**q & a WITH ssa**

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Social Security receives thousands of questions each day, here are some of the common questions. To so other common questions and answers, go to <https://faq.ssa.gov/en-US/>.

**Question:**

How do I apply for disability benefits? And, how long does it take to get a decision after I apply for disability benefits?

**Answer:**

You can apply for disability benefits online at [www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityssi/apply.html](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityssi/apply.html). To get a decision on your disability application usually takes three-to-five months. The time frame can vary depending on

* The nature of your disability;
* How quickly we can get your medical evidence from your doctor or other medical source;
* Whether it’s necessary to send you for a medical examination; and
* Whether we review your application for quality purposes.

Learn your claim status at [www.socialsecurity.gov/claimstatus](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/claimstatus).

**Question:**

I get Social Security because of a disability. How often will my case be reviewed to determine if I’m still eligible?

**Answer:**

How often we review your medical condition depends on how severe it is and the likelihood it will improve. Your award notice tells you when you can expect your first review using the following terminology:

\* Medical improvement expected — If your condition is expected to improve within a specific time, your first review will be six to 18 months after you started getting disability benefits.

\* Medical improvement possible — If improvement in your medical condition is possible, your case will be reviewed about every three years.

\* Medical improvement not expected—If your medical condition is unlikely to improve, your case will be reviewed about once every five to seven years.

For more information, visit [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

**Question:**

My doctor said he thinks I’m disabled. Who decides if I meet the requirements for Social Security disability benefits?

**Answer:**

We first will review your application to make sure you meet some basic requirements for Social Security disability benefits, such as whether you worked enough years to qualify. Then we will send your application to the disability determination services office in your state, often called the “DDS” or “state agency.” Your state agency completes the disability decision for us. Doctors and disability specialists in the state agency ask your doctors for information about your condition. They consider all the facts in your case. They use the medical evidence from your doctors and hospitals, clinics, or institutions where you have been treated and all other information.

The state agency staff may need more medical information before they can decide if you are disabled. If more information is not available from your current medical sources, the state agency may ask you to go for a special examination. We prefer to ask your own doctor, but sometimes the exam may have to be done by someone else. Social Security will pay for the exam and for some of the related travel costs. Learn more about disability benefits at [www.socialsecurity.gov/disability](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability).