



VISN 8
VA Sunshine Healthcare Network

Veterans HEALTH MATTERS

WELLNESS MAGAZINE FOR VETERANS IN FLORIDA, SOUTH GEORGIA & THE CARIBBEAN

INSIDE: SHINGLES more than just a bad RASH



Pictured: RN Care Manager Jenice Francis administers the shingles vaccine to U.S. Army Veteran Ivan Velazquez at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital in Tampa, Fla. One in 3 people will get Shingles in their lifetime. Read the story on pages 4-5.

TO OUR READERS

Flu season is here once again. On this page, read why you need this year's flu vaccine and where to get it.



Are you tired of being advised to limit things in your diet? The article on page 3 focuses on getting more of a nutrient—dietary fiber. Find out how much fiber you need each day and a variety of foods—in addition to whole wheat bread—that provide it.

If you want to help prevent or lower your risk for getting shingles and the extreme pain that can come with it, read the story on pages 4-5. Follow the advice of Dr. John Toney, a Tampa VA physician and a national expert on shingles.

On page 6, learn how you can take part in improving health care for Veterans. Partner with the VA's "Million Veteran Program" to find out how genes affect health.

Use your brain power to do the Shingles Word Search puzzle on page 7, and get a delicious and excellent source of dietary fiber from the easy-to-make Veggie Wrap recipe.

Wishing you and your loved ones an enjoyable and flu-free fall.

Paul Bockelman

Paul Bockelman, FACHE
Acting VISN 8 Network Director

Get Your (No Cost) Flu Shot

Vaccination is the surest way to protect against getting the flu.

The flu can become more than just a feverish, achy condition that lasts a few days. Hundreds of thousands of people in the U.S. are hospitalized every year with complications from influenza. Be sure to get your flu shot every year to protect yourself and help keep the flu from spreading to others.

Although the flu vaccine contains egg protein, research has shown people with egg allergies who can eat softly cooked eggs without a reaction can safely receive a flu shot. An egg-free flu shot is now available for those with severe egg allergies. Check with your VA health care team.

Veterans enrolled in VA health care and VA staff may get a no cost flu shot at their nearest VA health care facility. If you are not enrolled in VA health care, check your eligibility online at www.va.gov/healthbenefits.

Non-VA Providers and

Pharmacies: Many local retail pharmacies offer flu shots that may be covered by private insurance or programs such as Medicare. If you don't have insurance, there will usually be a charge.

To ensure your immunizations are properly documented in your VA health care record, please be sure to inform your VA health care team if you receive your flu shot outside the VA. You can tell a member of your VA health care team the next time you are at your clinic or you can send a secure

message to your care team through MyHealtheVet. Outside normal business hours, you can also call the VISN 8 Telcare line at 877-741-3400, Monday through Friday, from 4 p.m. to 8 a.m., and on weekends and holidays. They will collect the information and will ensure your patient record is documented.

Who should get a flu shot?

All people age six months and older who want to reduce their risk of getting sick should get a flu shot. Those more at risk of illness and complications from the flu include:

- People with chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease
- People older than age 50
- Pregnant women and women trying to become pregnant
- Caregivers of infants or a family member with health problems
- Health care workers

Is the Flu vaccine effective for all flu and cold viruses?

The seasonal influenza vaccine is designed to protect against the influenza viruses most likely to cause illness during the upcoming flu season. The 2015–2016 vaccine will continue to protect against three viruses, two of which are different from the vaccine available last flu season. A flu shot cannot cause the flu and at the same time it will NOT protect against infection and illness caused by other viruses, including colds that can also cause influenza-like symptoms.

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How to Get More FIBER IN YOUR DIET



First and foremost, fiber is found in plant foods—fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds. Animal foods, such as meat and dairy do not have fiber.

WHERE'S THE FIBER?

