



Home Health Care Homebound Criteria Quick Reference Guide for TRICARE West Region Providers

Key Points

- Homebound criteria define the conditions under which a patient is considered homebound.
- Certain absences from the home do not disqualify a patient from being classified as homebound.
- Special criteria apply to patients under the age of 18 or those receiving maternity care.
- Examples of homebound status help illustrate how the criteria apply in real life situations.

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Homebound Criteria

A patient qualifies as homebound when the patient normally cannot leave the home, or when leaving home would require a considerable and taxing effort.

Patients will also qualify as homebound if:

- They have an illness or injury that restricts their ability to leave their place of residence except with at least one of the following:
 - Supportive devices such as crutches, canes, wheelchairs, or walkers
 - The use of special transportation
 - The assistance of another person
- Leaving home is medically contraindicated.

Absences That Do Not Disqualify Homebound Status

Below are criteria for health care treatment-related absences, and non-medical absences that do not disqualify homebound status.

- Health care treatment-related absences, including regular absences to attend:
 - Therapeutic, psychosocial, or medical treatment in an adult day-care program licensed or certified by a state or accredited for such services
- Non-medical absences do not disqualify a person from being considered homebound if they are infrequent or of relatively short duration.
 - Examples: A trip to the barber or a short drive.



Special Criteria for Patients Under 18 or Patients Receiving Maternity Care

Beneficiaries under 18 years old or those receiving maternity care must have a written certification from a physician attesting that leaving their home would place them at medical risk in order to be considered homebound.

Regular or infrequent absences from the beneficiary's primary residence to attend an educational program in a public or private school that is state licensed or certified shall not negate homebound status.

Although patients must be confined to the home to be eligible for covered home health services, they cannot receive certain services at the patient's residence because the required equipment is not available for home use.

Examples include Hemodialysis, Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy, or surgical wound debridement.

If the services required involve such equipment, the Home Health Agency (HHA) may make arrangements with a hospital, Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF), or rehabilitation center to provide these services on an outpatient basis.

Examples of Homebound Status

Homebound status may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Patients with mobility-based disabilities, such as paralysis, or patients that otherwise require mobility aids like a wheelchair or crutches
- Patients with vision-based disabilities, or patients who are experiencing age-expected cognitive decline, who need assistance leaving their home
- Patients with psychiatric illnesses that cause them to refuse to leave home or otherwise pose safety concerns if left unattended, even without physical limitations

Important Note

Aged persons who stay home due to feebleness or insecurity from an advanced age do not qualify as homebound unless one of the above conditions is also present.