

Healthy Living!

Veterans & Their Families



2024 CALENDAR



Whole Health for You

Whole Health is about caring for all parts of your health and well-being. This includes your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. It puts you at the center of your care and what matters most – your values, needs, and goals. The Circle of Health above helps you explore all parts of your health and how they connect. Self-care activities, like recharging and moving your body, help build resilience. Mindful awareness helps you stay on track with what matters most so you can enjoy and live your life to the fullest.

Visit va.gov/wholehealth.



Healthy Living Messages

Live a healthier life and lower your risk for serious health problems:

- **Be involved in your health care.** Take an active role with your health care team.
- **Eat wisely.** Eat a variety of healthy foods and limit processed foods.
- **Be physically active.** Move your body regularly and spend less time sitting.
- **Strive for a healthy weight.** Reach and keep a healthier weight.
- **Limit alcohol.** If you drink, use moderation and avoid binge drinking.
- **Get recommended screenings and immunizations.** Learn what is recommended for you and stay up to date with screenings and shots.
- **Manage stress.** Find ways to relax and reduce stress.
- **Be safe.** Protect yourself from falls, violence, self-harm, and sexually transmitted infections.
- **Be tobacco free.** Quit if you use tobacco in any form. It is never too late!
- **Sleep well.** Make sleep a priority. Seek help if you have sleep problems.

Visit prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living.



Your Voice Matters!

We want to improve the Healthy Living Calendar. We invite you to take less than 5 minutes to let us know how we are doing. Your feedback will help us present topics that matter most to you.

Using your smart device, scan the QR (Quick Response) code below to take you to the survey.

- For newer smart devices, open the camera, point it at the QR code, and click the link.
- For other devices, download and open a free QR code reader. Then, point the camera at the QR code. A message with a link will pop up. Tap the link.





This Calendar Is Yours

- **Reflect on it.** Ask yourself how the information in this calendar relates to your health and what matters most to you.
- **Check out.** The mobile apps and resources can help you learn more and explore how to live your life to the fullest.
- **Scan QR codes.** Open the camera app on your device and point it at the QR code to access more information. Tap the link that pops up on your screen to see the content. If the link does not appear, you may need to download a free QR code app.
- **Make SMART goals.** For each monthly goal, focus on why you want to make a change. Use one of the monthly SMART goals or create your own.
- **Track it.** Record your exercise, blood pressure, hours of sleep, time spent connecting with friends, etc. Or keep track in My HealthVet at **myhealth.va.gov**.
- **Try it.** Make one of the healthy recipes you will find near the back of the calendar. They are easy to make and delicious!



Set SMART Goals

Build a solid path to a healthier you by working on SMART goals. The first step is to think about why the change you want to make matters to you. It should fit your life's purpose and personal values. Also, be specific about what you want to achieve, how you will get there, and when you will complete your goal. Scan this QR code to learn more about SMART goals.



SMART

SPECIFIC

Identify your goal clearly and in detail.

MEASURABLE

Identify how often or how many to track progress.

ACTION-ORIENTED

Describe steps or actions you will take.

REALISTIC & RELEVANT

Make it doable to align with what is important to you.

TIME-BASED

Set a target date to complete your goal.



The COMPACT Act

Prevention of Veteran suicide is VA's top clinical priority. Under the COMPACT Act, any Veteran can get free, emergency suicide care when they need it, no matter where they are. This means you can go to a VA or non-VA emergency room for suicide crisis care and VA will cover treatment, follow-up care, and other costs. This care includes inpatient or residential care, outpatient care, and transportation costs.

You do not have to be enrolled in VA care, but some eligibility criteria apply. To learn more, scan this code:



Mindfulness Helps Manage Stress



Mindfulness can do a lot to ease stress and help you live life to the fullest. This mind-body technique is about paying attention to what is happening in the present moment without judging it. This practice can help center yourself and see things as they really are. By calming your mind and body, you may avoid always focusing on your worst fears or worries.

