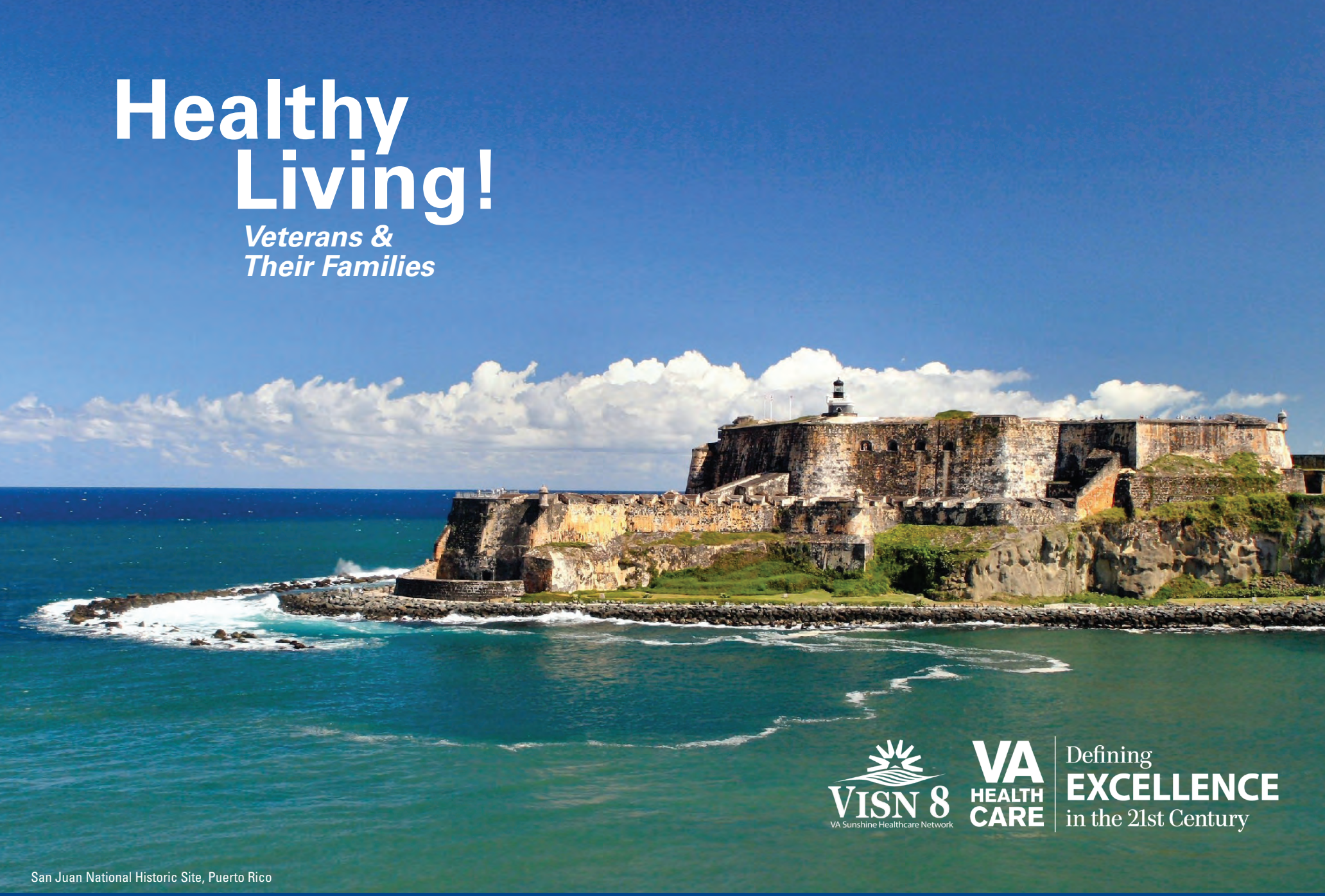
Healthy Living!

Veterans & Their Families



VISN 8
VA Sunshine Healthcare Network

VA HEALTH CARE

Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century

San Juan National Historic Site, Puerto Rico

2014 CALENDAR

Plan your health goals for the New Year!

Start by thinking about some aspect of your life or health that will help you feel better or may prevent an illness later. To help you plan your goals, use the **SMART** goal process:

- **Specific.** Plan what, why, and how you plan to reach your goal. Instead of, "I will exercise more," state, "My goal is to walk briskly for 15 minutes every other day this week."
- **Measurable.** Plan how you will check your progress. For example, "I walked briskly for 15 minutes 3 days this week."
- **Attainable.** Decide what skills, resources, and help you will need to reach your goal. Think about the challenges you might face and how to address them.
- **Realistic.** Plan things you are able to do. If you don't give yourself at least a 7 out of 10 chance, modify your action.
- **Time-based.** Set a date you hope to achieve your goal. Start with a short timeframe, such as a week to walk briskly for 15 minutes 3 days per week.

Get Involved.

- Partner with your health care team to choose your health goals.
- Plan goals to stay well and to prevent and treat health problems.
- Together, develop a written treatment plan to achieve your health goals.
- Use this calendar and the **Track Health** tools on My HealtheVet at www.myhealth.va.gov to record health data and monitor your progress at reaching your goals.

My Healthy Living Goals

- I will start planning, now, for screening tests I need this year. I will look at the "Heath Screenings" list at the back of this calendar and ask my health care team which tests I need.
- I will create one goal that I can DO! I will talk to my health care team and set a start date and meet it.

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Prevention Tip

Ask your family and friends for their support in your "healthier you" efforts.

January 2014

Record Minutes Exercised | Record Blood Pressure | Record Blood Sugar

You can also log these on My HealtheVet at www.myhealth.va.gov.

Tell your health care team if and why you may not follow your treatment plan for medications, medical care, and self-care.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December 2013 S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	 Biscayne National Park, Florida		1 New Year's Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	2	3	4 Weight _____
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 Weight _____
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 Weight _____
19	20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	21	22	23	24	25 Weight _____
26	27	28	29	30	31	**February 2014** S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

Healthy weight. Healthy heart.

A healthy weight is very important for heart health.

- It helps control your blood pressure, blood cholesterol and even blood sugar levels.
- It helps lower the risk for sleep apnea. Having sleep apnea raises your risk for heart disease.
- It lowers your risk for type 2 diabetes. Did you know that a major study found that lifestyle changes helped prevent or delay type 2 diabetes for adults at high-risk for the disease? This included a body weight loss of just 5-7% through healthy eating and exercise.
- If you already have type 2 diabetes, healthy weight makes it easier to control your blood glucose level. This may delay and prevent serious problems. These include heart and kidney diseases, stroke, blindness, and non-traumatic amputation.

Put your heart into controlling your weight.

- State out loud, "I love myself enough to control my weight – for my health and well-being and for the people I love."
- Focus on the positives of weight control, such as feeling better and having more energy to play with your children and grandchildren.
- Rally support from family and friends.
- Make healthy eating and exercise a family affair.

My Healthy Living Goals

- Within 3 days, I will find an exercise buddy to walk with me on 2 days a week.
- Starting today, I will not add salt to my food.
- I will create one goal that I can DO! I will talk to my health care team and set a start date and meet it.

