

Veterans' Health

SPRING • 2005

THE WELLNESS MAGAZINE
FOR OHIO VETERANS

Digesting the new
U.S. dietary
guidelines

Special care for
women vets

VA Healthcare
System of Ohio



To our readers



As the weather grows warmer and the flowers begin to bloom, we want to help you spring forward in good health.

Perhaps you've heard about the new federal dietary guidelines that recommend improving your diet and increasing your physical activity to prevent weight gain and future health problems. In this issue, we tell you manageable ways to fit healthy foods and exercise into your daily routine. We also inform you about health-care benefits for new vets and special services just for women.

Helping you feel your best remains our top priority. Best wishes for a healthy spring.

—Clyde Parkis,
Network Director

Call to cancel

Be a buddy to your fellow vet: Next time you can't make your health-care appointment, call and let us know. By canceling your visit, you're helping your fellow veterans get the appointments they need faster. **VH**

Veterans' Health is published quarterly as a patient education service by VA Healthcare System of Ohio, one of the 21 integrated networks of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The publication is intended to provide information to help you stay well, manage your healthcare and learn about the many health services available through VA. This publication is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, which should be obtained from your doctor. All articles may be reproduced for educational purposes.

The Mission of VA Healthcare System of Ohio is:

- To provide veterans a continuum of care that is accessible, value-added and cost-effective, and of the highest quality, within an environment of outstanding education and research.
- To promote a culture that supports and develops a caring, compassionate, competent and quality-oriented workforce.

About our mailing list



We make every effort to ensure our mailing lists are accurate. If you have questions or would like to be added to or deleted from the list, let us know. Please include your entire address. To make a change, you *must* mail the mailing panel to:

Veterans' Health

VA Healthcare System of Ohio Network Office

11500 Northlake Drive, Suite 200

Cincinnati, OH 45249

Veterans' Health is back online at www.va.gov/visn10/. Visit this site to view back issues or subscribe.

Helping you get health-wise



VA Healthcare System of Ohio is pleased to learn the *Healthwise® for Life* book is helping veterans be more proactive in their care. In three recent surveys, the majority of vets said the book is easy to understand and is helping them take better care of themselves at home. The book, along with the online Healthwise Knowledgebase—which features the most current information on various health topics—is part of VA Healthcare System of Ohio's total healthcare package aimed at getting and keeping you well.

Healthwise for Life helps you recognize and prevent common conditions and lets you know when it's time to call Tele-Nurse—an advice nurse telephone service. Advice nurses specially trained to answer your health questions help you decide if you can manage your condition yourself or if you should make an appointment with your primary care provider. If you need to see your primary care provider, *Healthwise for Life* prepares you for your visit.

If you haven't received your *Healthwise for Life* book, ask your primary care provider for one at your next appointment. To get to the Healthwise Knowledgebase, visit www.va.gov/visn10/ and click on "Healthwise." **VH**

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Modern-day house calls

Thanks to the latest technology, VA comes to you

If you're like many people with a chronic health condition, you most likely spend a lot of time visiting your provider for follow-ups. Imagine if you could get your blood pressure, heart rate and glucose level checked without having to leave home. Through a VA program called **Care Coordination/Home Telehealth (CCHT)**, you can do just that.

Care for all conditions

CCHT can effectively monitor nearly 40 medical and mental health conditions, including heart failure, diabetes and depression. Devices like a home-message system, videophone and computer-like health station are used to connect you to a trained care coordinator (such as a nurse or social worker) at a VA medical center who reviews your health status. "What began as a small pilot project in a rural part of the country where veterans faced long drives to see their doctors has grown into a national VA program. Now, we can monitor patients better and keep them at home, out of the hospital or nursing home longer," says Nancy Campbell, VISN 10 Care Coordination Program manager.

Using CCHT, you can check your weight, test your sugar or measure your blood pressure with a home device that transmits your readings straight to your care coordinator's desk. You may also be asked daily questions about your health. "The equipment is very easy to use, and veterans have adapted to it well," says Campbell.

