^eVet account has the necessary settings. Here is an overview of the process:

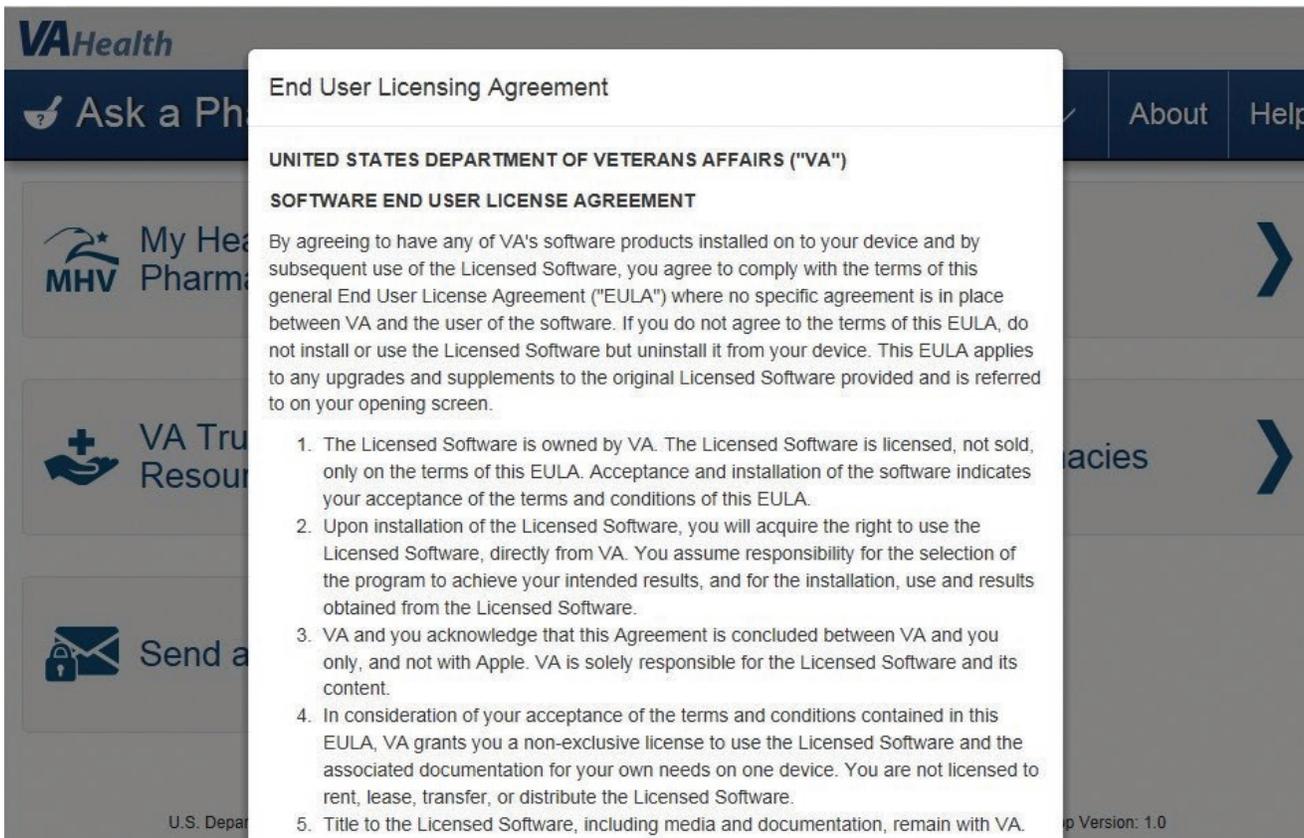
1. Create a Basic My Health^eVet account.
2. In your account settings, register as a “VA Patient.”
3. Upgrade to a Premium My Health^eVet account either through:
 - a. In-Person Authentication* (IPA) at your local VA Medical Center (VAMC) or Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC).
 - b. Online Authentication* through [ebenefits.va.gov](https://www.ebenefits.va.gov). This is for users who have a connected eBenefits DS Logon Premium account and My Health^eVet VA Patient account. (*Authentication means you are verifying your identity.)
4. After you have upgraded to a Premium My Health^eVet account, opt into Secure Messaging in your account settings.