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Prevention Tip

Shake the salt habit. Put a sodium-free seasoning blend in your "no salt" shaker.

February 2014

Record Minutes Exercised | Record Blood Pressure | Record Blood Sugar

You can also log these on My HealtheVet at www.myhealth.va.gov.

Count steps not just calories. Walking 2000 steps is about a mile. Wear a pedometer to log your daily steps.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
January 2014 S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	 Maho Bay, Virgin Islands National Park, St. John		**Tip the Scale in Your Favor** • Eat every 2-3 hours. • Put your fork down between bites. • Be careful to watch calories in salad dressings, condiments and sauces. • Turn off the TV and computer during meals.			1 Weight _____
2	3	4	5	6	7	8 Weight _____
9	10	11	12	13	14	15 Weight _____
16	17 Outpatient Clinics Closed	18	19	20	21	22 Weight _____
23	24	25	26	27	28	**March 2014** S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Lean toward healthy food choices.

Limit high fat meats, such as bacon, hot dogs, and sausage.

- Choose lean cuts of beef, pork, lamb, chicken, and turkey.
- Trim fat from meats before cooking.
- Eat fish 2-3 times a week.

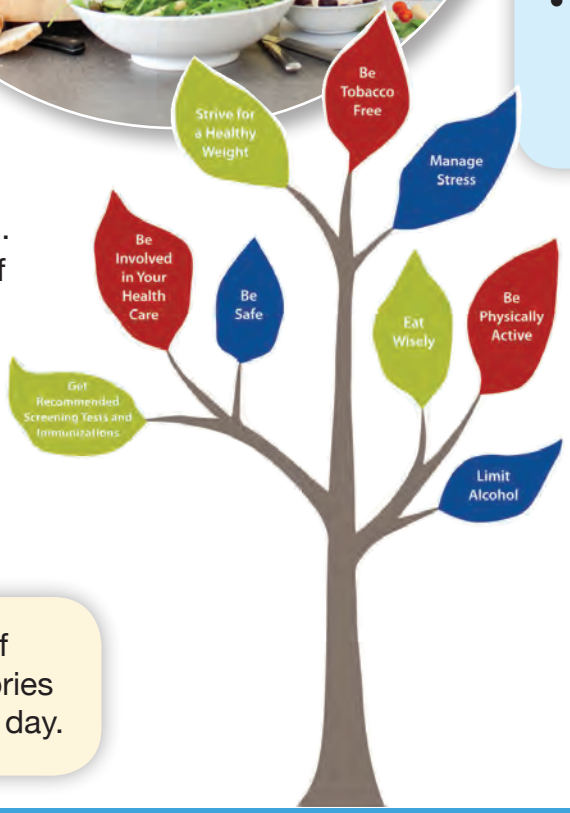
Enjoy plenty of fruits and vegetables.

Add little fat to foods.

- Bake and broil meats and fish.
- Poach chicken and fish in water or low-sodium broth.
- Use nonstick cooking spray in place of butter, margarine, or oil when you grill or sauté foods.
- Limit fried foods and creamy sauces.
- Put salsa instead of sour cream on a baked potato. Use vinegar and lemon juice plus 1-2 teaspoons of olive oil on salads. Or use fat-free or low-fat salad dressings or sprays.

Note the grams of fat per serving on food labels.

- Choose foods low in total and saturated fats.
- Avoid foods with *trans* fat.



Use ChooseMyPlate and VA Healthy Eating Tools.

- Get a custom eating plan for you and for each member of your family from www.ChooseMyPlate.gov. Get menus and recipes, too.

- Use VA MOVE! Nutrition Handouts from www.move.va.gov. Ask your health care team which ones are best for you.

My Healthy Living Goals

- I will get a food log from www.move.va.gov today. Tomorrow, I will write down everything I eat for the whole day.
- At my next clinic visit, I will ask my health care team how many grams of fat I should eat per day.
- I will create one goal that I can DO! I will talk to my health care team and set a start date and meet it.

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Prevention Tip

Limit total dietary fat to 30 percent of calories. This is 50 grams for 1,500 calories per day; 65 grams for 2,000 calories per day.

March 2014

Record Minutes Exercised Record Blood Pressure Record Blood Sugar

You can also log these on My HealtheVet at www.myhealth.va.gov.

Health Tip

March forward with healthier choices. Instead or butter or margarine, try using low-sugar spreadable fruit on wheat toast.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

February 2014

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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23	24	25	26	27	28	

April 2014

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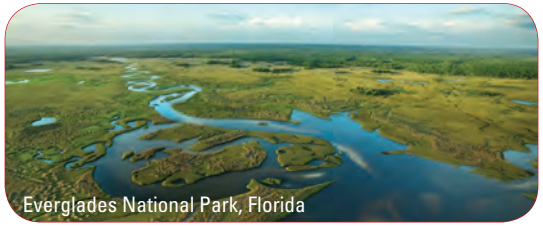
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Lean and Low-Sodium Meats

- Beef and pork tenderloin and sirloin
- White meat from chicken and turkey (remove skin before eating)
- Fresh, frozen, and low-sodium canned fish



1 Weight _____

2

3

4

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6

7

8 Weight _____

9 Daylight Saving Time Begins
(Turn clocks ahead one hour.)

10

11

12

13

14

15 Weight _____

16

17

18

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20

21

22 Weight _____

23

24

25

26

27

28

29 Weight _____

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31

Limit alcohol. It is a drug.

If you choose to drink alcohol, drink in moderation:

- Have no more than 2 drinks a day if you are male.
- Have no more than 1 drink a day if you are female or are a male over age 65.

Avoid binge drinking: This is having:

- More than 4 drinks on one occasion if you are male
- More than 3 drinks on one occasion if you are female or are a male over age 65

Enjoy drinks with less or no alcohol.

Drink this:	Instead of this:
12-ounce lite beer	• 12-ounce regular beer
Club soda with ice and lime	• Vodka on the rocks with lime
Virgin Bloody Mary	• Bloody Mary
• 3 ounces of wine mixed with 2 ounces of club soda or sparkling water	5 ounces of wine

Less alcohol means less calories.

One Standard Drink	Calories
12 ounces regular beer	About 150
8-9 ounces malt liquor	90-125
5 ounces wine	100-125
12 ounces wine cooler	220-250
1.5 ounces 80-proof hard liquor (gin, vodka, whiskey)	125

(See illustrations for standard drinks in the back of this calendar.)

My Healthy Living Goals

- The next time I talk to my health care team, I will ask if and how much alcohol is okay to have due to my health problems and medications I take.
- By the end of this week, I will take the "Drinker's Check-up" at www.veteransdrinkerscheckup.org.
- I will create one goal that I can DO! I will talk to my health care team and set a start date and meet it.

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Prevention Tip

If you are pregnant, have no alcohol. It can harm your unborn baby, and may result in a set of birth defects called fetal alcohol syndrome.

April 2014

Record Minutes Exercised | Record Blood Pressure | Record Blood Sugar

You can also log these on My HealtheVet at www.myhealth.va.gov.

Health Tip

Quench your thirst with water, not alcohol. When you drink alcohol, sip it to make the drink last longer.