A personal touch

"Veterans say they feel *more* connected to their doctors because someone is checking their health every week or every day rather than every few months," says Campbell. Besides getting your readings and responses to treatment, your care coordinator can talk with you face-to-face using video technology. Should you need more extensive care or treatment, he or she will arrange a visit with your provider—at the office or your home—and, if needed, a hospital trip. "It's a great way to offer the right care at the right place and at the right time," says Campbell. "We save patients the hassle of travel and wait time for a lot of their doctor visits. Plus, more frequent monitoring often means we catch and take care of problems earlier." **VH**



The Health Buddy® appliance helps veterans share daily information about their health with their care coordinators.

Connect with your coordinator

To learn more about Care Coordination/Home Telehealth, contact the care coordinator at your nearest VA medical center:

Dayton VAMC

Dawn Fortunato

937-268-6511, ext. 2932

Cincinnati VAMC

Brad Schaffer

859-572-6231

Chillicothe VAMC

Michelle Copley

740-773-1141, ext. 6222

Louis Stokes Wade Park VAMC

Barbara Matejczik, mental health

440-526-3030, ext. 6948

Joe Kohut, primary care

440-526-3030, ext. 6728

Chalmers P. Wylie Outpatient Clinic

Barbara Haeisen

614-257-5389





Uncle Sam wants to do more

Here's how to digest the new federal
Dietary Guidelines for Americans

Bookstores are filled with diet books written by doctors, fitness experts and celebrities. Now the U.S. government has its own version of a diet bible, too—the newly revised *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The guidelines offer the latest science-based advice about how to improve health and avoid disease by eating right and exercising.

“I see a number of patients who are overweight or obese,” says Ann McDowell, M.A., R.D., L.D., clinic dietician at Chalmers P. Wylie Outpatient Clinic in Columbus. “They have problems like diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure. Eating a healthy diet and losing weight can prevent or manage these conditions.”

The new guidelines can seem daunting at first glance. Major recommendations include getting 30 to 90 minutes of exercise on most days of the week and eating at least nine servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Even if you think you may be too busy, you'll find that the simple steps listed below are really easy to follow.

The guidelines can be summed up in three key points:

1. Get more exercise.

We all need regular physical activity to reduce the risk of chronic disease or prevent weight gain. How much do you need?

■ **To reduce your risk of chronic disease**, get at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity (greater than normal) physical activity on most days.

■ **To maintain your weight and prevent weight gain**, get at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous exercise on most days.

■ **To lose weight**, get at least 60 to 90 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise every day.

If you haven't been exercising at these levels, try these four steps to get closer to your guideline goal:

- For one week, increase your daily activity.

Take the stairs instead of the elevator, park in the farthest space or go for an easy stroll.

- During the second week, aim for 10,000 steps a day. Wear a pedometer, a device that hooks to your belt and counts the steps you take.

- Over the next few weeks, increase the intensity of your exercise. Try other activities, too, such as dancing or biking. Work up to at least 30 minutes of exercise at a time.

Place a star on your calendar each day you exercise, aiming for three stars a week at first, suggests McDowell.

- Increase your activity's duration until you reach your exercise goal.

Taking some
simple steps to
fit more exercise
and nutrition into your
daily routine can help
you fight disease
and weight gain.



2. Eat foods with the right nutrients.

The guidelines advise that you increase intake of fruits and vegetables, whole-grain foods and calcium. Based on an average daily intake of 2,000 calories (that amount varies based on your age, gender and activity level), this means eating:

■ **9 servings of fruits and vegetables a day**. That sounds like a lot, but one serving is only half a cup. Simply put, this means eating 2 cups of fruit and

YOU

for your health

2½ cups of vegetables daily. Eat a rich variety, including dark green choices and legumes.

■ **at least 3 ounces of whole-grain foods a day.**

Whole-grain foods are a good source of fiber and include whole-wheat bread, oats and brown rice.

■ **3 cups of fat-free or low-fat dairy products a day.** Milk and dairy products give you the calcium you need for strong bones.

To reach these goals, try these tips:

- Have a fruit and vegetable with every meal.

Top cereal with berries and double your dinner vegetable portion.