Practicing mindfulness can be as simple as paying attention to things you do every day, like brushing your teeth using all your senses. Or you can practice mindfulness while walking, doing Tai Chi, meditating, or taking a mindfulness class. Scan the QR code at the top to access tools and mobile apps. These tools can help you learn and practice mindfulness for stress relief.

S	Specific
M	Measurable
A	Action-oriented
R	Realistic & Relevant
T	Time-based

Set a SMART Goal

I will make one goal I can DO!

Examples:

- I will share information about the COMPACT Act with my loved ones by next weekend.
- I will ask my health care team about available mindfulness classes at my next appointment.

MY GOAL:

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

January 2024

RECORD minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at myhealth.va.gov

Using your smart device, scan this QR code to learn more about practicing mindfulness in daily living.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>DECEMBER 2023</p> <p>S M T W Th F S</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>3 4 5 6 7 8 9</p> <p>10 11 12 13 14 15 16</p> <p>17 18 19 20 21 22 23</p> <p>24 25 26 27 28 29 30</p> <p>31</p>	<p>New Year's Day Outpatient Clinics Closed</p> <p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p> <p>lbs.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p> <p>lbs.</p>
<p>14</p>	<p>Martin Luther King Jr. Day Outpatient Clinics Closed</p> <p>15</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>lbs.</p>
<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>lbs.</p>
<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>FEBRUARY 2024</p> <p>S M T W Th F S</p> <p>1 2 3</p> <p>4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>11 12 13 14 15 16 17</p> <p>18 19 20 21 22 23 24</p> <p>25 26 27 28 29</p>	<p> Healthy Living</p> <p>MANAGE STRESS: Practice mindful breathing for a few minutes by focusing on the in and out of your breathing.</p>	



Tai Chi and Yoga

These mind-body practices benefit heart health, including ways to move your body and help manage stress. Tai Chi is an ancient Chinese martial art. It combines slow-flowing movements with focused breathing, mindful awareness, and visualization. Yoga is also an ancient practice from India. It involves different postures, with focused breathing and relaxation or meditation.

These practices can also help improve mood, calm the mind, strengthen muscles, and improve balance. Movements can be adapted for people of all abilities.



Women Have Heart

High blood pressure and diabetes are known risk factors for heart disease. Did you know that women Veterans may have additional factors that can add to the risk for heart disease? Examples include PTSD and other experiences of trauma during your military experience.

VA offers a variety of services to support women’s heart health. These include heart health risk assessments,

prevention services, screening tests, and treatment. Making lifestyle changes is the best way to prevent heart disease, such as striving for a healthy weight, getting quality sleep, and being physically active. To access VA’s heart health services, talk to your VA provider to help you set up your heart health plan. You can also call, text, or chat the Women Veterans Call Center: 855-829-6636 or visit **www.womenshealth.va.gov**.

S	Specific
M	Measurable
A	Action-oriented
R	Realistic & Relevant
T	Time-based

Set a SMART Goal

I will make one goal I can DO!

Examples:

- I will ask my provider about heart health screenings at my appointment next month.
- I will take a beginner Tai Chi class at my local community center within two weeks.

MY GOAL:






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

February 2024

RECORD minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at myhealth.va.gov

Using your smart device, scan this QR code to learn about the "Go Red for Women" campaign to raise awareness about women's heart health.



SUNDAY							MONDAY							TUESDAY							WEDNESDAY							THURSDAY							FRIDAY							SATURDAY													
JANUARY 2024 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							MARCH 2024 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							6							7							8							9							 10													
11							12							13							14							15							16							 17													
18							Presidents' Day Washington's Birthday Outpatient Clinics Closed							19							20							21							22							23							 24						
25							26							27							28							29							 STRIVE FOR A HEALTHY WEIGHT: Let family and friends know how they can support you in reaching your healthy weight goal.																				



Mindful Eating

Do you ever finish eating a meal and not remember eating it? Many of us are busy thinking about other things while we eat. We plan what to do next, scroll through devices, or do work. Mindful eating is the opposite. It uses all your senses to enjoy every bite. This can help avoid stress eating and cut down on portions. Eating more mindfully slows you down so your brain has enough time to get the signal from your stomach that you are full.