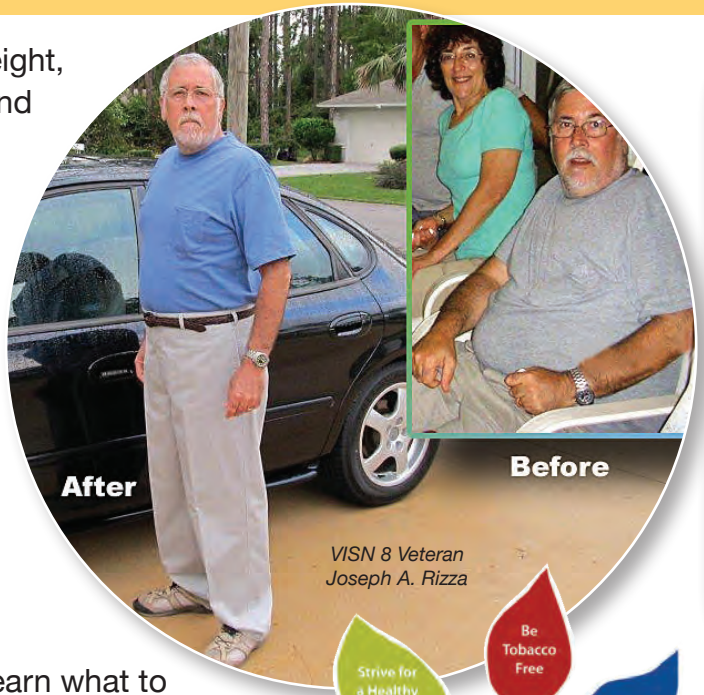
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
March 2014 S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31		1	2	3	4	5 Weight _____
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 Weight _____
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 Weight _____
20	21	22	23	24	25	26 Weight _____
27	28	29	30			**May 2014** S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Be Active and MOVE!

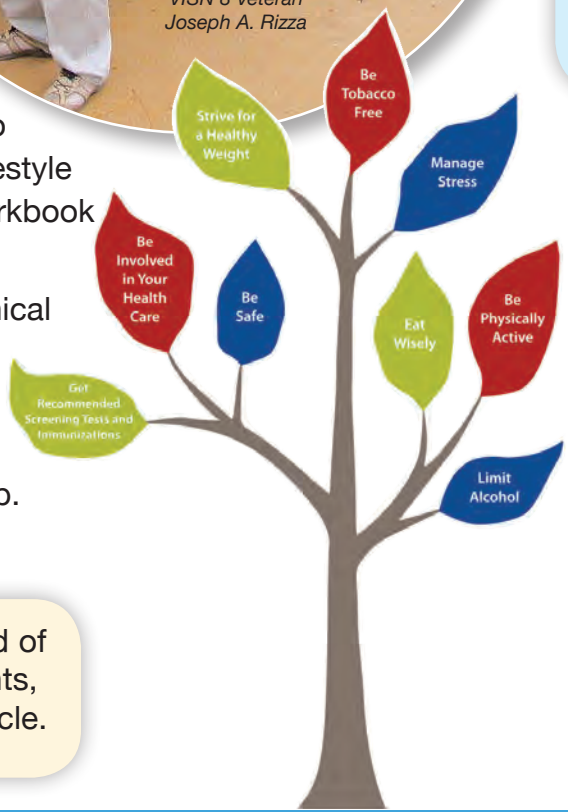
Follow VA's MOVE! program to lose weight, keep it off, and improve your health. Find out how to sign up and use the MOVE! program from your health care team or at www.move.va.gov. Ask which of these MOVE! program options are available to you.

- Individual visits with MOVE! staff
- Group sessions
- Support groups
- TeleMOVE!. You use a messaging device to take part in the MOVE! program from your home.
- Telephone Lifestyle Coaching. You learn what to do through a guided workbook. Your healthy lifestyle coach calls you on a regular basis to review workbook lessons and provide help and support.
- "Be Active and MOVE!" program. This uses Clinical Video Telehealth to provide group classes and exercises closer to where you live.

Learn how the MOVE! program has helped fellow Veterans at www.move.va.gov/SuccessStories.asp.



VISN 8 Veteran Joseph A. Rizza



Use your pedometer or odometer.

These devices record steps you take or distances you roll to track your progress in reaching your goals.

- You get a pedometer as part of the MOVE! program.
- If you are not yet enrolled in MOVE!, ask your health care team how to get a pedometer or wheelchair odometer. Or, get one on your own.

My Healthy Living Goals

- Today, I will get an activity log from www.move.va.gov or download an app, such as MyFitnessPal on my smartphone. Tomorrow, I will record physical activities I do for the day.
- I will create one goal that I can DO! I will talk to my health care team and set a start date and meet it.

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Prevention Tip

Mind your mindless munching. Instead of snacking while watching TV, lift weights, walk in place, or ride a stationary bicycle.

May 2014

Record Minutes Exercised | Record Blood Pressure | Record Blood Sugar

You can also log these on My HealtheVet at www.myhealth.va.gov.

If it is hard for you to be physically active, talk with your health care team about the types and amounts of activity that are best for you.

April 2014

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

June 2014

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Virgin Islands National Park, Caribbean (USVI)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Weight _____
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Weight _____
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 Weight _____
18	19	20	21	22	23	24 Weight _____
25	26 Memorial Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	27	28	29	30	31 Weight _____

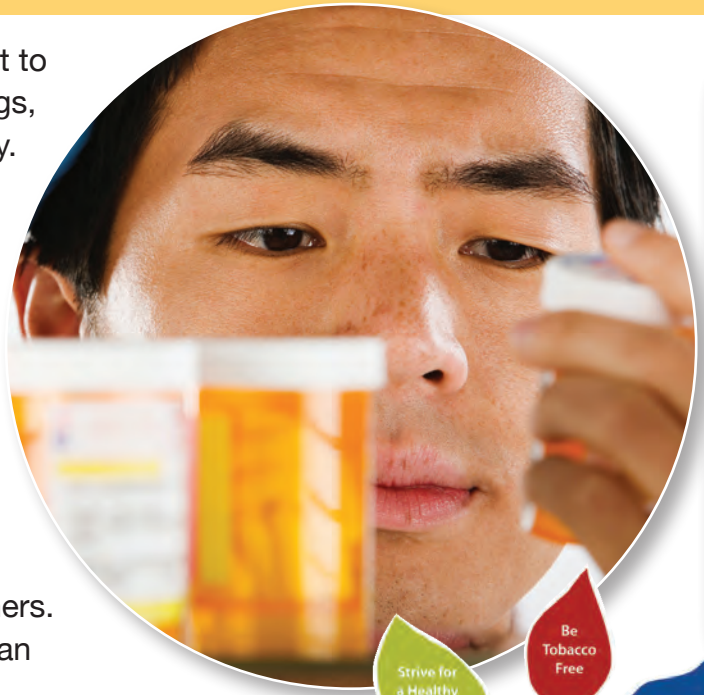
Dispose medications safely.

Contact your Public Health Department to find out where to take prescription drugs, especially narcotics, in your community. This can include:

- Drug take-back programs
- Hazardous waste collection events
- Law enforcement programs

When you are ready to get rid of out-of-date or unwanted medications (without narcotics), use these Federal guidelines:

- Take them out of the original containers. (Scratch out all label contents that can identify you.)
- Don't flush medicines down the toilet.
- Put the medicine inside an empty storage bag or box that can be sealed shut. Mix your medicines in this container with something you can't eat like cat litter or used coffee grounds.
- Throw the container in your household trash. Make sure you do not put it in the recycle bin.



Keep an up-to-date list of all your medications.

- Use the Medication List on My Health**e**Vet.
- Include prescribed and over-the-counter medications, vitamins, minerals, and herbals.
- Keep track of how much you have, when to order refills, and when to get new prescriptions.
- At least once a year, review all of your medications with your health care team.

My Healthy Living Goals

- Before this week is over, I will clean out my medicine cabinet.
- At my next clinic visit, I will ask my health care team if my current medications are still right for me.
- I will create one goal that I can DO! I will talk to my health care team and set a start date and meet it.

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Prevention Tip

Get details on proper disposal of medications at www.epa.gov. Search for "How to Dispose of Unused Medicines."

June 2014

Record Minutes Exercised | Record Blood Pressure | Record Blood Sugar

You can also log these on My HealtheVet at www.myhealth.va.gov.

Keep all medications secure from teens, children, and grandchildren. This includes ones in pill bottles, purses, and dose containers.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Weight _____
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Weight _____
15	16	17	18	19	20	21 Weight _____
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 Weight _____
29	30					

May 2014

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

July 2014

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

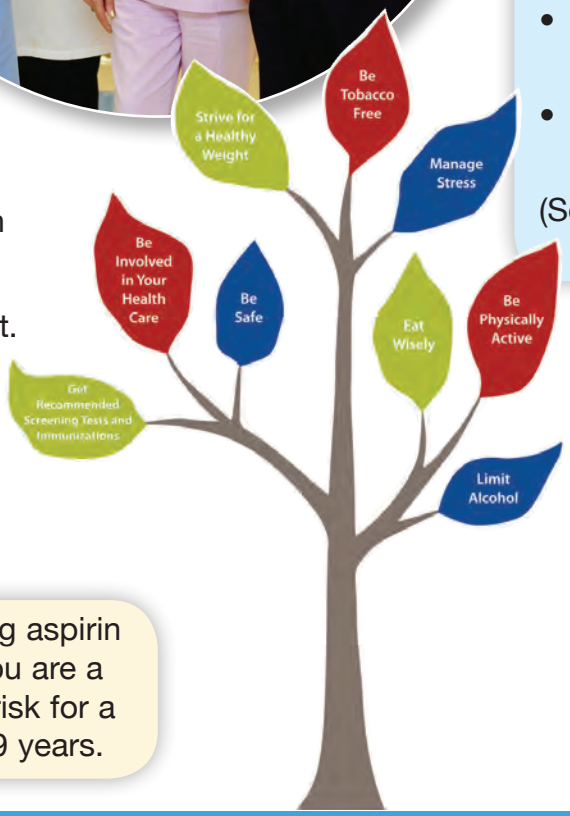
Ocala National Forest, Florida

Take charge of your health. Manage your chronic diseases.

Work with your health care team to develop a written treatment plan to use as a guide.

- Request help if you do not understand any part of your plan.
- Read your treatment plan often to remind you what to do.
- Record health data you monitor at home. Examples are: Your weight, blood pressure, blood sugar, and minutes you exercise daily (or steps you take). List these on this calendar and/or use the Track Health tools on My Health*e*Vet.
- Report to your health care team:
  - Side effects or problems with medications
  - What makes it hard to follow your treatment plan
  - What helps you feel well and function better
- Review your treatment plan at each health care visit.
- Revise the plan, with your health care team, as your needs change. Follow up with the changes. Work together to move forward with meeting your health goals.

VA Caribbean Healthcare System health care providers



Prevention Tip

Talk to your health care team about taking aspirin to lower your risk for a heart attack if you are a man ages 45 to 79 years; to lower your risk for a stroke if you are a woman ages 55 to 79 years.

Be proactive to prevent skin cancer.

Protect you and your family from UV radiation. Limit sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. and wear:

- Broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher; 30 or higher is better.
- A hat with a wide (2-3 inch) brim all the way around
- Clothing with UV protection or that covers the skin
- Sunglasses that block both UV-A and UV-B rays

(See "Warning Signs for Skin Cancer" at the back of this calendar.)

My Healthy Living Goals

- Before I try a new way that I found to treat a health problem, I will discuss, with my health care team, if this is right for me.
- Within 2 days, I will request a written treatment plan from my health care team.
- I will create one goal that I can DO! I will talk to my health care team and set a start date and meet it.

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July 2014

Record Minutes Exercised | Record Blood Pressure | Record Blood Sugar

You can also log these on My HealtheVet at www.myhealth.va.gov.

Health Tip

Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. Be careful around swimming pools to prevent falling.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
June 2014 S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	**August 2014** S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1	2	3 Independence Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	4	5 Weight _____
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 Weight _____
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 Weight _____
20	21	22	23	24	25	26 Weight _____
27	28	29	30	31	 Cumberland Island National Seashore, Georgia	

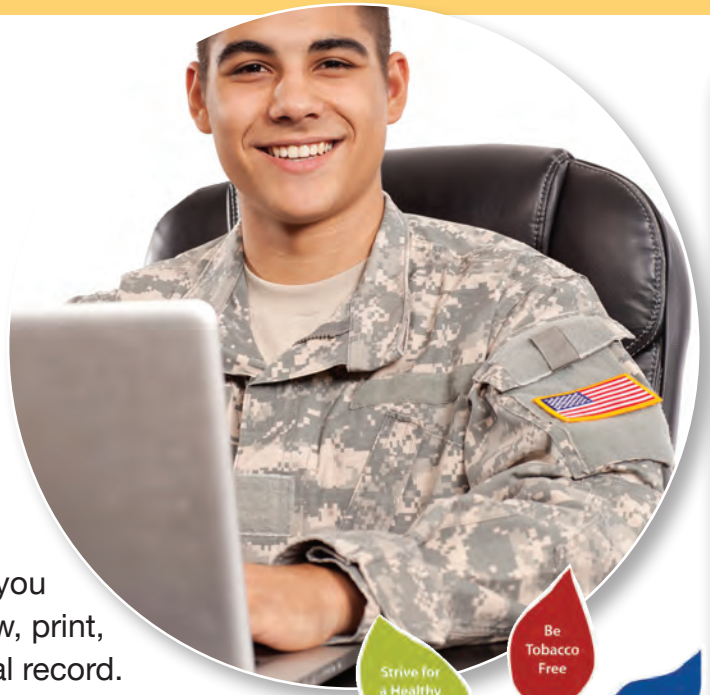
You benefit by using My HealtheVet.

Register for My Health*e*Vet (MHV) at www.myhealth.va.gov. Use this online tool 24/7 to:

- Learn about VA and its programs.
- Get and track information about your health.
- Order your VA medication refills.

Complete a one-time Authentication Process to upgrade to a Premium Account. Learn how to do this from your health care team or at www.myhealth.va.gov. This upgrade allows you to use the "Blue Button" feature to view, print, and save health data from your medical record. This includes:

- VA Appointments and Medication History
- VA Wellness Reminders for tests and exams
- VA Progress Notes written by your VA health care team
- VA Problem List of your active VA health issues
- Secure Messaging. You send "emails" to your health care team. You will get a response within 3 business days.



Use Secure Messaging Wisely.

Send "emails" for non-urgent matters, such as:

- To request, change, or cancel a VA appointment
- To request VA prescription medications (except ones with narcotics)
- To find out what to do for a symptom or health problem you are having.

Note: Do not use secure messaging for problems that need prompt medical care. (See, also, "Signs and Symptoms that Need Emergency Medical Care" at the back of this calendar.)

My Healthy Living Goals

- This week, I will learn about treatment options for 1 of my health problems from the Veteran Health Library at www.veteranshealthlibrary.org.
- Each time I use Secure Messaging, I will keep my message short and to the point.
- I will create one goal that I can DO! I will talk to my health care team and set a start date and meet it.

Prevention Tip

On My Health*e*Vet, go to the Track Health section to learn about healthy living topics. Find ways to prevent and treat health problems, too.

August 2014

Record Minutes Exercised | Record Blood Pressure | Record Blood Sugar

You can also log these on My HealtheVet at www.myhealth.va.gov.

Health Tip

Plan when you and family members will get your flu shots. Schedule your children's back-to-school physicals and required vaccines, too.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
July 2014 S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	**September 2014** S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	 Dry Tortugas National Park, Florida			1	2 Weight _____
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 Weight _____
10	11	12	13	14	15	16 Weight _____
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 Weight _____
24 31	25	26	27	28	29	30 Weight _____

Deal with depression and PTSD.

Depression and PTSD may not show scars, but are very real illnesses. There is no shame in seeking help. And you don't have to go it alone.

- Let your family and health care team know if you are anxious, depressed, or having problems coping with life.
- Take private, online screening tests for depression and PTSD on My Health**e**Vet at www.mentalhealth.va.gov. Share the results with your health care team. Depression and PTSD need a medical diagnosis and treatment.
- Use Veteran resources to help you cope:
  - **Moving Forward** from www.startmovingforward.org. This program teaches problem solving skills to help you better handle life's challenges. It also includes deep breathing, meditation, and other relaxation exercises.
  - **Making the Connection** for Veterans. Find out from www.maketheconnection.net/veterans how other Veterans deal with the same problems as you.

Use VA Tools to Help with PTSD.

- **PTSD Coach** smartphone App at www.ptsd.va.gov/publicpages/PTSDCoach.asp. This offers direct links to PTSD support and provides tools to help you handle stress.
- **AboutFace.** Learn about PTSD from other Veterans and how treatment helped them from www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/AboutFace/Index.html.

My Healthy Living Goals

- Today, on 5 different pieces of paper, I will write down 5 things I can do that make me happy. I will put them in my "Be Happy" jar. When I feel down, I will pick one from the jar and do that activity.
- I will explore new ways to have fun and do 1 of these within the next month.
- I will create one goal that I can DO! I will talk to my health care team and set a start date and meet it.

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Prevention Tip

Identify your stress triggers. Plan, ahead of time, ways to deal with them if and when they occur.

September 2014

Record Minutes Exercised | Record Blood Pressure | Record Blood Sugar

You can also log these on My HealtheVet at www.myhealth.va.gov.

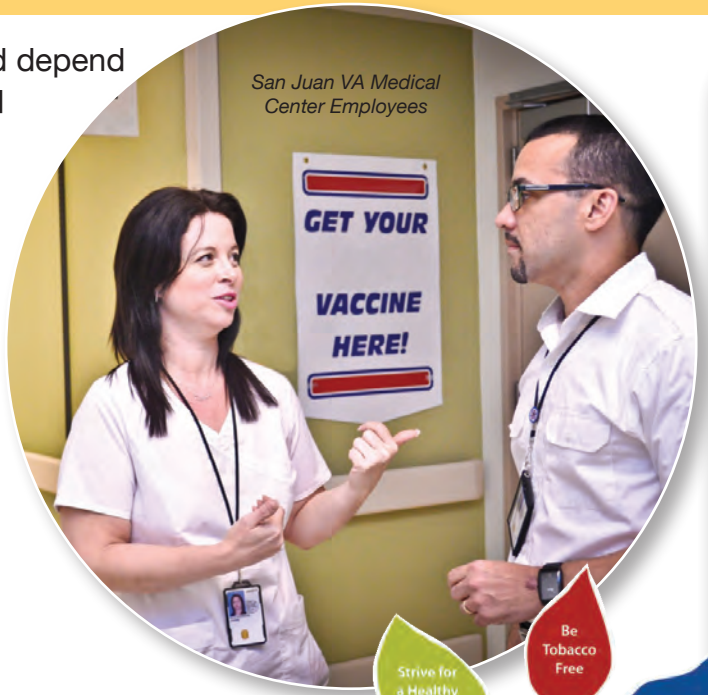
Spend time with loved ones, including pets. Accept help from family and friends who offer support.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
August 2014 S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1 Labor Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	2	3	4	5	6 Weight _____
7	8	9	10	11	12	13 Weight _____
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 Weight _____
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 Weight _____
28	29	30		Big Cypress National Preserve, Florida		**October 2014** S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Get your flu shot, other vaccines, and health screenings you need.

Screening tests and vaccines you need depend on your age, gender, health status, and family history.

- You know you should get a flu shot every year. Everyone in your family over age 6 months should get one, too. This is the single best way to protect you and those around you from getting the flu.
- Did you know that adults need a Tdap vaccine to protect against whooping cough? Find out about this and other adult vaccines in the "Vaccines" chart at the back of this calendar.
- Ask your health care team which health screenings and other vaccines are right for you.
- Use this calendar to schedule screening tests and vaccines you need this year and to keep a record of them.
- Talk with your health care team about additional screening tests that are right for you.



San Juan VA Medical Center Employees

Make handwashing a habit.

Did you know that proper handwashing may prevent 16% of respiratory infections?

- Wash your hands often.
- Use soap and running water. Lather up really well. Wash the fronts and backs of your hands, your wrists, and under your nails.
- Count to 15. Or sing, "Happy Birthday" two times.
- Rinse well. Dry with a clean towel.
- When you cannot wash your hands, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

My Healthy Living Goals

- Before I prepare and/or eat food, I will wash my hands.
- This month, I will get my flu shot at the VA.
- I will create one goal that I can DO! I will talk to my health care team and set a start date and meet it.

_____

_____

Prevention Tip

You can help protect your children and grandchildren from getting infectious diseases. Follow their doctor's advice for vaccines and health screenings they need.

October 2014

Record Minutes Exercised | Record Blood Pressure | Record Blood Sugar

You can also log these on My HealtheVet at www.myhealth.va.gov.

Cough and sneeze into a tissue. Then throw the tissue away. Or, cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve.