Most people think of whole-wheat bread as a good source of fiber. One slice has about 2 grams of fiber compared to white, refined bread which has only 0.8 g. But fiber does not exist in wheat bread alone. This is especially helpful to know if you need to follow a gluten-free diet. Plenty of other colorful and tasty foods and even spices and herbs can supply your daily fiber needs.

Go nuts for fiber

Per one-quarter cup each, whole almonds have 4.4 g of fiber; hazelnuts (2.5 g), chopped pecans (2.1 g) and chopped walnuts (1.9 g). Enjoy nuts as snacks and add them to salads and plain non-fat yogurt.



Pick berries and other fruits

Thanks to their seeds, one cup of raspberries has 8.0 g; 7.7 g for blackberries. One medium pear with skin has 5.5 g, one-quarter cup Florida pureed avocado (3.2 g) and one medium apple with skin (3 g). Opt for fruit with edible peels over fruit juice.



Plan to include bran

Many whole-grain cereals and pastas provide significant amounts of fiber. One-half cup of a popular brand of fiber cereal has 14.0 g. Per one cup serving each; raisin bran has 6.7 g, cooked whole wheat pasta (6.3 g), pearled barley (6 g), oatmeal (4 g) and brown rice (1.7 g). Per tablespoon, wheat and rice bran have 1.6 g of fiber; 0.9 g for oat bran. Add these to your breakfast cereal and plain non-fat yogurt.



Value your vegetables

For one cup each, a mashed sweet potato has 8.2 g, cooked collards (7.6 g) and baked butternut squash (6.6 g). Eat a small baked potato with skin for 3.3 g and one-half cup of sundried tomatoes for 3.3 g. Add vegetables to soups and sauces to increase fiber, flavor and nutrients.



Spice up your foods with fiber

Cinnamon has the most fiber at 1.2 g per teaspoon, but you also get some fiber from dried oregano, rosemary, basil and sage.

Be keen on beans

A variety of beans and peas are excellent sources of fiber. Per cooked one-half cup serving, navy beans have 9.5 g, black beans (8.3 g), split peas (8.2 g), lentils (7.8 g), kidney beans (6.8g), lima beans (5.4 g) and pink beans (4.5 g). Eat beans as a main or side dish, in soups, chilies and stews and add them to salads.



Choose seeds for some of your fiber needs

Good sources are sunflower seeds at 3.9 g per one-quarter cup, 2.8 g from one tablespoon of flaxseeds and 1.3 g per tablespoon of sesame seeds.

Daily Fiber Needs

Women 21-25 g

Men 30-38 g

In the U.S., most men and women get 10-15 g daily.

Read the Nutrition Facts on food labels for dietary fiber content. Choose foods that help you get your daily fiber needs.

Note: Add fiber slowly and drink at least 6 glasses of water a day. Otherwise you can develop bloating, cramping and gas. Also, ask your health care team if you could benefit from taking a fiber supplement.

Source for grams of dietary fiber: USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference Release 27, 2014

Shingles: a 'Pain in the Rash'

By Susan Wentzell

Burning, aching, stabbing, gnawing.

Even the feel of a bedsheet or a light breeze can be horrible, excruciating, unbearable.

That's how some people describe the pain of the most severe case of shingles, a rash gone psycho.



Dr. John Toney, a VA physician, is a national expert on shingles. He was a principal investigator and co-author of the landmark 2004 Shingles Prevention Study, the largest study ever to investigate the disease. From that study came the first shingles vaccine.

What Is Shingles?

Shingles—herpes zoster—is a painful skin rash caused by the varicella-zoster virus. It's the same virus (germ) that causes chickenpox. After you have chickenpox, the virus remains in your body, lying asleep in your nerve cells. However, it can activate again, traveling up the nerves and causing painful blisters on your skin. This often happens decades later, as you age or when your immune system weakens.



Typical of shingles is a "band-like" rash with small blisters that appears on one side of the body. The shingles rash shown here is about 3 to 4 days old.

