

# How Accurate is Your Disability Rating?

Tips to Review Your Rated  
Conditions and Unlock  
the Hidden Value

**VET COMP & PEN**  
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**FIGHTING FOR VETERAN BENEFITS**



# How Accurate is Your Disability Rating?

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The VA assigns you a rating based on the severity of your service-connected condition.

Using your disability rating and household information, taking into account spouse and dependents, the VA determines your disability compensation rate so they can calculate how much money you'll receive each month. They also use your disability rating to help determine your eligibility for other benefits, like VA health care.

When the VA makes a decision on a claim, they issue a rating decision letter to the Veteran explaining how they calculated their rating, or why the Veteran is receiving a denial. If you have reason to believe the rating does not fully reflect the severity of your medical disability, you have a right to appeal the decision within 365 days of the date that the decision was issued. Determining whether the rating decision is correct can be complicated and confusing.



These are important factors to take into consideration when evaluating your disability rating:

## Do some research

Veterans who succeed make it a habit to look up the rating range for their current service-connected disabilities in the online 38CFR to determine if their symptoms or diagnosis support a higher rating with the provided medical evidence.

Look for your prior decision letters - you can always request them from the VA. Review them carefully. If there are denials, find out why. For example, they may state that there is no DX or no Nexus or for PTSD or the VA never got a stressor form, etc.

Review your original decision letter to determine qualifications for the next rating.

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## Why 0% is valuable

While a 0% rating can be disappointing, the fact that you received a rating means that the VA is acknowledging that your disability is service-connected.

Service-connection is the start of the process, paving the way for you to make a case with medical evidence to support your claim for increases and secondary claims. Some rates have a maximum of 0% but with the VA admitting service-connection, you can get free healthcare on that disability. For example, a 0% for Erectile Dysfunction (ED) would allow for free ED medication.



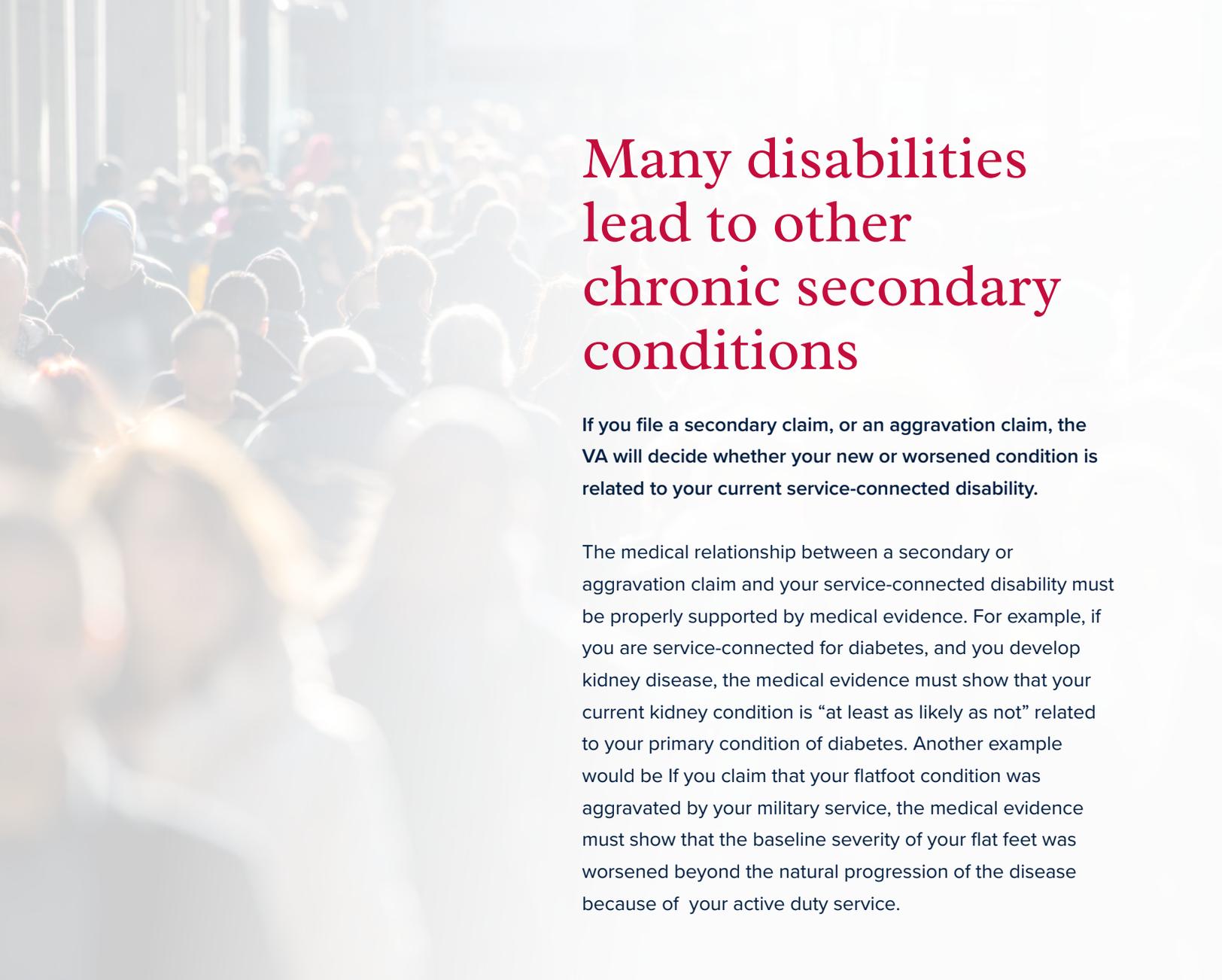
# Document your condition and be prepared to share at your exam