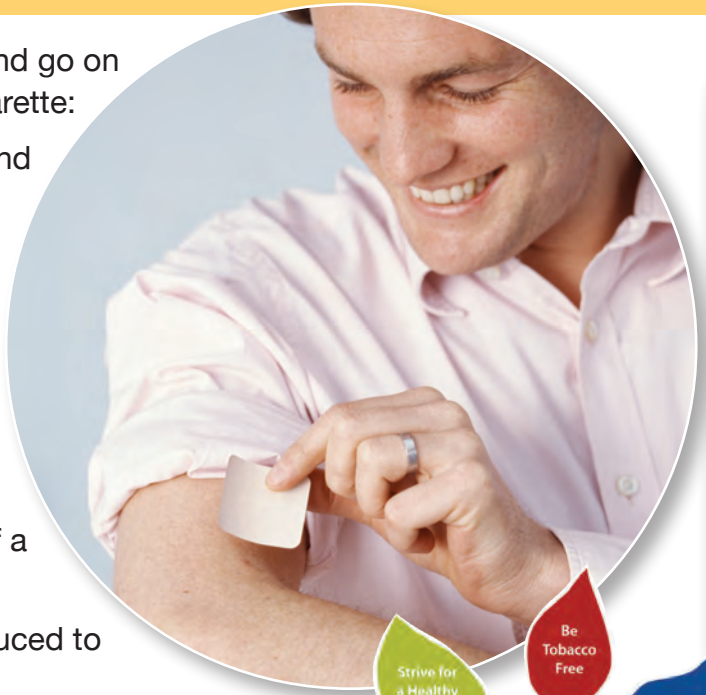
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
September 2014 S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	 El Yunque National Forest, Caribbean		1	2	3	4 Weight _____
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 Weight _____
12	13 Columbus Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	14	15	16	17	18 Weight _____
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 Weight _____
26	27	28	29	30	31	**November 2014** S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

It's never too late to be tobacco free.

Health benefits begin within minutes and go on for years after you smoke that last cigarette:

- Within 20 minutes, your pulse rate and blood pressure decrease.
- In 12 hours, the carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.
- Within 2 weeks to 3 months, your heart attack risk begins to drop and your lung function starts to improve.
- In 1 year, your excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.
- In 5-15 years, your stroke risk is reduced to that of a nonsmoker's.
- In 15 years, your risk of coronary heart disease is back to that of a nonsmoker.

Be a nonsmoker for your health and the health of your family and pets. If you are pregnant, be a nonsmoker for your unborn baby's health.



If you use tobacco, get help to quit.

- Ask your VA health care team about VA treatment options.
  - Nicotine patch, gum, or other medications
  - One-on-one counseling
  - VA smoking cessation clinic
- Get help 24 hours a day and 7 days a week from "Quit Tobacco – Make Everyone Proud" at www.ucanquit2.org/thinkingaboutquitting/veterans/default.aspx.

My Healthy Living Goals

- When I get a strong urge for a cigarette, I will chew nicotine gum like my health care team advised.
- I will create one goal that I can DO! I will talk to my health care team and set a start date and meet it.

_____

_____

Prevention Tip

To prevent an explosion, never allow smoking in the house if someone uses oxygen. Post "NO Smoking – Oxygen in Use" signs at entryways and inside the house.

November 2014

Record Minutes Exercised | Record Blood Pressure | Record Blood Sugar

You can also log these on My HealtheVet at www.myhealth.va.gov.

Health Tip

Know your smoking triggers. Avoid them or plan ahead of time, something else you will do, such as chew sugarless gum.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
October 2014 S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	**December 2014** S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	**Great American Smokeout Day is November 20th!**		 Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, Florida		1 Weight _____
2 Daylight Saving Time Ends (Turn clocks back one hour.)	3	4	5	6	7	8 Weight _____
9	10	11 Veterans Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	12	13	14	15 Weight _____
16	17	18	19	20	21	22 Weight _____
23 30	24	25	26	27 Thanksgiving Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	28	29 Weight _____

Deal with added holiday pressure.

Make a holiday "To Do" list. Rank tasks by importance and value to you and your family.

Write your holiday plans on this calendar. Check it before you say "yes" to another invitation or task. Try not to overdo it.

Be with people you love and feel safe with, even if you feel down. Talk to someone you haven't spoken with in a long time.

Stick to what you can afford for gifts. Keep health in mind when making your list and checking it twice.

- Give a fresh fruit basket instead of candy and cookies.
- Give a pedometer, soccer ball, or other exercise gifts instead of battery-operated cars and toys.

Focus less on presents and more on the presence of people you like to be with. Give the gift of your time to help someone in need.

Get enough sleep and rest.

Plan time for physical activity with family and friends.

Prevention Tip

Go easy on holiday treats.
Redo family favorite recipes to lower fat, sugar, sodium, and calories.

Prevent suicide.

VA's ultimate goal is to eliminate suicides among Veterans. If you or someone you know is at risk of doing self-harm, seek help, without delay:

Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

- Call the Veterans' Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255. Push "1" for Veteran services. Calls are answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Chat online at www.veteranscrisisline.net.
- Text for help at 838255.

My Healthy Living Goals

- I will write down 2 ways I can help someone have a happier holiday and do these before the end of the year.
- I will start 1 new holiday tradition that involves fitness with my family or friends.
- I will create one goal that I can DO! I will talk to my health care team and set a start date and meet it.

_____

_____

December 2014

Record Minutes Exercised | Record Blood Pressure | Record Blood Sugar

You can also log these on My HealtheVet at www.myhealth.va.gov.

Focus on others to help you get outside yourself and fight the "holiday blues." For VA volunteer opportunities, go to www.volunteer.va.gov.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
November 2014 S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	1	2	3	4	5	6 Weight _____
7	8	9	10	11	12	13 Weight _____
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 Weight _____
21	22	23	24	25 Christmas Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	26	27 Weight _____
28	29	30	31	**January 2015** S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	 Caneel Bay, US Virgin Islands National Park	

January 2015

Record Minutes exercised — **Record** Blood pressure — **Record** Blood sugar
and/or log these on My HealtheVet at www.myhealth.va.gov.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December 2014 S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	**February 2015** S M T W Th F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28			1 New Year's Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	2	3 Weight ____
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Weight ____
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 Weight ____
18	19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	20	21	22	23	24 Weight ____
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 Weight ____

My Health Choices

Circle your choice below:

Be Involved in Your Health Care

Be Physically Active

Eat Wisely

Strive for a Healthy Weight

Get recommended screenings and immunizations

Limit Alcohol

Be Tobacco Free

Manage Stress

Be Safe

Your Choice

_____

_____

- My goal for the next week: (Example: I will take a 15 minute walk, at least 3 times this week, after I get home from work.)

- Things that might get in my way: (Examples: bad weather, pain, work overtime.)

- What I can do to overcome these things: (Examples: walk indoors or at an inside mall, listen to soothing music while I walk.)

- I believe that I can reach my goal: (Circle the number that matches how confident you feel.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not At All Sure — Somewhat Sure — Very Sure

Speak Up!

Henry J. Billings, Vietnam Veteran & Patient with Dr. Andria Klioze and nurse Jennifer Traverso at the Daytona Beach VA Outpatient Clinic.

Take an active role in your care.

Speak up when you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of your care.

Partake in decisions made about your care. When a test, surgery, or medication is proposed, ask why you need it and about the pros and cons involved.

Express your opinions, beliefs, and values.

Ask questions about anything you do not understand. Ask for things to be explained in terms you know.

Know about your health conditions and the medications you take. Get trusted information from the Veterans Health library at www.veteranshealthlibrary.org.

Understand your role in your care and your responsibility as a patient. Involve a trusted family member or friend as needed.

