



# HEALTHY LIVING!

*Veterans & Their Families*

**2020 CALENDAR**



# THANK YOU, VETERANS

**VA**  **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**  
Veterans Health Administration  
VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8)





# Whole Health for Life

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VA invites you to think about your health in a BIG way:

- What is important to me?
- What brings me joy?
- How do I want to live my life?

Being aware of the reasons why your health is important helps you make the best decisions about it. Yes, these may be challenging questions to answer. That is why your VA health care team has many resources and programs to help you identify your priorities.

The Personal Health Inventory (PHI) ([www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/explore/about-whole-health.asp](http://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/explore/about-whole-health.asp))

and Personal Health Plan (PHP) ([www.prevention.va.gov](http://www.prevention.va.gov)) can help you explore and identify what is most important to you, such as:

- Combat loneliness by increasing social connections in your community.
- Explore ways to manage your blood pressure other than by taking medication.

You can contact a Whole Health Coach (see article toward the end of the calendar) or your health care team to help you with your choices or learn about the PHI and PHP tools.

## Your Journey

VA is transforming to a Whole Health approach in delivering health care to Veterans. This approach equips and empowers you to take charge of your health and live life to the fullest. The nine Healthy Living Messages, such as eating wisely, staying safe, and managing stress are aligned with Whole Health.



### Get Involved in Your Health Care

Talk to your health care team to get on the journey with meeting your health needs and your health choices. You deserve the best!

Using the Whole Health approach and the Healthy Living Messages are the right partners in your journey to a healthier you.

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### My Goal and My Reason:

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- I will ask my health care team to help me identify what is important in my life at my next VA appointment.
- This month, I will review VA's Healthy Living Messages at [www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy\\_Living/index.asp](http://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/index.asp) to help me set goals.

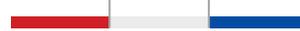
*I WILL make one goal I can DO! I will talk to my health care team about it, set a date, and meet it.*

#### MY GOAL:

What is driving my goal?  
Why do I want to make this change?

# January 2020

**RECORD** minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)



**Tip:** Place an image or photo on your fridge as a reminder of why you want to reach your goal.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>DECEMBER 2019</b> 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			New Year's Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	1	2	3
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## Declutter to De-stress

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When you have too many items in one space, it can be overwhelming. Having less clutter in your home can help relieve stress by creating a calmer living environment and a calmer mind.

If you are not sure where to start, you can begin the decluttering process with these three steps:

**1. Start small** – Focus on one space, like a kitchen “junk drawer,” bookcase, or closet. By completing one decluttering task at a time, you will feel a sense of accomplishment.

**2. Does it “fit”?** – Ask yourself if each item reflects your current values and lifestyle. The goal is to keep items that truly connect to your life’s purpose, your loved ones, and things that add joy to your life.

**3. Re-purpose** – Donate items you no longer need or want to your favorite charity, such as Vietnam Veterans of America.

While decluttering your home, it is also a good time to check and see what you can do to make it safer for you and your loved ones.

## Fewer Fall Risks

Lower your risk for falling in your home with these easy fixes:

- **Stairs** – Keep steps clutter-free and install lights at the top and bottom of the steps.
- **Bathroom** – Use non-slip mats and install grab rails by the toilet and tub.

- **Front door area** - Make sure it is well lit so you can see where you are stepping. Install grab bars on one side of your door for better balance while putting the key in the lock, especially if you are carrying bags or other items.



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### **My Goal and My Reason:**

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- I will place non-skid liners under scatter rugs in my home within the next month.
- I will check all smoke detectors to ensure they are in good working order this week.

*I WILL make one goal I can DO! I will talk to my health care team about it, set a date, and meet it.*

#### **MY GOAL:**

**What is driving my goal?  
Why do I want to make this change?**

# February 2020

**RECORD** minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

**Tip:** There are plenty of decluttering resources at your local library, online, and apps for your phone.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>JANUARY 2020</b> 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	<b>MARCH 2020</b> 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					<b>WEIGHT</b> <input type="text"/> 1
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## Eating for a Healthy Gut

Having a healthy gastrointestinal tract (gut) may help keep you healthy. Trillions of microorganisms that make their home in your gut can have a lot to do with that. There is growing evidence that these good bacteria help digest food and reduce diarrhea. These bacteria may also destroy many disease-causing microorganisms.

The good news is food can help supply your body with many health-promoting bacteria:

- **Prebiotics** – Plant-based foods that help healthy bacteria grow in your gut. These foods include fruit, vegetables, and whole grains, such as bananas, onions, leeks, asparagus, soybeans, and whole-wheat cereals.

