



Social Security

How We Decide if You Still Have a Qualifying Disability

www.socialsecurity.gov

How We Decide if You Still Have a Qualifying Disability

In most cases, you're reading this leaflet because you just got a letter telling you we were going to review your medical condition. We're required by law to review, from time to time, the current medical condition of all people receiving disability benefits to make sure they continue to have a qualifying disability.

Generally, if your health hasn't improved, or if your disability still keeps you from working, you'll continue to receive your benefits.

We'll gather the information

To help us make our decision, we'll first gather new information about your medical condition.

- We'll ask your doctors, hospitals, and other medical sources for your medical records. We'll ask them how your medical condition limits your activities, what your medical tests show, and what medical treatments you've been given.
- If we need more information, we'll ask you to go for a special examination or test for which we'll pay.

We'll review the facts

Next, we'll look at what your medical condition was when we last reviewed your case. We'll also look at any new health problems you may have.

We'll make a decision about whether or not your medical condition has improved. If we decide your medical condition has improved, we'll make a decision about whether or not your medical condition has improved enough to allow you to work.

We'll also look to see if your overall medical condition affects the kind of work you can do. Then, we'll look at the requirements of the work you did in the past and requirements for any other kind of work you might be able to do now.

How your benefits are affected

If your medical condition has improved, and we decide you can work, your benefits will stop.

Your disability benefits will also stop if:

- You can work because you've benefited from vocational training, or advances in medical treatment or vocational technology;

- We made a mistake in an earlier decision to give or continue your disability benefits.
- You aren't following the treatment your doctor ordered (without a good reason), and you probably could work if you followed the treatment;
- You gave us false or misleading information when we made an earlier decision.
- You aren't cooperating with us, and you don't have a good reason for not cooperating; and
- You're working and your average monthly earnings show that you're doing substantial gainful work. The amount of earnings we consider substantial and gainful changes each year. For the current figure, refer to the annual *Update* (Publication No. 05-10003). However, this situation won't affect Supplemental Security Income payments.

If we decide your disability benefits will stop, and you disagree, you can appeal our decision. That means you can ask us to look at your case again. When you get a letter telling you about our decision, the letter will tell you how you can appeal the decision.

Contacting Social Security

Visit www.socialsecurity.gov anytime to apply for benefits, open a **my Social Security** account, find publications, and get answers to frequently asked questions. Or, call us toll-free at **1-800-772-1213** (for the deaf or hard of hearing, call our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**). We can answer case-specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. Generally, you'll have a shorter wait time if you call after Tuesday. We treat all calls confidentially. We also want to make sure you receive accurate and courteous service, so a second Social Security representative monitors some telephone calls. We can provide general information by automated phone service 24 hours a day. And, remember, our website, www.socialsecurity.gov, is available to you anytime and anywhere!



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