Symptoms

The first signal of shingles is usually pain, burning, tingling or itching on one part of your body or face. You might also feel like you have the flu, with chills and fever. In a few days, a red rash with small blisters appears, usually on only one side of the body, spreading along the nerve path that held the virus. Blisters are most common on the back, chest or stomach area. However, a rash can also form around an eye, on one side of the neck, face or even in the mouth.

"The lifetime risk of developing shingles is about 30%: 1 in 3 people will get it."

BY AGE 85, UP TO 50% will have developed one or more episodes."

- Dr. John Toney

RISK FACTORS

Anyone who's had chickenpox—or who has been exposed to someone (like a child) who has chickenpox—can develop shingles. And the risk increases with age. About half of all shingles cases occur in people older than 60.

Here are the risk factors:

- Being age 60 or older
- Having a disease or illness that weakens your immune system, like HIV/AIDS
- Having cancer, especially Hodgkin's disease or lymphoma
- Taking medications that suppress your immune system, including corticosteroids

Treatment

For most people, the rash comes and goes within two to four weeks, according to Dr. John Toney, Director of Healthcare Epidemiology, Antimicrobial Stewardship, and Infectious Disease Clinical Research Programs at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital and Clinics in Tampa, Fla., and Professor of Medicine in the Division of Infectious Disease and International Medicine at the University of South Florida Morsani College of Medicine, also in Tampa.

At-home shingles treatments may include applying cool compresses to the skin or soaking in a cool bath. You can also use calamine lotion to calm itchy skin and take over-the-counter pain relievers.

For a suspect rash, however, the best course of action is to be seen by a health care professional right away to see if the rash is shingles. "If you catch it early and are seen and treated within 72 hours of the rash first appearing—you'll have the best outcome. Your doctor will likely put you on antiviral medication," he said.

Dr. Toney explained that antiviral medication shortens the timeframe of the rash, reduces pain during the illness's active stage, and reduces the chance of getting complications of shingles, known as postherpetic neuralgia or PHN.

Dr. Toney, 61, knows all about shingles—in fact, he's a national expert on the subject. He was a principal investigator and co-author of the landmark 2004 Shingles Prevention Study, the largest study ever to investigate the disease.

The Zostavax Vaccine: Reducing the Pain of Shingles

More than 38,500 older adults were enrolled in the study—1,200 Veterans and others at the Tampa VA Hospital alone. The data that resulted introduced the first ever shingles vaccine—Zostavax—which was approved in 2006 by the Food and Drug Administration for people older than 60.

During the study, Zostavax was shown to reduce the risk of getting shingles by about half.

Dr. Toney and the other researchers also found that administering the vaccine led to a 61 percent reduction in the amount of shingles pain and a 66 percent reduced risk of patients getting long-term pain, three months after the disease first appeared.



The Real Danger: Postherpetic Neuralgia (PHN)

The rash and the pain of shingles aren't the real problem, according to Dr. Toney, who said those will go away. The real danger he explained, is PHN, the serious, persistent nerve condition that continues long after the shingles blisters have healed. It can last weeks, months, even years after the virus is no longer active.

Complications can include vision loss, neurological problems, skin infections, permanent scarring and a debilitating type of pain that is beyond description.

Most people will have one episode of shingles. Another 20 percent will get it again and it's rare to have it a third time, according to Dr. Toney. "But one in every five people who get shingles will get the most painful kind—and you have no way of knowing who will get it," he said.

Talk to Your Doctor

NOT EVERY RASH IS SHINGLES,

but if yours is, it's important to be seen by a health care professional as quickly as possible. And if you've had chickenpox and are age 60 or older, get vaccinated, Dr. Toney advised.

DR. TONEY CAUTIONED THAT NOT EVERYONE IS A CANDIDATE FOR THE SHINGLES VACCINE.

"If you're on medications that suppress your immune system, you should wait. And if you have HIV disease or other conditions that affect your immune system, you shouldn't get it," he said. He added that a discussion with your primary care provider is the best course of action.