For full details on setting up your My Health^eVet account, [click here](#) to read the complete steps and access the **VA Release of Information** (ROI) form (10-5345a-MHV). When you click on a link within the Ask a Pharmacist App that takes you to these special features in My Health^eVet, you will be asked to log in with your username and password. If you have already logged into My Health^eVet in the same session you are using the Ask a Pharmacist App, you will not have to log into My Health^eVet again. If you have already logged into My Health^eVet in the same session you are using the Ask a Pharmacist App, you will not have to log into My Health^eVet again, unless you have been inactive in My Health^eVet for 15 minutes.

Logging in

When you first access the app, you will see an End User License Agreement (EULA) > Read the EULA, and tap **Accept** > You will go to the Ask a Pharmacist App Home screen. The next time you access the app, you will go directly to the Home screen.

NOTE: You can access the Ask a Pharmacist App either directly from your mobile device or through the VA Launchpad. The VA Launchpad contains links to all VA Apps that access information from your VA Electronic Health Record (EHR). By signing into the VA Launchpad once with your DS Logon Level 2 (Premium) Account, you can access multiple apps without signing into each app separately. If you are accessing the Ask a Pharmacist App through the VA Launchpad and have already signed into another app, you will not need to re-enter your credentials.



Getting to know the screen

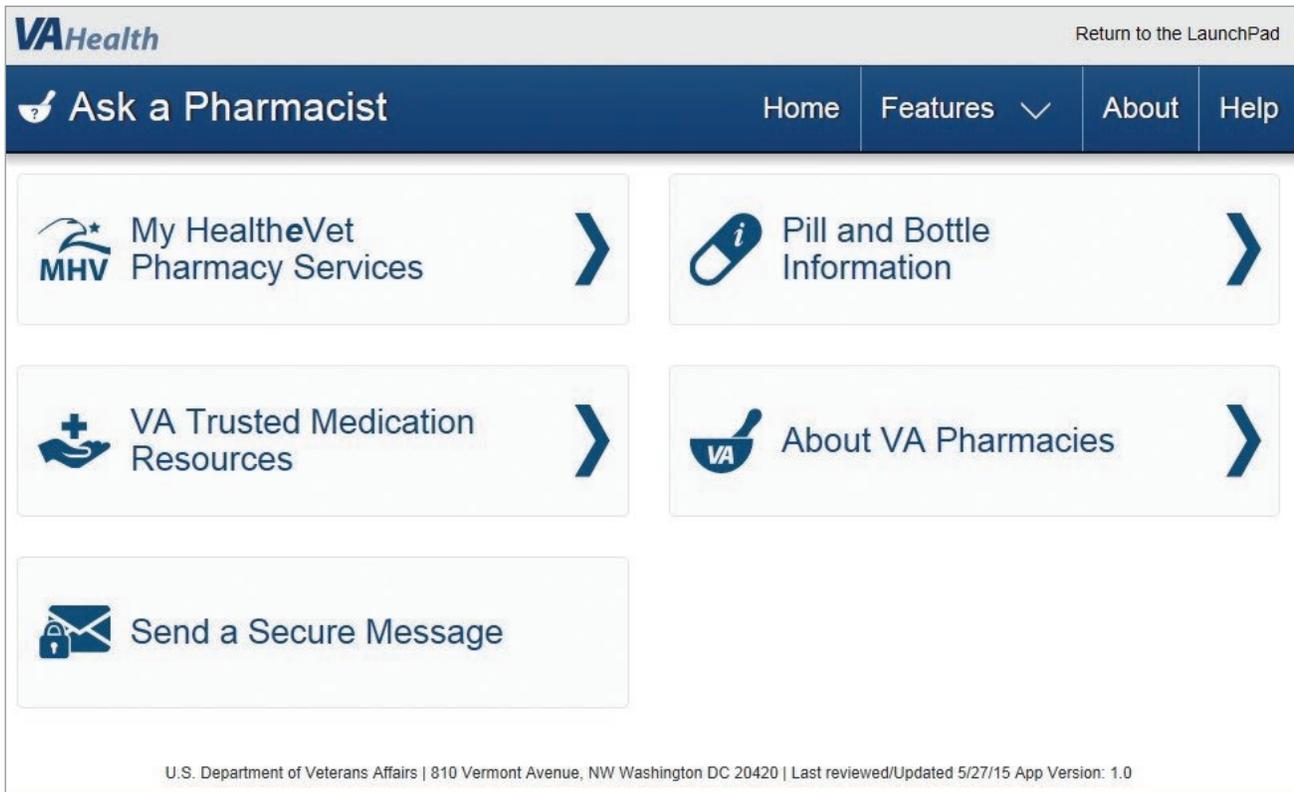
When you log into the Ask a Pharmacist App, the Home screen will have two main ways to move through the app: the horizontal navigation bar at the top, and the five buttons on the Home screen.