- Eat whole-grain cereal. Also use brown rice instead of white rice and whole-wheat pasta instead of white pasta.

- Choose fat-free or low-fat dairy products such as milk, cheese and yogurt. “Try some of the new yogurt flavors like key lime pie and cherry cheesecake,” suggests McDowell.

3. Limit your intake of some foods.

You’ll also need to cut back or cut out the less ideal choices.

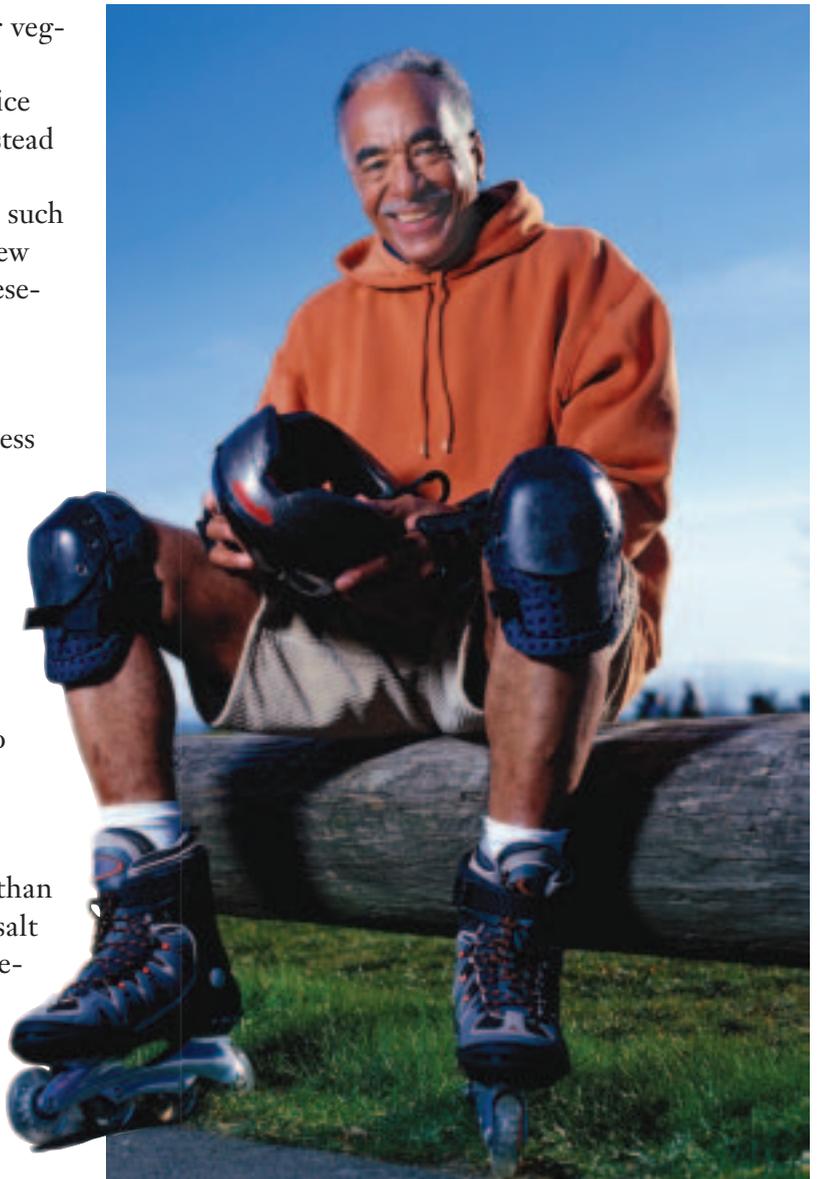
- **Fats.** Limit fats to between 20 percent to 35 percent of your total calories, with most coming from polyunsaturated and monounsaturated choices such as fish, nuts and vegetable oils. “Eat modest, leaner portions of meat and skip the frying,” says McDowell.

- **Sugars.** A lot of sugar and calories sneak into our diets through juices and other drinks.

- **Salt.** Keep daily sodium intake less than 2,300 mg—about one teaspoon of salt. “Unfortunately, many people consume more than 4000 mg a day, often without picking up the salt shaker,” says McDowell. Read food labels carefully, avoid processed foods and cook with more herbs and spices.