- **Probiotics** – Fermented foods that contain certain bacteria or yeast, such as yogurt with live and active cultures. Other non-dairy foods are sauerkraut, kimchi, kefir, tempeh, and kombucha.
- **Supplements** – Prebiotics and probiotics are available as dietary supplements.

It is always best to discuss your specific needs with your VA provider before taking these substances in pill form rather than getting them from foods.

## Easy Meal Combos

Here are three quick and healthy meals you can prepare at home. Two meals are plant-based, and one features egg and tuna as lean protein choices.



### Start With:

### Add:

Baked sweet potato

Canned vegetarian chili and diced avocado with frozen cooked veggies

Cooked quinoa or brown rice

Reduced-sodium black beans, cooked corn niblets, and chopped raw green pepper, tossed with canola oil and fresh lime juice

Pre-washed salad greens (e.g., spinach, kale)

Chopped hard-boiled egg, canned tuna, tomatoes, and olives, with a low-fat dressing

### My Goal and My Reason:

- I will eat at least one plant-based (non-meat) meal per week.
- The next time I shop for groceries, I will buy ingredients to make one of the featured meal combos.

*I WILL make one goal I can DO! I will talk to my health care team about it, set a date, and meet it.*

### MY GOAL:

What is driving my goal?  
Why do I want to make this change?

# March 2020

**RECORD** minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

**Tip:** For easy and healthy recipes visit VA's Healthy Teaching Kitchen website and YouTube channel: [www.nutrition.va.gov/Healthy\\_Teaching\\_Kitchen.asp](http://www.nutrition.va.gov/Healthy_Teaching_Kitchen.asp)

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**FEBRUARY 2020**

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**APRIL 2020**

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# Mind-Body Healing

Did you know your mind and your body are in constant contact? Current research shows that the mind has the power to positively affect the body.

Mind-body therapies can help with many physical health conditions. These include pain management, sleep problems, and high blood pressure. Mental health conditions may also improve, such as anxiety, depression, and PTSD. Examples of mind-body therapies include:

- **Biofeedback** – Control your heart rate and blood pressure using specific relaxation techniques and exercises.
- **Meditation** - Train your mind to focus on your breathing, an image, a sound, or a word. You do this without paying attention to what is going on around you.
- **Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)** – Notice and replace unhelpful thoughts and feelings with more helpful ones.

Ask your VA health care provider if these or other mind-body therapies can work for you.

# Mind Power to Relax

Mindfulness is a mind-body technique that can help you relax and reduce stress. With practice, you learn to notice what is going on in the present moment. You become more aware of your thoughts and feelings, without judging them.



## Mindfulness Coach



This VA mobile app can help you learn and develop a simple mindfulness

practice at your own pace. It may help you reduce stress, anxiety and depression; improve emotional balance; and increase self-awareness. For more information or to download this app visit [mobile.va.gov/app/mindfulness-coach](https://mobile.va.gov/app/mindfulness-coach).

### My Goal and My Reason:

- At my next VA health appointment, I will ask about using one of these mind-body techniques.
- I will download the mindfulness coach app this week.

*I will make one goal that I can DO! I will talk to my health care team about it, set a start date, and meet it.*

#### MY GOAL:

What is driving my goal?  
Why do I want to make this change?

# April 2020

**RECORD** minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)



**Tip:** If someone in your life has PTSD, suggest that they talk to a mental health provider about psychotherapy.

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## Appointment Tools

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You have many options for tracking and scheduling your VA health care appointments, including these online tools:

- **VA Online Scheduling** – Use as a mobile app or on a web-based device (including through your MyHealthVet premium account). Request, view, and cancel many types of VA appointments; send messages to your health care team; and receive appointment notices.
- **MyHealthVet premium account** – Add online scheduling, view VA appointments, look up past appointments, set reminders for upcoming VA appointments, and add non-VA appointments.

- **VA Video Connect** – Reach your VA health care team using a secure video connection. This convenient appointment feature works as a mobile app or on a web-based device.

Find out if you are eligible for VA health care and how to sign up so you can start using these VA appointment tools.

Visit [www.va.gov/health-care/schedule-view-va-appointments](http://www.va.gov/health-care/schedule-view-va-appointments).