Prevent medical errors.

- Take your medications as prescribed.
- Tell all of your health care providers about any allergies you have and problems you have had with medications.
- If you are having surgery, make sure that you, your health care team, and your surgeon all agree and are clear on what will be done.

Size Does Matter

Examples of One Standard Drink

12 ounces beer

5 ounces wine

1½ ounces hard liquor

Control Portions to Control Calories

Supersizing portions supersizes your waistline! Opt for smaller servings.

Choose this:

1.5 ounce muffin
210 calories

Over this:

4 ounce muffin
500 calories

Choose this:

4 ounce hamburger and salad | 440 calories

Over this:

Large double cheeseburger and French fries | 1130 calories

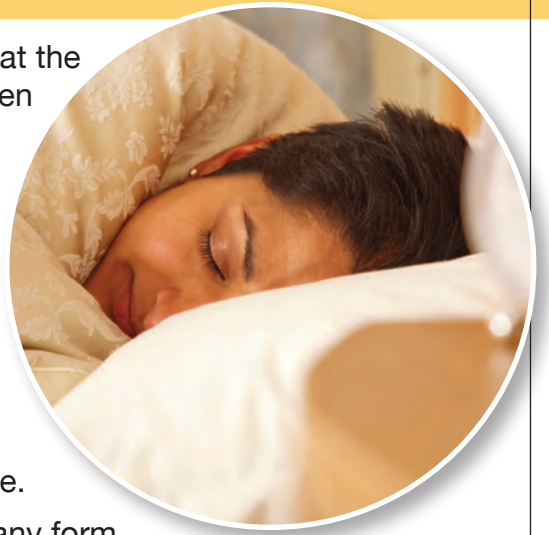
Better yet, Choose this:

3 ounce veggie burger and carrot sticks | 235 calories

Over this:

4 ounce hamburger | 420 calories
But still enjoy the salad!

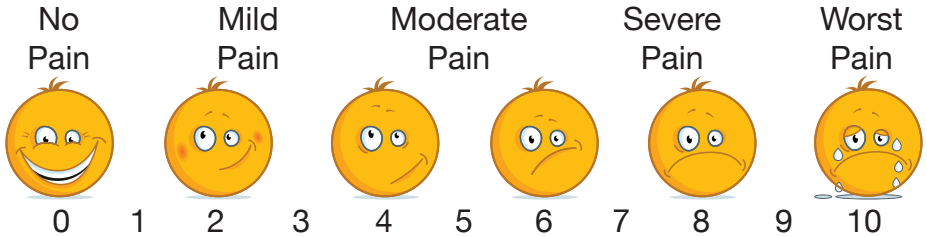
Develop Healthy Sleep Habits.



- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- Avoid naps and caffeine after 3 p.m.
- Limit caffeine to 300 milligrams per day (amount in 2 cups of coffee).
- Exercise daily, but not within 2 hours of bedtime.
- Do not have nicotine in any form, unless you are using a nicotine patch or gum in a quit tobacco plan.
- Don't eat large meals within 2 hours of bedtime.
- Dim the lights an hour before you go to bed.
- Unwind with a good book or soothing music.
- Take a warm bath or shower about a half hour before bedtime.
- Pass on an alcoholic drink. It may help you doze off, but it will prevent you from getting deep sleep.
- Minimize noise, light, and excessive hot or cold temperatures in your bedroom.
- Follow a bedtime routine. Lock doors and windows. Say goodnight or check on loved ones. Brush your teeth, etc.
- If you do not fall asleep within 30 minutes, get out of bed. Do something relaxing. After 20 minutes, go back to bed until you fall asleep.

Manage Your Pain.

Discuss your pain with your health care team. State where you feel pain and how much it hurts. Use these numbers and faces to rate your pain:



- Keep a pain journal to identify your pain triggers. Include when the pain occurs and what makes it better or worse. Write down what you did to treat the pain and other symptoms that occurred with it.
- Discuss what your pain keeps you from doing.

Work with your health care team to manage your pain.

- Take prescribed and over-the-counter medications, as advised. Follow a healthy lifestyle, too.
- Get plenty of rest and eat a healthy diet.
- Walk 2 or 3 times a week. A recent study showed that walking this often is very effective in decreasing lower back pain.
- Reduce stress in your life. Chronic pain is intensified if you feel stressed. Listen to soothing, calm music, such as relaxation tapes. Create calming, peaceful images in your mind.
- Don't smoke. Smoking reduces circulation and can worsen chronic pain.
- Discuss the use of physical therapy, recreation therapy, biofeedback, and cognitive training to help you manage your pain.

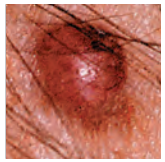
Let your health care team know about problems you have with medications and other treatment measures.

Warning Signs - Take Action!

SKIN CANCER

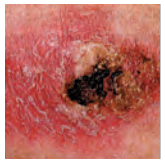
Let your health care team know if you have any of these signs. **Basal cell** and **squamous cell** cancers seldom spread to other parts of the body. Here's what to look for:

Small, smooth, shiny, pale or waxy lump



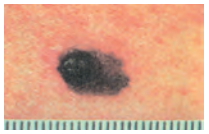
Firm red lump

Lump that bleeds or develops a crust

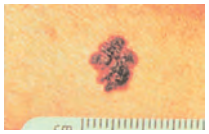


A flat, red spot that is rough, dry or scaly and may become itchy or tender

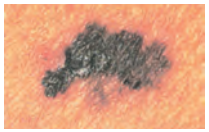
Melanoma can spread to other parts of the body and be fatal if not treated early. Often, the first sign is a change in the size, shape, or color of an existing mole. It also may appear as a new, abnormal, or "ugly looking" mole. Learn the ABCD and E's that can help you detect it early.



Asymmetry – The shape of one half does not match the other.



Border – The edges are ragged, notched, or blurred.



Color – The color is uneven. Shades of black, brown, or tan and areas of gray, red, or blue may be seen.

Diameter – The size changes and is often bigger than a pencil eraser.

Evolving lesion – Surface bleeding or a change in the size, shape, shades of color or symptoms occurs.

HEART ATTACK

- Pressure, fullness, squeezing, or pain anywhere in the chest. This lasts more than a few minutes or goes away and comes back.
- Discomfort or pain in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach
- Shortness of breath. This can come with or before chest symptoms.
- Breaking out in a cold sweat, lightheadedness or nausea

Women are more likely than men to have fatigue, shortness of breath without chest pain, or lower chest pain.

For any of the signs listed above:

- **Don't delay. Call 9-1-1 right away!**
- Chew one 325 mg. aspirin (or 4 baby aspirin), unless you are allergic to aspirin.
- Tell EMS that you are having chest pain.

STROKE

Call 9-1-1 right away if you have any of these signs:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination

You can spot a stroke by asking 3 simple questions. Remember "S-T-R.," the first 3 letters of stroke:

S – Ask the person to **SMILE**. Does 1 side of the face droop or is it numb?

T – Ask the person to **TALK** or repeat a simple sentence, such as "The grass is green." Are the words slurred or hard to understand? Can the person not speak at all?

R – Ask the person to **RAISE** both arms together. Does one arm drift downward or is it (or one leg) numb or weak?