The navigation bar includes:

- Home
- Features – a drop-down menu providing access to the same features as the five buttons on the Home screen
- About – background information about the app
- Help – access to help hotlines and a built-in user manual

The five buttons on the Home screen give you access to the app's main features:

- My Health eVet Pharmacy Services
- Pill and Bottle Information
- VA Trusted Medication Resources
- About VA Pharmacies
- Send a Secure Message



Learning about the app

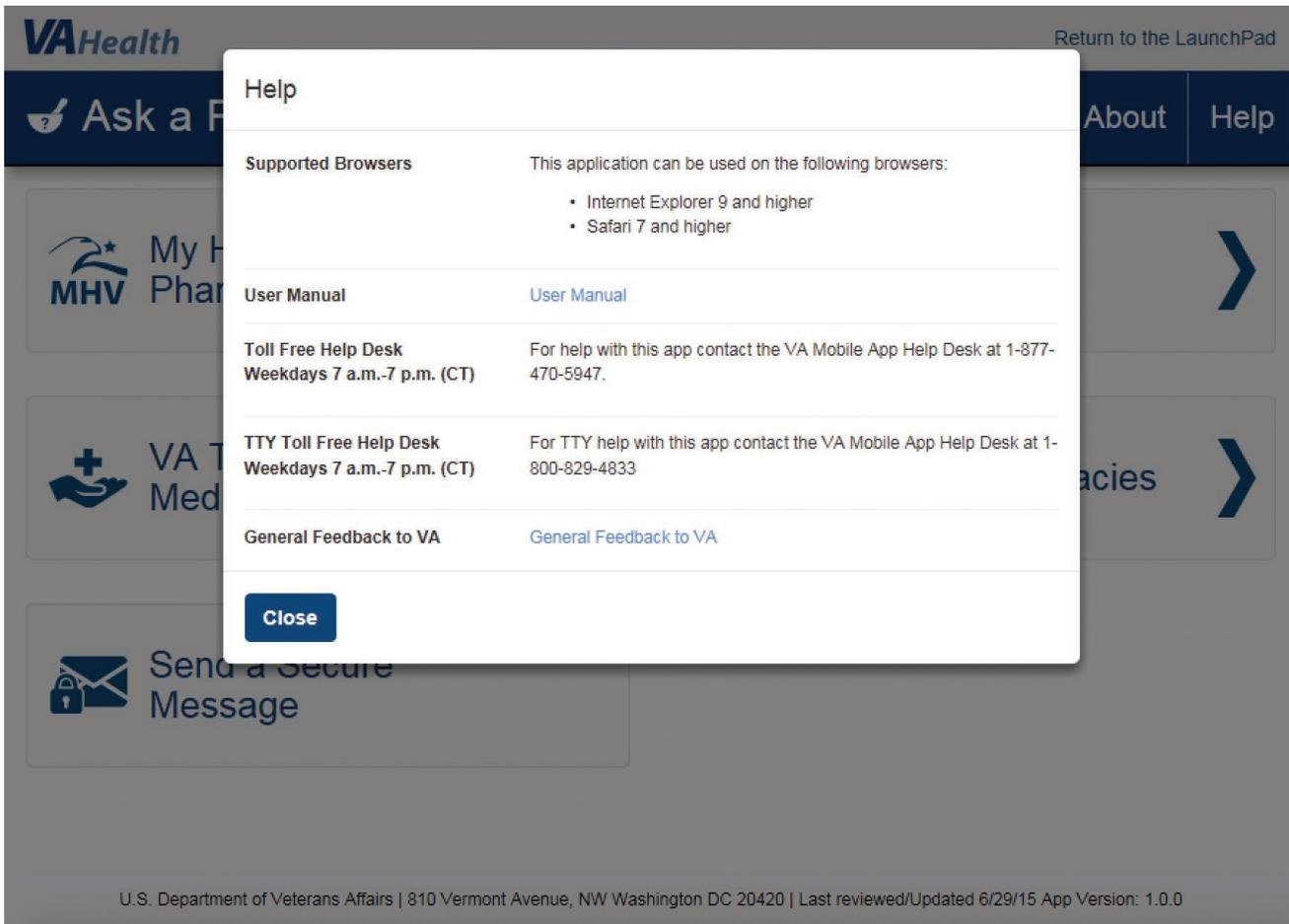
In the horizontal navigation bar at the top of the Home screen, tap **About** > A pop-up About box will appear, which provides background information about the app > Read the information, and tap **Close**.