## Online Mental Health Screenings

Sometimes, you may be worried about something but you are not sure if you should seek medical advice. That's when taking a brief self-assessment might help you decide, especially if it is a sensitive topic. VA offers online screening tools that are anonymous and provide instant and confidential feedback on the following mental health issues:

- Alcohol use
- Depression
- PTSD



The results of your screening will help you decide if you should seek further evaluation from your VA health care provider. Learn more about these screening tools at [www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/home](http://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/home).

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### My Goal and My Reason:

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- I will complete the alcohol-use online screening before my next VA appointment.
- I will try to schedule my next VA provider appointment using VA online scheduling.

*I will make one goal I can DO! I will talk to my health care team about it, set a date, and meet it.*

#### MY GOAL:

What is driving my goal?  
Why do I want to make this change?

# May 2020

**RECORD** minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

**Tip:** Seeking solutions about a possible mental health issue are signs of strength and taking control of your life.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
<b>APRIL 2020</b> 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	<b>JUNE 2020</b> 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					<b>WEIGHT</b> 1 <input type="text"/> 2	
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24	Memorial Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	25	26	27	28	29	<b>WEIGHT</b> <input type="text"/> 30
31							



# Spiritual Health

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Do you feel like you have a sense of purpose or meaning in your life? If you do, research shows it is good for your health. For many people, this helps create a whole and fulfilling life. Spirituality is often expressed as feeling “connected” to something larger than yourself.

When life gets difficult or challenging, you may turn to your religious or spiritual faith, or you may seek comfort in nature. Another way to express spirituality is by connecting with art or music, spending quiet time alone, or finding ways to help others.

Whatever ways you choose to express your life’s purpose and to find meaning, there are many VA resources and programs available to support your spiritual journey, such as:

- VA chaplaincy services
- Living history project
- Drum circles
- Meditation resources

For more information on the connection between health and spirit visit [www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/veteran-handouts](http://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/veteran-handouts) or contact your facility’s Healthy Living Team members.

# Food for the Soul

Sharing food can help connect you with others, especially if it is a dish you thoughtfully prepared with a certain person in mind.

The key is to find out what that person enjoys eating and prepare it for them. For some, that might be pernil, a traditional Puerto Rican pork dish. For others, a flavorful meat-free stew would fit the bill. And, remember those who would appreciate a homemade dessert!

## The bottom line

When you offer a homemade dish to another person, you will both experience a positive and meaningful connection.



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## My Goal and My Reason:

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- I will go for a quiet walk by myself once a week.
- I will offer a prepared meal to my friend within the next month.

*I will make one goal that I can DO! I will talk to my health care team about it, set a start date, and meet it.*

### MY GOAL:

What is driving my goal?  
Why do I want to make this change?

# June 2020

**RECORD** minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

**Tip:** VA chaplaincy services can help support your spiritual path and guide you in making challenging health decisions.

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# Your Clinical Contact Center



The VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center (CCC) provides virtual urgent health care to Veterans enrolled in the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network.



**Around the Clock Support** – Receive immediate clinical and administrative support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



**Nurse Triage** – Talk with a nurse about your health concerns to identify the best next steps to address your health care needs.



**Connect with a Provider** – Talk with a doctor or nurse practitioner about your care by phone or by secure video.



**No Co-Pays** – As a Veteran eligible for VA care, you do not have co-pays when using services through your CCC.



**Pharmacy\*** – You and your health care team receive help from pharmacists to support your healing.

*\*(prescription medications may have co-pays)*

# Secure Video Appointments



You can call the VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center (CCC) and use VA Video Connect to talk about your health concern. VA Video Connect lets you talk to the CCC or your health care team from your online device. Your virtual visit is encrypted so it is secure and private.



Learn how to use VA Video Connect on your device by visiting: **[mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect](https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect)**.

## My Goal and My Reason:

- I will call the CCC the next time I have an urgent health concern.
- I will talk with my provider about potential urgent care needs I may have that would be appropriate for care by the Clinical Contact Center.

*I WILL make one goal I can DO! I will talk to my health care team about it, set a date, and meet it.*

### MY GOAL:

What is driving my goal?  
Why do I want to make this change?

# July 2020

**RECORD** minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

**Tip:** Remember, there are no co-pays for using the CCC if you are enrolled in the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8).

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## Relationships that Nurture

Having positive relationships with people you are close to is good for your well-being. It is vital to feel connected to the people in your life – family, friends, and co-workers. These relationships are valuable resources that help you feel joy and positivity. They also provide support when times are tough.

On the flip side, when you experience too much loneliness, you are at a higher risk for having a serious illness or making an existing illness worse.