The C&P examiner is required to document objective and subjective evidence and will most likely ask you if you experience flare-ups of the condition and how these flare-ups affect your symptoms. This is because your disability rating is meant to reflect the severity of your condition on your worst day. If you can bring a journal documenting pain, discomfort, and how these symptoms affect your daily activity with intermittent pain and loss of function, this helps to paint a complete picture of your condition.

VA C&P Exam Preparation Tips

## Verify Which Condition Is Being Evaluated

If you are claiming multiple disabling conditions, you may be asked to attend more than one C&P exam. Therefore, make sure you find out which condition is scheduled to be evaluated so that you can elaborate on the condition.



# Many disabilities lead to other chronic secondary conditions

If you file a secondary claim, or an aggravation claim, the VA will decide whether your new or worsened condition is related to your current service-connected disability.

The medical relationship between a secondary or aggravation claim and your service-connected disability must be properly supported by medical evidence. For example, if you are service-connected for diabetes, and you develop kidney disease, the medical evidence must show that your current kidney condition is “at least as likely as not” related to your primary condition of diabetes. Another example would be if you claim that your flatfoot condition was aggravated by your military service, the medical evidence must show that the baseline severity of your flat feet was worsened beyond the natural progression of the disease because of your active duty service.

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## SMC Pay

Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) is a tax-free benefit paid in addition to the regular VA Disability Compensation, to a Veteran who, as a result of military service, incurred the loss or loss of use of specific organs or extremities. Some disabilities, such as erectile dysfunction, have a maximum rating of 0% but provide additional monthly payments in the form of SMC pay.



# Consider hiring a professional medical consulting company.

**It may not be necessary for all Veterans to obtain medical consulting services.**

However, in many cases, independent medical consulting services can be the single factor that makes the difference between a higher rating and a denial. Because the VA is working very hard to meet the demands of evaluating so many Veterans, the VA often contracts with outside companies. It is possible for examiners to sometimes overlook medical conditions. In fact, the Board of Veterans Appeals and the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims send back a large portion of denied claims because VA examiners failed to conduct thorough and complete examinations. A medical consulting company like Vet Comp & Pen prides itself on treating Veterans like people and not numbers, spending the time to thoroughly review—and follow-up on what is indicated by the medical evidence. Vet Comp & Pen considers itself as an aid to help the VA achieve its mandate by ensuring that important medical evidence isn't missed. Let us help you achieve the disability rating that you medically and ethically qualify for. Our no-fee-without-success performance eliminates your risk while increasing your chances of an accurate rating of all disabilities that you have.

\* This report is for informational and educational purposes only with no guarantee of accuracy. Vet Comp & Pen does not offer legal or medical advice. All uses of the term "you" are for illustrative purposes regarding a hypothetical veteran. You should consult with an accredited VA representative, an attorney, or a doctor before making any serious decisions about your rights to receive VA benefits.



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