

Resources: Have you experienced Intimate Partner Violence or Sexual Trauma?

MILITARY SEXUAL ASSAULT

If you experienced military sexual assault and received a discharge status of other than honorable, bad conduct, or dishonorable, you may be able to apply for a discharge upgrade.

Visit <https://www.va.gov/discharge-upgrade-instructions/> for more information.

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)

The safety of yourself and other household members (e.g., children) is essential. IPV raises the risk of homicide for oneself and one's children, and talking to a partner who uses IPV may be unsafe. The VA IPV assistance program (IPVAP) offers help.

See the website at <https://www.socialwork.va.gov/IPV/Coordinators.asp>

If you, or someone you know, could be experiencing and/or using IPV, call The National Domestic Violence Hotline is also available at 1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA

Approximately 1 in 3 women and 1 in 50 men report experiencing MST during their military service.

If you or someone you know has experienced military sexual trauma, you can find resources at: <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome/vha-mst-coordinators.asp>

Additional Resources

To help keep you and your family safe, several resources are available.

FIREARM STORAGE OPTIONS

<https://keepitsecure.net>

MEDICATION DISPOSAL LOCATIONS

<https://apps.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main>

MILITARY DISCHARGE UPGRADE RESOURCES

<https://www.va.gov/discharge-upgrade-instructions/>

MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA RESOURCES

<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome/vha-mst-coordinators.asp>

THE NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

<https://www.socialwork.va.gov/IPV/Coordinators.asp>

WOMEN VETERANS CALL CENTER

855-VA-WOMEN (855-829-6636)

<https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/wvcc.asp>

WEEKDAYS 8:00 AM - 10:00 PM ET
SATURDAYS 8:00 AM - 6:30 PM ET



VETERAN CRISIS LINE

<https://veteranscrisisline.net/chat> or text 838255



VA IPV ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (IPVAP)

<https://www.socialwork.va.gov/IPV/Coordinators.asp>

Secure Firearm and Medication Storage for Women Veterans

You can protect the health and well-being of yourself and your family by securely storing firearms and medications in your home.



How to Recognize and Talk About Suicide Risk

WARNING SIGNS FOR SUICIDE RISK:



Talking or joking about death or suicide



Feeling extremely sad, anxious, or angry



Changes in behavior, such as withdrawing from friends or family, mood swings, or taking dangerous risks



Using drugs or alcohol more often



Feeling nervous, tired, or having physical pain or stress

If you are experiencing any of these signs, talk with a trusted friend or relative. You can seek help from a primary care physician, mental health counseling center, or at an emergency department.

For more tips on how to talk to a Veteran about suicide risk, visit: https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention

FIREARM STORAGE RISKS:

- Approximately 1 in 2 women Veterans have access to household firearms.
- 42-44% of women Veterans who have household firearms store them unlocked or loaded with ammunition.
- In 2021, firearms were a suicide method in over half (51.7%) of suicide deaths among women Veterans.
- 1 in 4 individuals attempt suicide within just 5 minutes of deciding to do so. Secure firearm storage prevents suicide by putting time and space between a person in crisis and a lethal method of self-harm, allowing for the crisis to resolve or lessen.

How to Keep Firearms Securely Stored

Secure firearm storage puts time and space between a person in crisis and a lethal method of self-harm. Practicing secure firearm storage keeps you, your children, and your family safe.

TO SECURELY STORE FIREARMS IN YOUR HOME:



Keep firearms **unloaded** when not in use



Securely **lock** firearms with the **safety activated**



Use a cable/trigger lock or place in a secure lockbox



Store ammunition in a separate location from firearms



In times of crisis, ask a significant other to temporarily store household firearms



Talk to health, primary care, or reproductive health provider about firearm access and storage



CABLE LOCK
Price: \$10-\$50



LOCKBOX
Price: \$25-\$350



GUN SAFE
Price: \$200-\$2,500

To request a gun lock from your local VA medical facility, visit: <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>
Learn more firearm storage options at: [keepitsecure.net](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/keepitsecure)

Medication Safety Risks

You and your family members may be at risk of harm by ingesting medications, including those not prescribed to them or greater quantities than prescribed. Medications should be safely and securely stored when not in use to prevent an intentional or unintentional overdose.

Medication poisoning is the second most common method of suicide death among women Veterans, used in 23.7% of suicide deaths in 2021.

How to Securely Store Medications

SECURE YOUR MEDICATIONS

- Keep medications out of children's sight and reach.
- Have a family member or friend manage medication dosages.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist to limit the number of refills or the quantity of medication.
- Discuss options for storing medications with your doctor.
- Portion out pills for a week and lock up the rest.

CHECK AND DISPOSE OF MEDICATIONS

- Inspect and dispose of any medications past the expiration date.
- Dispose of any medication unused in the past 12 months.

DISPOSE OF MEDICATIONS RESPONSIBLY

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist about options for disposing of unused medications.
- Utilize VA Medication Take Back Days at your local VA Medical Center.
- Take unused medications to your local pharmacy.
- Request a medication return envelope from your VA prescriber.
- Locate a medication disposal site by using the locator tool provided by The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

<https://apps.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main>

If you are using prescribed or illicit opioid medications (e.g., fentanyl, oxycodone, morphine), ask your doctor for a prescription of Naloxone - an antidote for opioid drug overdose - and learn how to use and store it safely.