Accessing help for the app

In the horizontal navigation bar at the top of the Home screen, tap **Help** > A pop-up Help box will appear, which provides:

- Supported Browsers – The internet options on which the app works best.
- User Manual – To access this User Manual from the app, tap **User Manual** > You will go to mobilehealth.va.gov/training, and search for the name of the app.
- Toll Free Help Desk – The number and operating hours of the VA Mobile App Help Desk.
- TTY Toll Free Help Desk – The number and operating hours for TTY help.
- General Feedback to VA – To let VA know what you think about the app and the VA Mobile Health program, tap **General Feedback to VA** > You will navigate away from the app and to a VA Mobile Health App Feedback website where you can take a survey and submit your comments about the app.

To close the Help box, tap **Close**.



Accessing the VA Launchpad

You can access the VA Launchpad at any time by tapping **Return to the LaunchPad** in the top right corner of your screen. Through the VA Launchpad, you can access other apps without re-entering your DS Logon Level 2 (Premium) Account credentials.

My HealtheVet Pharmacy Services

Learn about My HealtheVet's Pharmacy Services, including the ability to refill and track your VA prescriptions.

VAHealth Return to the LaunchPad

Ask a Pharmacist Home Features About Help

My HealtheVet Pharmacy Services

FAQ - MyHealtheVet

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) provide a group of commonly asked questions and answers about features in My HealtheVet.

Medical Library

My HealtheVet provides two extensive, online medical libraries for you to learn more about your health and stay healthy: The Veterans Health Library is designed and available to all Veterans, their family members, and the public, no matter where the Veteran receives care. MedLine Plus® is the online resource from the National Library of Medicine located at the National Institutes of Health. MedLine Plus® offers a wealth of information on health promotion, conditions, and treatments to help you take control of your own health.

Medication Articles on My HealtheVet

Read medication and pharmacy-related articles from My HealtheVet.

Prescription History

When you log in to My HealtheVet using your Advanced or Premium account, you can choose Prescription History to view a list of your past VA prescribed medications.

Rx Refill

When you log in to My HealtheVet using your Advanced or Premium account, you can manage your VA prescription refills online and view their status.

Accessing My HealtheVet Services

Either on the Home screen or from the Features drop-down menu, tap **My HealtheVet Pharmacy Services** > You will go to a My HealtheVet Pharmacy Services screen > Tap on the names of the kinds of services you would like to access:

- **FAQs-My HealtheVet** – You will go to a page on the My HealtheVet website about commonly asked questions and answers and features in My HealtheVet.
- **Medical Library** – You will go to a page on the My HealtheVet website where you can access resources in two different online medical libraries to help you learn more about your health and ways to stay healthy.
- **Medication Articles on My HealtheVet** – You will go to a screen that lists the articles about medications that are on the My HealtheVet website > Tap the name of the article you would like to read > You will go to a page on the My HealtheVet website that features the article.
- **Prescription History** – You will go to a page on the My HealtheVet website that provides you with information about how to log into My HealtheVet to view a list of your past VA prescribed medications. If you have already logged into My HealtheVet in the same session you are using the Ask a Pharmacist App, you will not have to log into My HealtheVet again, unless you have been inactive in My HealtheVet for 15 minutes.