- **Alcohol.** Limit drinks to one a day if you’re female and two a day if you’re male.

Letting go of old habits isn’t always easy, but you can start making healthier choices today. Try one change at a time. Perhaps you can begin walking or eat a better breakfast. Get support from friends or family members. Also, ask your primary care provider to refer you to a VA dietician. The rewards will be well worth the effort. “You’ll feel better and have more energy to embrace new challenges,” says McDowell. **VA**



Calling all new vets

Enroll today for your VA benefits



Welcome home! As a soldier returning from Iraq or Afghanistan, you're most likely facing adjustments and challenges to life after war. VA wants to do everything possible to ease your transition to civilian life—and to let you know you're eligible for certain healthcare benefits. *But you must enroll now.*

While you were on duty, the Department of Defense cared for your healthcare needs. Now that you're a veteran, VA is here for you. But first you have to enroll, and you must do so *within two years from the date on your discharge papers*. Once you enroll, you'll have access to a wide range of VA's healthcare benefits, which include:

- any necessary inpatient and outpatient healthcare services
- primary medical care, such as doctor visits, diagnosis and treatment
- medications
- preventive medicine (immunizations, screening tests, health education and training classes)
- outpatient surgery
- mental healthcare
- substance abuse treatment
- home healthcare
- emergency medical care
- nursing home care
- respite and hospice care
- transition or adjustment counseling

Many of our brave servicemen and servicewomen injured during duty need ongoing treatment and rehabilitation. If you're one of them, rest assured you'll continue to receive the finest medical care, medication and nursing care needed.

Sometimes, a service-related injury or condition may not become fully apparent

until you're back home. "Often, skin conditions, orthopedic problems and mental health issues like post-traumatic stress disorder and sleep disorders appear later in veterans," says Tina Cole, chief of ambulatory care and processing at Cincinnati VA Medical Center. "We want you to enroll now so we can check and take care of you." **VH**

New vets, act now!

VA wants to help all recently discharged veterans or reservists deactivated from federal duty make easy transitions from the military to the VA healthcare system. Perhaps you've been having symptoms but aren't sure what they are. VA has experience in diagnosing and treating combat-related conditions that your family doctor may not have encountered. To start receiving VA medical benefits, here's what you need to know:

- You have two years from your date of discharge to receive VA healthcare.
- You can enroll for care by:
 - going to a VA medical center or community-based outpatient clinic near you (see this issue's back page for a list of facility locations)
 - mailing or faxing the completed 10-10EZ form to your nearest VA medical center or community-based outpatient clinic
 - completing the 10-10EZ online enrollment form (visit www.va.gov/visn10/ and click on "10-10EZ Online")

Women are veterans, too

Meeting the growing demand for female care

More women are serving our country than ever before and changing the face of our nation's armed forces. Today, women make up 15 percent of the entire military, including the reserves, and the number is rising. More women in the military means more women veterans.

VA recognizes this increasing trend and places a high priority on meeting women's healthcare needs. "We want our women veterans to know that anything they could ever need through a primary care physician, they can get through VA," says Sharon D. Parker, lead Women Veterans Health Program manager for VA Healthcare System of Ohio.

Serving many needs

Besides primary healthcare and screenings, VA offers a wealth of women's services, including:

- complete gynecological care, including Pap tests and pelvic and breast exams
- surgical services such as hysterectomy
- mammograms
- maternity care for pregnancy and delivery
- some infertility treatments
- family planning services, including tubal ligation and birth control
- menopause management
- bone-density testing
- sexual trauma counseling and treatment

- a support group for women suffering post-traumatic stress disorder
- domiciliary care, a residential program for homeless women
- domestic abuse counseling

Spotting conditions early

To catch diseases in women early when treatments are most effective, VA offers advanced diagnostic testing. A mammogram, for instance, can detect a lump in the breast up to three years before it can be felt. VA strongly urges women to make appointments for health screenings. In fact, starting next year, VA will expand its efforts to help women fight osteoporosis, a condition that causes bones to become thin and brittle. The disease strikes more women than men. "Our plan is for all women ages 64 and older to have a baseline bone-density scan," says Parker. This painless, non-invasive test helps your healthcare provider know how to treat you to prevent further bone loss and fractures.