Recruiting Continues for MILLION VETERAN PROGRAM

The Veterans Affairs (VA) Research and Development program has launched the Million Veteran Program (MVP), an important partnership between VA and Veterans to learn more about how genes affect health, in order to improve health care for Veterans.

To do this, MVP is establishing one of the largest databases of genetic, military exposure, lifestyle, and health information. Research findings based on MVP may lead to new ways of preventing and treating illnesses in Veterans.

Such findings may help answer questions like “Why does a treatment work well for some Veterans but not for others?”; “Why are some Veterans at a greater risk for developing an illness?” and “How can we prevent certain illnesses in the first place?” With the expected enrollment of one million Veterans over the next five to seven years, MVP aims to be one of the largest databases of its kind in the United States.

How does this important research help Veterans?

Veterans—and in fact all Americans—stand to benefit greatly as researchers learn more about the effects of genes on health. Screening, diagnosis, and treatment for some illnesses—such as some forms of cancer—have already been improved through knowledge about the effects of certain genes. MVP will lead to new knowledge about which genes put people at risk for certain diseases, and which ones affect how people respond to treatment. This knowledge may eventually lead to better treatments and preventive measures for many diseases, including common illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

What does participation involve?

The goal of MVP is to partner with Veterans already receiving services in the VA Sunshine Health Care System who volunteer to share their health information as well as genetic material. Veterans are being recruited to participate in MVP in the following service areas: Malcom

Randall VA Medical Center (VAMC) in Gainesville, Fla., James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital in Tampa, Fla., Orlando VAMC in Orlando, Fla., the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System in St. Petersburg, Fla., and the Miami VA Healthcare System in Miami, Fla.

To be actively involved in this program, you need to:

- Fill out surveys about health and health-related behaviors
- Provide a blood sample (which contains DNA and other substances) that will be stored for future genomic analyses
- Allow secure access to VA and VA-linked medical and health information, including past and future health records
- Agree to future contact

To learn more about the program including risks involved, data handling and storage, confidentiality, security, and other issues, visit www.research.va.gov/MVP/veterans.cfm

SHINGLES

Learn about Shingles on pages 4-5.

A S E L G N I H S C Z R
 O G S C N T A K R I E V
 S N E H I A I X A T N A
 R I D I H N V A S E I N
 E N I C C A V O H P M T
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 S U H E I S I I C E L V
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 L R A P E D U C E T C R
 B E R O E V R E N S S A
 Y E O X U R R E N O I L
 H X A V A T S O Z P S K

Find these words associated with shingles.

ANTIVIRAL	ITCHING	RASH ACHE
BLISTERS	NERVE	SHINGLES
BURNING	ONE	SIDE
CALAMINE	PAIN	SKIN
CHICKENPOX	POSTHERPETIC	VACCINE
HERPES ZOSTER	RASH	ZOSTAVAX

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**GET
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High Fiber Recipe! Veggie Wrap

Ingredients

- 4 (8-inch) whole-wheat tortillas
- 1 medium red bell pepper, seeded and sliced
- 1 medium yellow pepper, seeded and sliced
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 tsp canola oil
- 1 can (15½ oz) low-sodium black beans, drained and rinsed
- ½ avocado, peeled and diced
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 tsp chili powder (optional)
- ½ cup fat-free sour cream
- Juice from 1 lime
- 8 Tbsp fresh salsa



Directions

1. In a nonstick pan, sauté the peppers and onion in the canola oil for 5 minutes over medium heat. Add beans. Stir well. Reduce heat to low. Simmer for about 5 minutes, then set aside.
2. In a small bowl, combine the avocado, lime juice, cilantro, and chili powder. Reserve half of the mixture for topping.
3. Add sour cream to beans. Mix well.
4. Warm tortillas in the microwave or in a pan on the stovetop.
5. Fill a warmed tortilla with ¼ bean mixture and ¼ avocado mixture. Drizzle 2 tablespoons of salsa over the bean and avocado mixture. Fold ends of the tortilla over. Roll up to make wraps.
6. Top the veggie wraps with remaining avocado mixture. Follow this process for the three other wraps.