- **Rx Refill** – You will go to a page on the My HealthVet website that provides a list of FAQs regarding the VA (Rx) Prescription Tracker.
- **Rx Refill Guide** – You will go to a page on the My HealthVet website where you can learn about refilling your VA prescriptions.
- **Send a Secure Message** – You will go to a page on the My HealthVet website where you may learn about sending Secure Messages to your VA care team.
- **Track My Medications** – You will go to a Track My Medications screen > Tap either **Prescription Tracker-FAQ, UPS My Choice** or **USPS** > You will go to the service’s website where you can learn about how to track your prescription deliveries.

When you click on a link that takes you to a site that is not part of the Ask a Pharmacist App, a pop-up box will appear, informing you that you will be leaving the app and going to an external website > Tap **Continue** > You will go to the website with the information, which will usually be a page on the My HealthVet website. To return to the Ask a Pharmacist App from the external site, tap the back arrow on your device or browser. **NOTE:** Most of these links will take you to information about these features on the My HealthVet website. However, to use the features themselves within the My HealthVet website, you will have to log in with your My HealthVet credentials.

Pill and Bottle Information

Learn how to read a prescription label and identify pills by sight.

🏠
Ask a Pharmacist

Home
Features ▾
About
Help ↗

Pill Bottle Information

Label Example
Yours May Look Slightly Different

Medication Safety Tips

- Keep out of the reach of children
- Store your medications securely
 - Keep in original container
 - Avoid storing in hot humid places
- Do not share your medication with others
- Do not keep outdated medicine or medicine you no longer need
 - Do not place in trash where children and pets may find
 - Check with your pharmacist on how to safely dispose
- Tell your provider or pharmacist if you are taking any herbals, vitamins or any other medication not provided by the VA

IMPORTANT NOTE: This information is intended to supplement, not substitute for, the expertise and judgment of your physician, pharmacist or other health care professional. This information does not indicate whether use of this drug is safe, appropriate, or effective for you. If you have any questions about your medication or think you may be having a reaction to any medication please contact your doctor or pharmacist.

Accessing Pill and Bottle Information

Either on the Home screen or from the Features drop-down menu, tap **Pill and Bottle Information** > You will go to a Pill and Bottle Information screen > Tap the name of the type of information you would like to view:

- **Pill Bottle Information** – You will go to a screen that provides a diagram of a label to help you interpret the information, as well as some medication safety tips.
- **Pill Identification** – A pop-up box will appear, informing you that you will be leaving the app and going to an external website > Tap **Continue** > A pop-up message box about medication emergencies will appear > Tap **OK** > You will go to a National Library of Medicine pillbox site, which provides images and information to help you identify pills by sight.

To return to the Home screen, tap either **Home** or the back arrow in the upper left corner of the screen.

VA Trusted Medication Resources

Access reliable, VA-approved resources about types of drugs and administering and disposing of medications.

VAHealth
Return to the LaunchPad

Ask a Pharmacist
Home
Features
About
Help

VA Trusted Medication Resources

Consumer Drug, Herbal & Supplement Information

Go to MedWatch online and submit a voluntary report of adverse events that you observe or suspect for human medical products, including serious drug side effects, product use errors, product quality problems, and therapeutic failures.

Drug Interactions and Adverse Drug Events

A Drug Interaction Checker explains the mechanism of each drug interaction, the level of significance of the interaction (major, moderate or minor), and in certain cases, can provide the recommended course of action to manage the interaction.

FAQ - VA National Medication Formulary

Ask A Pharmacist provides links to general questions and answers on medications and medication management from trusted resources.