All relationships need nurturing to stay strong and positive. Maybe it is time to consider ways to build more positive relationships in your life. Possible solutions may include:

- Marriage therapy
- VA peer support programs
- VA Caregiver Support program and resources

Your VA health care team is always there to support your goals for building healthy relationships in your life.

## Health Talking Tips

Want to get the most out of talking with your health care team at your care appointments? Here are some tips to use:

- Ask your provider to identify your health issue(s) in plain language that you understand.



- Ask for written instructions that identify specific actions you should do to manage it.
- Ask why it is important to follow the treatment plan you receive, so you understand how it will help you feel better and live healthier.
- Take notes and review them with your provider before leaving your appointment.
- Bring a written medication list so you will have more time to ask questions.

### My Goal and My Reason:

- At my next VA health appointment, I will ask about joining a program where I can be with other Veterans.
- I will buy a notebook within two weeks to use only for my health care appointments.

*I will make one goal I can DO! I will talk to my health care team about it, set a date, and meet it.*

#### MY GOAL:

What is driving my goal?  
Why do I want to make this change?

# August 2020

**RECORD** minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)



**Tip:** Ask someone you trust to go with you to your health care appointment if you have an important health decision to make.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>JULY 2020</b> 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	<b>SEPTEMBER 2020</b> 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					<b>WEIGHT</b> <input type="text"/> 1
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## Are You Up to Date?

- Have you had your flu shot yet this year?
- Are you due for a colorectal cancer screening?
- When was the last time you had your blood cholesterol checked?

Did you know that some immunizations you received as a child wear off over time? You may need additional vaccinations, or “booster” shots to stay protected against certain infectious diseases, such as tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough).

Staying up to date with recommended screenings and immunizations is one of the best ways you can take charge of your health. Discuss what works best for you with your VA provider.

**Get empowered to live a stronger and longer life.**

These are just a few of the VA health screenings and immunizations that may be recommended for you. They will help prevent, reduce your risk, or more effectively treat many serious health conditions and diseases. Other examples of health screenings include tests for Hepatitis C, blood pressure, diabetes, and HIV.

## Need a Ride?

If you face challenges getting to health appointments, Veteran Transportation Service (VTS) is available if you are eligible for VA health care and have a VA-authorized appointment.

- **Beneficiary Travel (BT)** – Based on your eligibility and ridership guidelines at your local VA Medical Center, you will be reimbursed for traveling costs. This includes appointments at VA health care facilities and approved non-VA appointments.



- **Volunteer Transportation Network (VTN)** – You can access transportation services provided by volunteers, which are free of charge.

For more information about VTS, contact your VA medical center’s mobility manager.

### My Goal and My Reason:

- I will get a flu shot by October 31st.
- Within the next week, I will encourage my spouse to get their recommended screenings and immunizations for this year.

*I will make one goal I can DO! I will talk to my health care team about it, set a date, and meet it.*

#### MY GOAL:

What is driving my goal?  
Why do I want to make this change?

# September <sup>2020</sup>

**RECORD** minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)



**Tip:** Veterans eligible for VA health care may receive transportation in a wheelchair van or ambulance depending on their medical condition.

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# Sleep Well

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Are you one of the 30% of Americans who do not get enough sleep? Quality sleep has the power to refresh and revive your body and mind each day. For most adults, that means getting seven to nine hours of mostly uninterrupted sleep.

Sleep has a key role in reducing your risk of developing chronic diseases, including heart disease and depression.

Certain lifestyle habits can often make it hard to get a good night's sleep. Is it time to work on changing some of your habits so you can get a better sleep?

- Avoid caffeine in coffee, tea, soda, and other caffeinated beverages after 12 p.m.
- Avoid alcohol at least three hours before bedtime.
- Get up at the same time every day, including on the weekends and holidays.
- Exercise daily but make sure to complete your exercises three to five hours before your bedtime.
- Limit distractions in your bedroom, such as a TV, computer, or pet.
- Avoid napping or limit it to 20 minutes early in the day.

## Path to Better Sleep® Program

VA's new sleep program may help if you are having problems getting to sleep and/or problems staying asleep.

This free, online program is based on cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-i), the most effective treatment for long-term insomnia. CBT-i will help you set a sleep schedule, modify sleep behaviors, and reduce unhelpful thoughts that get in the way of sleeping well.



You can take the program on your own, but you may get more benefits if you add in-person therapy. For more information visit [www.veterantraining.va.gov/insomnia/index.asp](http://www.veterantraining.va.gov/insomnia/index.asp). You can also download a CBT-i app at [mobile.va.gov](http://mobile.va.gov).