Helping women feel comfortable while receiving care is a priority, too. VA Healthcare System of Ohio provides separate inpatient rooms for women and ensures privacy during consultations and exams. Some Ohio clinics offer a separate women's suite or wing as well. **VH**

Learn more!

To learn more about special benefits for women, call your local VA medical center (*see this issue's back page for a listing of facilities*) and ask to speak to the women veterans coordinator.

Reaching us is easy

Keep this information handy—when you need us, we'll be there.

Chillicothe VAMC

17273 State Route 104
Chillicothe, OH 45601
740-773-1141

Community-Based Outpatient Clinics Athens

510 West Union Street
Athens, OH 45701
740-593-7314

Lancaster

1550 Sheridan Drive,
Suite 100
Colonnade Medical Building
Lancaster, OH 43130
740-653-6145

Marietta

418 Colegate Drive
Marietta, OH 45750
740-568-0412

Portsmouth

621 Broadway Street
Portsmouth, OH 45662
740-353-3236

Cincinnati VAMC

3200 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45220
513-861-3100

Ft. Thomas VA Campus

1000 So. Ft. Thomas Avenue
Ft. Thomas, KY 41075
859-572-6202

Community-Based Outpatient Clinics Bellevue

103 Landmark Drive
Bellevue, KY 41073
859-392-3840

Clermont County

Eastgate Professional
Office Park
4355 Ferguson Drive,
Suite 270
Cincinnati, OH 45245
513-943-3680

Dearborn County

710 W. Eads Parkway
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025
812-539-2313

Louis Stokes Wade Park VAMC

10701 East Boulevard
Cleveland, OH 44106
216-791-3800

Brecksville VA Medical Center

10000 Brecksville Road
Brecksville, OH 44141
440-526-3030

Community-Based Outpatient Clinics Akron

55 West Waterloo
Akron, OH 44319
330-724-7715

Canton

733 Market Avenue South
Canton, OH 44702
330-489-4600

East Liverpool

332 West 6th Street
East Liverpool, OH 43920
330-386-4303

Lorain

205 West 20th Street
Lorain, OH 44052
440-244-3833

Mansfield

1456 Park Avenue West
Mansfield, OH 44906
419-529-4602

McCafferty

4242 Lorain Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44113
216-939-0699

New Philadelphia

1260 Monroe Avenue, #15H
New Philadelphia, OH 44663
330-602-5339

Painesville

7 West Jackson Street
Painesville, OH 44077
440-357-6740

Ravenna

6751 North Chestnut Street
Ravenna, OH 44266
330-296-3641

Sandusky

3416 Columbus Avenue
Sandusky, OH 44870
419-625-7350

Warren

Riverside Square
1400 Tod Avenue NW
Warren, OH 44485
330-392-0311

Youngstown

2031 Belmont Avenue
Youngstown, OH 44505
330-740-9200

Chalmers P. Wylie Outpatient Clinic

543 Taylor Avenue
Columbus, OH 43203
614-257-5200

Community-Based Outpatient Clinics

Grove City

1953 Ohio Avenue
Grove City, OH 43123
614-257-5800

Marion

1203 Delaware Avenue
Marion, OH 43302
740-223-8089

Zanesville

840 Bethesda Drive
Building 3A
Zanesville, OH 43701
740-453-7725

Dayton VAMC

4100 West Third Street
Dayton, OH 45428
937-268-6511

Community-Based Outpatient Clinics

Lima

1303 Bellefontaine Avenue
Lima, OH 45804
419-222-5788

Middletown

675 North University Boulevard
Middletown, OH 45042
513-423-8387

Richmond

4351 South A Street
Richmond, IN 47374
765-973-6915

Springfield

512 South Burnett Road
Springfield, OH 45505
937-328-3385

Call Tele-Nurse at 1-888-838-6446. • Visit us online at www.va.gov/visn10/.

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