How to Properly Administer a Medication

Your medicine can only work correctly if it is administered properly in the body. This link takes you to helpful illustrations that show the right way to use eye, ear, and nose drops; eye ointments; inhalers; and suppositories.

Know Your Medication Label

A standardized patient-centric label was created to increase each Veteran's understanding of how to take his or her medications.

Accessing trusted medication resources

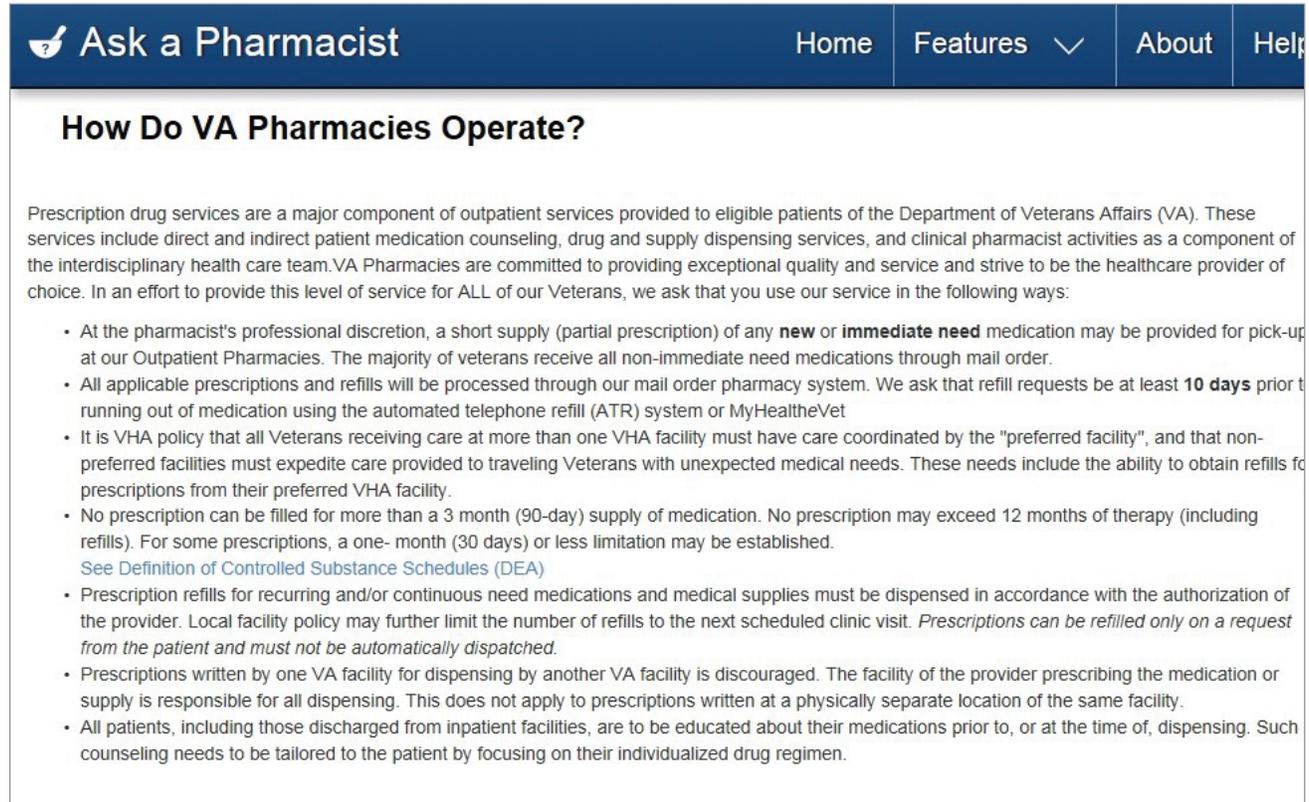
Either on the Home screen or from the Features drop-down menu, tap **VA Trusted Medication Resources** > You will go to a VA Trusted Medication Resources screen > Tap on the names of the kinds of services:

- **Consumer Drug, Herbal & Supplement Information** – You will have to tap the names of the subcategories of information > When you reach your final selection, a pop-up box will appear, informing you that you will be leaving the app and going to an external website > Tap **Continue** > You will go to the site with information and reviews on consumer drugs, herbal and supplemental information.
- **Drug Interactions and Adverse Drug Events** – You will have to tap the names of the subcategories of information > When you reach your final selection, a pop-up box will appear, informing you that you will be leaving the app and going to an external website > Tap **Continue** > You will go to the site with the information on how drugs interact with each other and side effects.
- **FAQ-VA National Medication Formulary** – You will go to a FAQs screen that provides you with answers to general questions about medications and medication management.
- **How to Properly Administer a Medication** – A pop-up box will appear, informing you that you will be leaving the app and going to an external website > Tap **Continue** > You will go to a Safe Medication site where you can learn more about how to administer medications.
- **Know Your Medication Label** – You will go to a screen that provides a diagram of a label to help you interpret the information, as well as some medication safety tips.
- **Medication Disposal** – A pop-up box will appear, informing you that you will be leaving the app and going to an external website > Tap **Continue** > You will go to the VA Pharmacy Benefits Management Services website for more information on how to stay safe when disposing medication.
- **Pill Identification** – A pop-up box will appear, informing you that you will be leaving the app and going to an external website > Tap **Continue** > A pop-up message box about medication emergencies will appear > Tap **OK** > You will go to a National Library of Medicine pillbox site, which provides images and information to help you identify pills by sight.

To return to the Home screen, tap either **Home** or the back arrow in the upper left corner of the screen.

About VA Pharmacies

Easily locate your VA pharmacy, and learn how VA pharmacies operate.



The screenshot shows the 'Ask a Pharmacist' app interface. At the top is a dark blue navigation bar with a white mortar and pestle icon and the text 'Ask a Pharmacist'. To the right of this bar are four menu items: 'Home', 'Features' (with a downward arrow), 'About', and 'Help'. Below the navigation bar is a white content area with the title 'How Do VA Pharmacies Operate?' in bold. The main text explains that prescription drug services are a major component of outpatient services for eligible patients of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). It lists several ways VA pharmacies operate, including direct and indirect patient medication counseling, drug and supply dispensing, and clinical pharmacist activities. A list of seven bullet points provides specific details on medication supply, refill policies, and coordination of care. The list includes a link to the 'Definition of Controlled Substance Schedules (DEA)'.

How Do VA Pharmacies Operate?

Prescription drug services are a major component of outpatient services provided to eligible patients of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). These services include direct and indirect patient medication counseling, drug and supply dispensing services, and clinical pharmacist activities as a component of the interdisciplinary health care team. VA Pharmacies are committed to providing exceptional quality and service and strive to be the healthcare provider of choice. In an effort to provide this level of service for ALL of our Veterans, we ask that you use our service in the following ways:

- At the pharmacist's professional discretion, a short supply (partial prescription) of any **new** or **immediate need** medication may be provided for pick-up at our Outpatient Pharmacies. The majority of veterans receive all non-immediate need medications through mail order.
- All applicable prescriptions and refills will be processed through our mail order pharmacy system. We ask that refill requests be at least **10 days** prior to running out of medication using the automated telephone refill (ATR) system or MyHealtheVet
- It is VHA policy that all Veterans receiving care at more than one VHA facility must have care coordinated by the "preferred facility", and that non-preferred facilities must expedite care provided to traveling Veterans with unexpected medical needs. These needs include the ability to obtain refills for prescriptions from their preferred VHA facility.
- No prescription can be filled for more than a 3 month (90-day) supply of medication. No prescription may exceed 12 months of therapy (including refills). For some prescriptions, a one- month (30 days) or less limitation may be established.
[See Definition of Controlled Substance Schedules \(DEA\)](#)
- Prescription refills for recurring and/or continuous need medications and medical supplies must be dispensed in accordance with the authorization of the provider. Local facility policy may further limit the number of refills to the next scheduled clinic visit. *Prescriptions can be refilled only on a request from the patient and must not be automatically dispatched.*
- Prescriptions written by one VA facility for dispensing by another VA facility is discouraged. The facility of the provider prescribing the medication or supply is responsible for all dispensing. This does not apply to prescriptions written at a physically separate location of the same facility.
- All patients, including those discharged from inpatient facilities, are to be educated about their medications prior to, or at the time of, dispensing. Such counseling needs to be tailored to the patient by focusing on their individualized drug regimen.