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### My Goal and My Reason:

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- I will get out of bed and read if I cannot get back to sleep within 20 minutes.
- I will switch to decaffeinated coffee in the afternoon.

*I will make one goal that I can DO! I will talk to my health care team about it, set a start date, and meet it.*

#### MY GOAL:

What is driving my goal?  
Why do I want to make this change?

# October 2020

**RECORD** minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

**Tip:** Keeping a sleep diary to discuss with your VA provider will help identify the best treatment for improving your sleep quality.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
<b>SEPTEMBER 2020</b> 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	<b>NOVEMBER 2020</b> 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	<b>WEIGHT</b> <input type="text"/> 3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	<b>WEIGHT</b> <input type="text"/> 10	
11	Columbus Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	12	13	14	15	16	<b>WEIGHT</b> <input type="text"/> 17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	<b>WEIGHT</b> <input type="text"/> 24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	<b>WEIGHT</b> <input type="text"/> 31



## Your Reasons for Quitting

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If you are thinking about quitting tobacco, do you know why? Understanding your reasons may help keep you motivated as you are trying to quit. This can also increase your chances of staying quit.

Here are some common reasons people choose to quit, which may help pinpoint your own reasons:

- **My Health** – I will breathe easier and cough less. My chance of getting lung cancer will go down.
- **My Lifestyle** – My kids will not smell like smoke. I will have more money to spend.

- **My Family Life** – I will be around to enjoy my family's special moments. I will have more energy to play with my kids or grandkids.

Once you make a list of your reasons, keep it in a place where you will see it every day for added inspiration.

For more quit tobacco tools and resources, including how to build your quit plan, visit <https://veterans.smokefree.gov> or call 1-866-QUIT-VET.

## Health-giving Hobbies

If you are trying to quit tobacco, it may be a good opportunity to add more healthy habits or hobbies to your day. Find activities to help take your mind off your tobacco-related lifestyle. Examples include:

- Learn to play a musical instrument like a harmonica.
- Sign up for those swimming lessons you have been thinking about for years.
- Join a local walking club.



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### **My Goal and My Reason:**

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- By the end of the month, I will visit <https://veterans.smokefree.gov/reasons-quit> to explore my reasons for wanting to quit tobacco.
- This month, I will do online research to find a local swimming club I can join.

*I WILL make one goal I can DO! I will talk to my health care team about it, set a date, and meet it.*

#### **MY GOAL:**

**What is driving my goal?  
Why do I want to make this change?**

# November 2020

**RECORD** minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

**Tip:** For extra motivation, set a goal for what you could do with money you will save by quitting tobacco.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
Daylight Saving Time Ends (Turn clocks back one hour.) 1	2	3	4	5	6	WEIGHT <input type="text"/> 7	
8	9	10	Veterans Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	11	12	13	WEIGHT <input type="text"/> 14
15	16	17	18	19	20	WEIGHT <input type="text"/> 21	
22	23	24	25	Thanksgiving Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	26	27	WEIGHT <input type="text"/> 28
29	30						

**OCTOBER 2020**

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 2020**

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		



## Limit Holiday Drinking

It is easy to see how drinking too much “holiday” alcohol can get out of control. When people gather to celebrate, there is usually plenty of alcohol to go around. This can create a lot of social pressure for you to drink.

This year, before the holiday season is in full swing, set your intention to limit your alcohol intake. Reflecting on your overall wellness goals will help you stay on track.

If you are concerned about your drinking, talk to your VA health care team about getting help.

### One drink =



	If you drink alcohol*	Binge drinking is:
Men	Limit to 2 drinks a day	More than 4 drinks on one occasion
Women (and 64+)	Limit to 1 drink a day	More than 3 drinks on one occasion

\*Limit alcohol guidelines are from [www.prevention.va.gov](http://www.prevention.va.gov).

## Pomegranate Fizz



### Directions

1. In a large pitcher, mix pomegranate juice cocktail and seeds, sparkling water, juice of 2 limes and 8 ice cubes.
2. Pour into glasses and garnish with a lime wedge and mint leaves, if desired.

### Ingredients

- 2 cups pomegranate juice cocktail
- 4 cups plain sparkling water
- ½ cup pomegranate seeds
- 3 limes (1 for garnish)

Options: Use 100% pomegranate juice to further reduce sugar (carbohydrate) content.

