

What Medical Conditions Are Listed?

- musculoskeletal problems, such as back injuries
- cardiovascular conditions, such as heart failure or coronary artery disease
- senses and speech issues, such as vision and hearing loss
- respiratory illnesses, such as COPD or asthma
- neurological disorders, such as multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, Parkinson's disease, and epilepsy
- mental disorders, such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, autism, or retardation
- immune system disorders, such as HIV/AIDS, lupus, and rheumatoid arthritis
- various syndromes, such as Sjogren's Syndrome and Marfan Syndrome
- skin disorders, such as dermatitis
- digestive tract problems, such as liver disease or IBD
- kidney disease and genitourinary problems, and
- cancer
- hematological disorders, such as hemolytic anemias and disorders of bone marrow failure

Does a Medical Condition Have to Match the Blue Book Listing?







You can also be awarded disability benefits if Social Security considers aspects of your condition medically equivalent to the criteria in the listing or a related listing. This is called "equaling a disability listing." (According to recent government statistics, 37% of all approved disability applications "met" a listing and 6% "equaled" a listing.)

Does a Medical Condition Have to Be in the Blue Book?

A Social Security disability claimant doesn't even have to have an impairment that is listed in the Social Security disability blue book to be awarded disability benefits. For instance, migraine headaches are not included in the blue book, but if a claimant's migraines are severe enough and are well documented, the SSA may grant disability benefits if the migraines make it impossible for the disability applicant to work a full-time job. The **keys** here are that the condition be a medically determinable impairment and that it reduces someone's RFC enough so that they can't do their prior job or any job. In this case, an applicant could qualify for benefits under a medical-vocational allowance.

Which Medical Conditions Are Likely to Qualify for Disability?

Approval Rates for Common Impairments

Multiple sclerosis		68%
All cancers		64%
Respiratory disorders		47%
Osteoarthritis/ joint disease		40%
Mood and anxiety disorders		37%
Back problems		34%

About two-thirds of readers with cancer or MS received disability awards.

What Is Your Residual Functional Capacity (RFC)?

The consultant will determine what level of exertion you are capable of, and what restrictions limit the jobs you can do. The medical consultant will rely on your medical record and your doctor's notes about your **functional abilities and restrictions** to come up with your RFC

What Level of Activity Are You Capable Of?

Note that to be considered able to work, you must be able to work full time, attend work regularly, [be productive at work](#), and not need to take frequent rest breaks.

If the disability examiner determines you can't do your prior job, the examiner will then use the SSA's medical-vocational rules grid to determine whether, given your RFC, your age, your education, and your skills, you should be able to learn another job

The disability claims examiner at DDS will first use your RFC to determine if you can be expected to do your prior job. The examiner will look at your work history for the past 15 years to see what type of work you know how to do. If your prior job was sedentary and your RFC is for sedentary work (or higher), the claims examiner will probably find you should be able to return to your job, unless your RFC has further non-exertional restrictions. (If you have mental or emotional limitations, such as memory problems from a psychiatric or neurological disorder, or you are unable to concentrate, DDS should create a mental RFC for you as well.)

Your physical RFC determines whether you can be expected to do sedentary work, light work, or medium work. For instance, if your doctor has restricted you to walking and standing no more than two hours per day, your RFC will be for sedentary work. Here are the various exertional levels that could appear in your RFC:

- *Sedentary work*. This means you have the ability to lift no more than ten pounds at a time, and occasionally lift or carry things like files or small tools. A sedentary job is mostly sitting, but you must be able to walk and stand occasionally.
- *Light work*. This means you can lift up to 20 pounds occasionally, and frequently lift or carry up to ten pounds. Light work requires frequent walking and standing and the ability to push and pull with your arms or legs. If you can do light work, you can do sedentary work.
- *Medium work*. This means you can lift up to 50 pounds at a time, and frequently lift or carry up to 25 pounds. If you can do medium work, you can also do light and sedentary work.

- *Heavy work.* This means you can lift up to 100 pounds at a time, and that you can frequently lift or carry up to 50 pounds. If you can do heavy work, you can do medium, light, or sedentary work.
- *Very heavy work.* This means you can lift objects that weigh more than 100 pounds, and frequently lift or carry 50 pounds or more. If you can do very heavy work, you can do all other levels as well.

Your RFC will also include any non-exertional restrictions, such as not being able to stoop, use your fingers, or remember instructions.