Accessing information about VA pharmacies

Either on the Home screen or from the Features drop-down menu, tap **About VA Pharmacies** > You will go to an About VA Pharmacies screen > Tap on the names of the kinds of information:

- **Find My Facility** – A pop-up box will appear, informing you that you will be leaving the app and going to an external website > Tap **Continue** > You will go to the VA Facility Location website where you can select the type of location you're looking for and then go to a map with a search feature.
- **How VA Pharmacies Operate** – You will go to a How Do VA Pharmacies Operate? Screen with more information.
- **How VA Pharmacists Help Veterans** – You will go to a How VA Pharmacies Help Veterans screen with more information.

To return to the Home screen, tap either **Home** or the back arrow in the upper left corner of the screen.

Send a Secure Message

Learn about sending a Secure Message to your VA care team.



Accessing VA's Secure Messaging feature

Either on the Home screen or from the Features drop-down menu, tap **Send a Secure Message** > A pop-up box will appear, informing you that you will be leaving the app and going to an external website > Tap **Continue** > You will go to a page on the My HealtheVet website where you may learn about sending Secure Messages to your VA care team. **NOTE:** To send a Secure Message, you will have to log in with your My HealtheVet credentials and use the feature within the site.

Help and Additional Information

Additional Training Materials for the Ask a Pharmacist App

In addition to the information under the Help section, more resources, such as a Quick Start Guide, Slideshow and FAQs, are available at mobile.va.gov/training.

Help Desk Information

If you need help with the Ask a Pharmacist App, dial 1-877-470-5947 to speak with a VA representative. The Help Desk is open weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. CT. For TTY assistance, dial 711. For clinical questions regarding your personal medical information, please contact your VA care team.

Emergencies

You should never use this app in an emergency. If you encounter an emergency, call your local medical center or dial 911. If you feel your information may have been compromised, contact your local VA facility to obtain the contact information for your Privacy Officer. To locate your local VA facility, visit VA's Facility Locator: va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1.

Appendices

Appendix #1: Project References

This app was developed by Hewlett Packard according to an approved concept paper. The app was tested in a demo environment to ensure optimal functionality. Subject matter experts who served in the Ask a Pharmacist App's creation are: The Hewlett Packard Team.

Appendix #2: Glossary

App – an application, or software program, that can be accessed through a website or mobile device and is designed to fulfill a particular purpose

DoD – Department of Defense

DS Logon (Department of Defense Self-Service Logon) – a secure logon ID, created by the Department of Defense (DoD), that verifies the identities of individuals affiliated with DoD or the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and allows them to access secure websites and digital resources across DoD and VA using a single username and password.

DS Logon Level 1 (Basic) Account: Provides limited access to website features

DS Logon Level 2 (Premium) Account: Offers the highest level of access to website features. (**NOTE:** You must have a DS Logon Level 2 (Premium) Account to use VA's Mobile Apps.)

Electronic Health Record (EHR) – a digital record of a patient's treatment plan and health care interactions with his or her providers

My HealthVet – an online resource created by VA that allows Veterans and Caregivers to create a personal health record and access educational health care information and acts as a portal to VA Electronic Health Records (EHRs) by clicking on the Blue Button

PDF – a file format that provides an electronic image of text and/or graphics that looks like a printed document and cannot be edited, but can be viewed, printed and electronically transmitted

VA – Department of Veterans Affairs

VA Mobile Health – an initiative that aims to improve Veterans' health by providing technologies to expand care beyond the traditional office visit and that includes the creation of secure mobile apps to leverage the popularity of wireless technologies to support Veterans, Caregivers and VA care teams [More at: mobile.va.gov]