Nutritional Information: Serves 8. Per serving: 49 calories, 0 g total fat, 12 g carbohydrates, 0 g dietary fiber, 0 g protein, and 4 mg sodium

### My Goal and My Reason:

- I will bring a non-alcoholic beverage to two holiday events this year.
- Before I arrive at a party, I will practice what to say when offered multiple alcoholic drinks.

*I WILL make one goal that I can DO! I will talk to my health care team about it, set a start date, and meet it.*

### MY GOAL:

What is driving my goal?  
Why do I want to make this change?

# December <sup>2020</sup>

**RECORD** minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

**Tip:** As soon as you arrive at a social gathering, ask for a glass of water or other non-alcoholic beverage.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>NOVEMBER 2020</b> 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	<b>JANUARY 2021</b> 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	WEIGHT <input type="text"/> 5
6	7	8	9	10	11	WEIGHT <input type="text"/> 12
13	14	15	16	17	18	WEIGHT <input type="text"/> 19
20	21	22	23	24	Christmas Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	WEIGHT <input type="text"/> 26
27	28	29	30	31		



## Inspired for Fitness

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You already know the importance of getting regular exercise and limiting how much time you spend sitting. But sometimes it helps to have a little extra motivation or inspiration. How about finding a fitness-related fundraiser for a cause you feel deeply about, such as breast cancer, diabetes, or Alzheimer's disease?

There are plenty of walk-a-thons and bike-a-thons to benefit these and many other worthy causes. Check online or contact local not-for-profit organizations to find one located near you. Also, your VA facility is involved in many similar events throughout the year.

When you begin training for your event, start slowly if you have been inactive for a while. Then, you can gradually increase the amount and intensity. The goal is to get at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity every week.

### Win-win

Training for and completing a fitness fundraiser is good for everyone. You supply much needed funds for a worthwhile cause. Plus, you receive the health benefits that come with increasing your physical activity.

## Exercises for Older Adults

Doing a variety of exercises on a regular basis will give you the *most* health benefits:

- **Aerobic** (works your heart and lungs) – walking, swimming, and dancing.
- **Strength** (do everyday activities more easily) – lifting weights, resistance band exercises, and kayaking.
- **Balance** (helps prevent falls) – tai chi, standing on one foot, and ballroom dancing.
- **Flexibility** (move around more easily) – yoga, tai chi, and stretches for shoulders and calves.

### Less is More

You can improve your overall health by spending less time sitting and more time doing almost anything else.

- Better pain management
- Fewer symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression
- Reduced risk of type 2 diabetes
- Better brain health for those with Parkinson's disease and dementia.

Think about which activities you do now while sitting. Could you do any of these activities while standing or walking?





# Your Whole Health Coach

The role of a Whole Health Coach is based on VA's Whole Health for Life approach to health care. This approach goes beyond your illnesses, injuries, or disabilities. Whole Health invites you to take charge of your health and well-being. It connects with your values and dreams and is guided by your personal health plan. All this helps you live your life to the fullest. Whole Health supports your self-care, and helps with preventing and treating diseases and illness. This approach uses medical care alongside complementary and integrative therapies.



## S.M.A.R.T. Goals

It helps to have a clear idea of *where* you want to go and *how* you want to get there. Make your goals SMART:

### S = Specific

Your goal in detail.  
Example: I will become more fit by walking more.

### R = Realistic

Doable in terms of time and energy; meets your needs.  
Example: I will walk at least three days a week for 45 minutes at a moderate pace to train for this walking fundraiser.

### M = Measurable

Goal can be tracked by numbers or other units which can measure your progress.  
Example: I will complete one, 10-mile walking fundraiser.

### T = Time to complete

When will you reach this goal?  
Example: I will complete this 10-mile, walking fundraiser within one year.

### A = Action-oriented

Behaviors you will do.  
Example: I will train for at least six months to complete one, 10-mile walking fundraiser event.

**Once each goal is met, it is time to set another one to help meet your overall health and wellness goal.**

### Your coach—in your corner

The main job of a Whole Health Coach is to partner with you as you work to change your health behaviors so they align with your own goals and values.

Using a variety of VA resources and tools, your Coach will help you build new habits to live a healthier life. At the same time, you may also quit habits that weaken your health. This allows you to achieve your vision of optimal health and live the life you want to live.

To get started with your Whole Health Coach talk with your VA health care provider.





# Health Screenings

Always discuss which health screenings you need with your VA health care team based on your personal health risk and medical history.