Nutritional Information: Serves 4. Per serving; 346 calories; 6 g total fat; 1 g saturated fat; 278 mg sodium; 15 g protein; 14 g fiber; 61 g carbohydrate (14 g of this is from fiber)

Source: Modified from *Delicious Heart Healthy Latino Recipes*, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute



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2016 Wellness Calendar Coming Soon

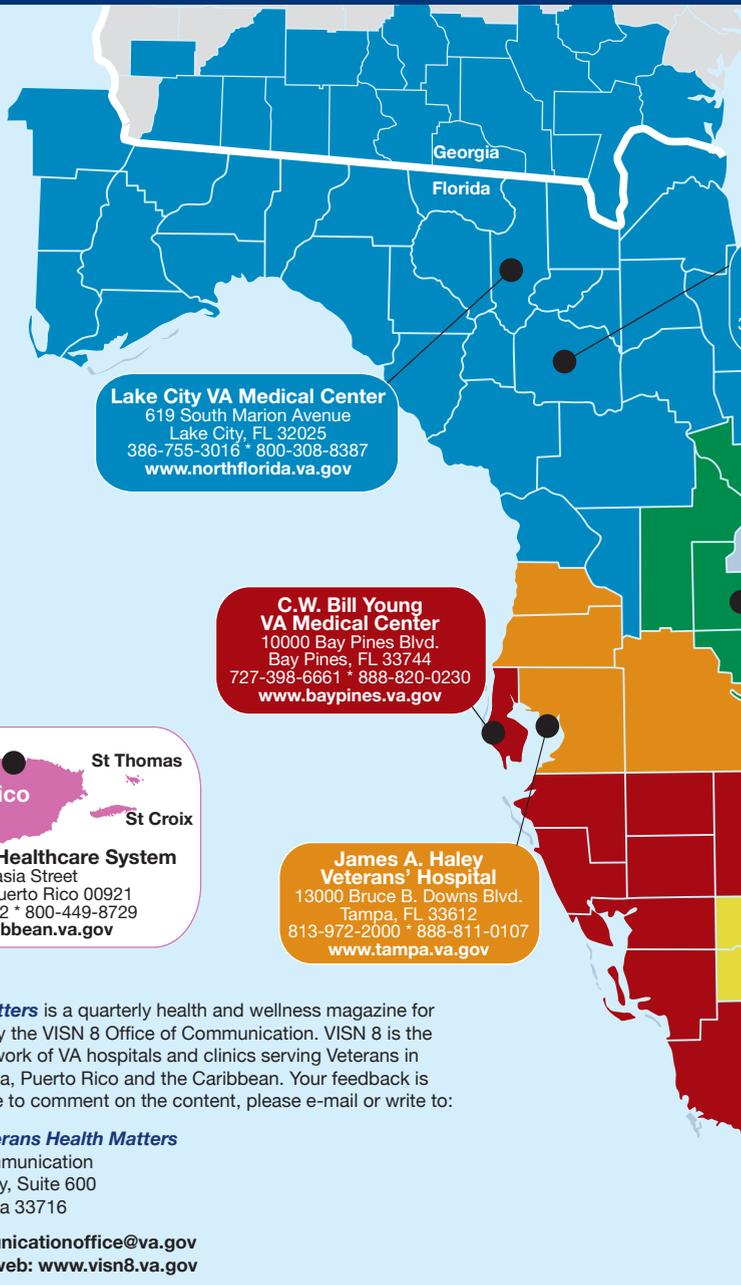
Veterans: The 2016 Health & Wellness Calendar for Veterans will soon be available at VA hospitals and clinics in the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network. Be watching for this award-winning calendar and when available, be sure to take one home.

VA Sunshine Healthcare Network

www.visn8.va.gov



at all
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www.va.gov/health/FindCare.asp

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