Health Screenings

General guidelines are listed below. Discuss health screenings you need with your health care team.

Screening Test or Exam	How Often	Date Given
Alcohol, depression, tobacco	Yearly	_____
Blood Pressure	Every visit	_____
Body Mass Index (BMI)	Yearly	_____
Blood Cholesterol:	As advised by health care team	_____
Total		_____
LDL (bad) - cholesterol		_____
HDL (good) - cholesterol		_____
Triglycerides		_____
Colorectal Cancer Screening	Ages 50-75	_____
Follow your health care team's advice for screening method and how often to be screened.		
Dental Care	1-2 times a year as advised	_____
Diabetes Screening	Yearly	_____
Hepatitis C Risk, HIV Risk, PTSD, Military Sexual Trauma	Yearly	_____
Osteoporosis	Start at age 65 (sooner if at risk)	_____
For Women		
Cervical Cancer	Ask your health care team about recommendations for cervical cancer screening.	_____
Chlamydia	Ages 24 and younger. Ages 25+ if at high risk.	_____
Breast Cancer (Mammogram)	Every 2 years ages 50-74. Ages 40-49 and after age 74, discuss this with your health care team.	_____
For Men		
Prostate Cancer	Ask your health care team for recommendations for prostate cancer screening.	_____
Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm	One-time screening between ages 65-75 if ever smoked	_____
Syphilis	Ask your health care team if you should be screened	_____
For Persons with Diabetes		
A1C Hemoglobin	Every 3-6 months	_____
Blood Cholesterol	Yearly	_____
Foot Exam	Yearly	_____
Dilated Retinal Eye Exam	Yearly	_____
Urine Test for Kidney Function	Yearly	_____

Find out more about health screenings from: www.healthfinder.gov/widgets

Vaccines for Adults	How Often	Date Last Given
Flu	Yearly	_____
Tetanus / Diphtheria / Pertussis (Whooping cough)	Tdap (1 dose) if not had in the past. Td booster every 10 years.	_____
Varicella (Chicken pox)	Discuss, with health care team, if you have not had chicken pox or had only one dose of this vaccine	_____
Hepatitis A	Discuss with your health care team	_____
Hepatitis B	3 doses, if advised	_____
Human Papillomavirus (HPV)	3 doses ages 9-26	_____
Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)	1 or 2 doses if you were born in 1957 or later	_____
Meningococcal	Discuss with your health care team	_____
Pneumonia	Once at age 65+; sooner if you smoke or if advised by your health care team	_____
Zoster (Shingles)	Once at age 60 or older	_____

If traveling out of the country, discuss needed vaccines with your health care team prior to travel.

Discuss all vaccines you need with your health care team. Find out about vaccines for adults and children from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/vaccines and 1-800-232-4636.

Know Your Numbers	Target Goals	My Goals	Keep Records
Heart rate	_____	_____	_____
Blood pressure (BP) (mm Hg)	< 120/80	_____	_____
If have high BP	< 140/90	_____	_____
If African American	< 130/80	_____	_____
If have diabetes	< 130/80	_____	_____
If have kidney disease	< 130/80	_____	_____
Blood cholesterol (mg/dL)			
Total	< 200	_____	_____
LDL-cholesterol	< 130	_____	_____
LDL-If you have diabetes	< 100	_____	_____
HDL-cholesterol	≥ 40 Men	_____	_____
	≥ 50 Women	_____	_____
Triglycerides	< 150	_____	_____
Body Mass Index (BMI)	18.5-24.9	_____	_____
Weight	_____	_____	_____
Blood sugar	_____	_____	_____
Hemoglobin A1C	_____	_____	_____

VA Resources	Phone Number	Web Site
Veteran Benefits	1-800-827-1000	www.va.gov www.ebenefits.va.gov
Health Eligibility & Enrollment	1-877-222-8387	www.va.gov/health/default.asp
VA Facility Locator	1-877-222-8387	www.myhealth.va.gov
Agent Orange Helpline	1-800-749-8387	www.va.gov/agentorange
Burial & Memorials	1-800-827-1000	www.cem.va.gov
Center for Minority Veterans	1-202-461-6191	www.va.gov/centerforminorityveterans
Devices for the Deaf (TDD)	1-800-829-4833	
Education Benefits & Services	1-888-442-4551	www.gibill.va.gov
Gulf War Helpline	1-800-749-8387	www.va.gov/gulfwar
Homeless Veterans	1-877-424-3838	www.va.gov/HOMELESS/index.asp
Home Loans	1-888-244-6711	www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans
Life Insurance	1-800-669-8477	www.insurance.va.gov
Mental Health	Call Your VA	www.mentalhealth.va.gov
MOVE!® Program	Call Your VA	www.move.va.gov
MyHealth*e*Vet	1-877-327-0022	www.myhealth.va.gov
National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	1-802-296-6300	www.ptsd.va.gov
Returning OEF/OIF/OND Service Members	1-866-606-8216	www.oefoif.va.gov
Survivor Benefits	1-800-827-1000	www.vba.va.gov/survivors
VA Caregiver Support	1-855-260-3274	www.caregiver.va.gov
VA National Center for Health Promotion & Disease Prevention		www.prevention.va.gov
VA National Center for Patient Safety		www.patientsafety.gov
Veterans Crisis Line	1-800-273-8255 Press "1"	www.veteranscrisisline.net
Women Veterans Health Care	1-855-829-6636	www.womenshealth.va.gov

Health Contacts & Phone Numbers

Emergency Contact Numbers

Emergency Medical Service: 911 or _____

Ambulance Service: _____

Fire: _____

Police: _____

Poison Control Center: 1-800-222-1222

Health Care Team Members & Other Health Care Providers

My Primary Care Doctor: _____

My Nurse Care Manager: _____

My Clinical Associate: _____

My Care Team Clerk: _____

My VA Facility: _____

Name: _____

Phone #: _____

Name: _____

Phone #: _____

My Pharmacist: _____

Pharmacy Refill: _____

VA Tele-Nurse: _____

Make an Appointment Phone #: _____

Cancel an Appointment Phone #: _____

Patient Representative (Advocate): _____

Transportation Service: _____

My Health*e*Vet Help #: 1-877-327-0022

My Health Insurance Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Policy #: _____

VA Sunshine Healthcare Network

www.visn8.va.gov ■ at all Medical Centers

Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
10000 Bay Pines Blvd.
Bay Pines, FL 33744
727-398-6661 * 888-820-0230

James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital
13000 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33612
813-972-2000 * 888-716-7787

Miami VA Healthcare System
1201 NW 16th Street
Miami, FL 33215
305-575-7000 * 888-276-1785

North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System

Lake City VA Medical Center
619 South Marion Avenue
Lake City, FL 32025
386-755-3016 * 800-308-8387

Malcom Randall VA Medical Center
1601 SW Archer Road
Gainesville, FL 32608
352-376-1611 * 800-324-8387

Orlando VA Medical Center
5201 Raymond Street
Orlando, FL 32803
407-629-1599 * 800-922-7521

VA Caribbean Healthcare System
10 Casia Street
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00921
787-641-7582 * 800-449-8729

West Palm Beach VA Medical Center
7305 N. Military Trail
West Palm Beach, FL 33410
561-422-8262 * 800-972-8262