Screening Test or Exam	Recommendation	Date Done
Blood cholesterol and Triglycerides	Every 5 years: Men age 35 and older. Men ages 19–34 at increased risk for heart disease. Women age 20+ at increased risk.	
Colon cancer screening	Age 50–75: Frequency depends on test recommended. Age 76-85 at increased risk.	
Depression	Yearly	
High blood pressure	Every 2 years or more	
HIV infection	Once	
Overweight & obesity	Every year	
Syphilis	Discuss your need to be tested with your provider.	
Tobacco	Every visit	
<b>FOR MEN</b>		
Prostate cancer	Age 55-69: Talk with your provider to determine your need to be tested.	
Abdominal aortic aneurysm	One time, age 65–75 if ever smoked.	
<b>FOR WOMEN</b>		
Breast cancer for women not at high risk	Age 45-74: Every 1-2 years. Women of other ages should discuss with their provider when to be tested.	
Cervical cancer for women not at high risk	Age 21-29: Pap test every 3 years. Age 30-65: Every 3-5 years depending on tests chosen.	
Chlamydia & gonorrhea	Age 24 & younger: All sexually active. Age 25 and older: All sexually active who are at increased risk.	
Osteoporosis	Age 65 and older: One time. Age 18-64: Talk with your provider.	

Talk with your health care team about screenings for Hepatitis B and C, PTSD, military sexual trauma and diabetes. Visit [www.prevention.va.gov/index.asp](http://www.prevention.va.gov/index.asp) for the full recommended screening schedule.

# Know Your Numbers

< is less than      > is greater than

Blood pressure (mm Hg)	Ranges	My Goal	Keep Records
Normal blood pressure	< 120/80		
High blood pressure	> 140/90		

Discuss your target goal with your VA provider.  
Prehypertension is between the normal and high blood pressure ranges.

Blood cholesterol (mg/dL)*	Ranges	My Goals	Keep Records
Total cholesterol	< 200		
LDL (bad) cholesterol*	< 100		
HDL (good) cholesterol	> 40 Men		
	> 50 Women		
Triglycerides	< 150		

\*Ask your VA provider about using target goals. They may prescribe treatment that can include medication (such as a statin), based on your age, health conditions, and 10-year risk for cardiovascular disease. LDL-cholesterol levels of 100-129 are acceptable for those with no health issues.

Body Mass Index (BMI)	Ranges	My Goal	Keep Records
Find your BMI at <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing">www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing</a>			
Underweight	Below 18.5		
Healthy weight	18.5-24.9		
Overweight	25.0-29.9		
Obese	30.0+		

Waist Size (inches)	Ranges	My Goal	Keep Records
Men	< 40		
Women	< 35		

Blood Glucose (mg/dL) (fasting)	Ranges	My Goals	Keep Records
Normal blood glucose	80-100		
Pre-diabetes (for diagnosing)	100-125		
Diabetes (for diagnosing)	126+		
A1C (for diagnosing pre-diabetes)	5.7-6.4		
A1C (for diagnosing diabetes)	6.5+		



## 3 Lifestyle Changes for Better Health

Did you know that a healthy diet, an active lifestyle, and being tobacco-free can help reduce up to 50% of all deaths on the planet?



Source: VA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP). Highlights Report 2017.



## Black Bean & Corn Salad

### Ingredients

- 1 (15-ounce) can reduced-sodium black beans, drained
- 1 cup cooked, frozen corn niblets
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 1 cup cucumber, chopped
- 1 each jalapeño pepper and garlic clove, diced
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 lime, juiced
- 2 tablespoons cilantro, chopped

### Directions

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and mix well.

**Nutritional information:** Serves 4. Per serving: 210 calories, 8 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 33 g carbohydrates, 7 g dietary fiber, 8 g protein, and 206 mg sodium.



## Fish & Veggie Pockets

### Ingredients

- 4, 4-ounce frozen, white fish fillets
- 2 cups frozen, mixed vegetables
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 4 sheets tin foil

### Directions

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Place one fish fillet in each tin foil square. Combine frozen vegetables, canola oil, and diced onion in bowl. Spoon mixture over fillets. Sprinkle lemon juice and parsley. Fold ends of foil together to seal up. Bake for 10 minutes.

**Nutritional information:** Serves 4. Per serving: 176 calories, 5 g total fat, 0 g saturated fat, 15 g carbohydrates, 5 g dietary fiber, 19 g protein, and 355 mg sodium.

## VA Services

### **Veteran Benefits**

1-800-827-1000  
www.va.gov  
www.vets.gov  
www.ebenefits.va.gov

### **Health Care Benefits**

1-877-222-8387  
www.va.gov/healthbenefits

### **Burials and Memorials**

1-800-827-1000  
www.va.gov/burials-memorials

### **Center for Minority Veterans**

www.va.gov/centerforminorityveterans

### **Community Care (VA MISSION ACT, 2018)**

www.va.gov/communitycare

### **Devices for the Deaf (TDD)**

Dial 711

### **Education and Training**

1-888-442-4551  
www.benefits.va.gov/education

### **Homeless Veterans**

1-877-424-3838  
www.va.gov/homeless

### **Life Insurance**

1-800-419-1473  
www.va.gov/life-insurance

### **Mental Health**

www.mentalhealth.va.gov

### **Military Exposures**

**(Agent Orange, Gulf War Illnesses, etc.)**  
1-877-222-8387  
www.va.gov/health-needs-conditions

### **National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**

Call Your VA or 1-802-296-6300  
www.ptsd.va.gov

### **Survivor Benefits**

1-800-827-1000  
www.va.gov/survivors

### **Traveling Veterans Coordinator Program**

www.va.gov/healthbenefits/access/seamless\_care.asp

### **VA National Center for Patient Safety**

www.patientsafety.va.gov

### **VHA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention**

www.prevention.va.gov

### **Veterans Crisis Line**

1-800-273-8255 Press "1"  
OR text to 838255  
www.veteranscrisisline.net



## VA Resources

### **Borne the Battle (VA's Official Podcast)**

www.podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/id1171416564

### **MOVE!® Program**

www.move.va.gov

### **MyHealthVet**

1-877-327-0022  
www.myhealth.va.gov

### **MyVA 311: one number to reach VA**

1-844-MyVA311 (1-844-698-2311)

### **SmokeFreeVET**

1-855-QuitVET (855-784-8838)  
Text VET to 47848  
Smokefree.gov/Veterans

### **VA Caregiver Support Line**

1-855-260-3274  
www.caregiver.va.gov

### **VA Facility Locator**

www.va.gov/find-locations

### **Veterans Health Library**

www.veteranshealthlibrary.org

### **VHA YouTube Channel**

www.youtube.com/user/veteransHealthAdmin

### **Whole Health**

www.va.gov/patientcenteredcare

### **Women Veterans Call Center**

1-855-829-6636  
www.va.gov/womenvet

## VA Mobile Health – mobile.va.gov



Stay Quit Coach



Online Scheduling



MOVE!® Coach



Video Connect



PTSD Coach



VetChange

# VA Sunshine Healthcare Network

.....  
[www.visn8.va.gov](http://www.visn8.va.gov)  
.....

 at all  
Medical Centers

.....  
Find a VA hospital or  
clinic near you:  
[www.va.gov/find-locations](http://www.va.gov/find-locations)  
.....

 **Bruce W. Carter Dept. of VA Medical Center**  
1201 NW 16th Street  
Miami, FL 33125  
305-575-7000 • 888-276-1785  
[www.miami.va.gov](http://www.miami.va.gov)

 **C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center**  
10000 Bay Pines Blvd.  
Bay Pines, FL 33744  
727-398-6661 • 888-820-0230  
[www.baypines.va.gov](http://www.baypines.va.gov)

 **James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital**  
13000 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.  
Tampa, FL 33612  
813-972-2000 • 888-811-0107  
[www.tampa.va.gov](http://www.tampa.va.gov)

 **Lake City VA Medical Center**  
619 South Marion Avenue  
Lake City, FL 32025  
386-755-3016 • 800-308-8387  
[www.northflorida.va.gov](http://www.northflorida.va.gov)

 **Malcom Randall VA Medical Center**  
1601 SW Archer Road  
Gainesville, FL 32608  
352-376-1611 • 800-324-8387  
[www.northflorida.va.gov](http://www.northflorida.va.gov)

 **Orlando VA Medical Center**  
13800 Veterans Way  
Orlando, FL 32827  
407-631-1000 • 800-922-7521  
[www.orlando.va.gov](http://www.orlando.va.gov)

 **West Palm Beach VA Medical Center**  
7305 North Military Trail  
West Palm Beach, FL 33410  
561-422-8262 • 800-972-8262  
[www.westpalmbeach.va.gov](http://www.westpalmbeach.va.gov)

 **VA Caribbean Healthcare System**  
10 Casia Street  
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00921  
787-641-7582 • 800-449-8729  
[www.caribbean.va.gov](http://www.caribbean.va.gov)