The most important thing to do to eat more mindfully is to avoid distractions while you eat. Scan this code to learn more:



Get Help from a Dietitian

Your food and lifestyle choices impact your whole health. Dietitians are food and nutrition experts in disease prevention and management. Top reasons for meeting with a dietitian include:

- You want to eat smarter to enjoy a healthier lifestyle.
- You want help managing diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, or other chronic diseases.

- You need to gain or lose weight or are considering bariatric surgery.

Your dietitian will explain how your food choices impact your health and develop a personalized nutrition plan with you. Ask your VA PACT or health care team to see a dietitian, in-person or by virtual visit. You can also send a Secure Message through your MyHealthVet account.

S	Specific
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Set a SMART Goal

I will make one goal I can DO!

Examples:

- At next week's appointment, I will ask my health care team about seeing a dietitian to help me manage my high blood pressure better.
- I will schedule 30 minutes to eat dinner at least four days a week.

MY GOAL:

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

March 2024

RECORD minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at myhealth.va.gov

Using your smart device, scan this QR code for VA's Cooking Around the World Cookbook.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 2024 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	APRIL 2024 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			 EAT WISELY: Learn to prepare one new healthy recipe a month to help expand your food choices.	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Daylight Saving Time Begins (Turn clocks ahead one hour.)	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



Ask These Questions

Asking questions when you see a health care provider helps you understand how to take care of your health. It can be difficult to remember what to ask. Try to focus on what you should know by asking three specific questions. There is no need to feel embarrassed if you do not understand something. You can ask them again to clarify:

- 1. What is my main problem?** Ask them to use simple terms to help you better understand.
- 2. What do I need to do?** Ask them to write down specific actions to take care of yourself.
- 3. Why is it important to do this?** Ask how it will help you feel better and live healthier.

The PACT Act and You

If you are a Veteran or their survivor, the PACT Act may benefit you. This new law expands eligibility for VA health care and benefits. It covers Veterans who have been exposed to toxic substances during their military service and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and post-9/11 era. Examples of toxic exposures include burn pits, Agent Orange and other chemicals, air pollutants, radiation, and warfare agents.

The PACT Act expanded and created new presumptive conditions that Veterans can use to apply for benefits. If you have one of these conditions, VA automatically assumes your service caused your condition. Examples include types of cancer and high blood pressure. Veterans previously denied a toxic exposure-related disability claim can file a supplemental claim. To learn more visit www.VA.gov/PACT.

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Set a SMART Goal

I will make one goal I can DO!

Examples:

- I will visit the PACT Act website this week to learn how to file a supplemental claim.
- I will record the three questions to ask on my smartphone before my next appointment in two weeks.

MY GOAL:

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

April 2024

RECORD minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at myhealth.va.gov

Using your smart device, scan this QR code to watch a video about what the PACT Act means for you.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>MARCH 2024</p> <p>S M T W Th F S</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>3 4 5 6 7 8 9</p> <p>10 11 12 13 14 15 16</p> <p>17 18 19 20 21 22 23</p> <p>24 25 26 27 28 29 30</p> <p>31</p>	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				
					<p>BE INVOLVED IN YOUR CARE: Bring a medication list to your health care appointments so you have more time to ask questions you want answered.</p>	<p>MAY 2024</p> <p>S M T W Th F S</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>5 6 7 8 9 10 11</p> <p>12 13 14 15 16 17 18</p> <p>19 20 21 22 23 24 25</p> <p>26 27 28 29 30 31</p>



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How to Get Started

- Identify your reasons for wanting to improve your whole health through movement.
- Start slowly and build from there. Set small goals to help keep you motivated. When you reach your goal, reward yourself with something you enjoy doing.
- Add more movement to your daily routine. For example, go for a morning walk.
- Seek support from family and friends. Ask them to encourage you or be your walking buddy.
- Take movement breaks from sitting too long.
- For more ways to get started, scan this code:



Be Active and Move

One of the best things you can do for your whole health is to move your body and be physically active. In the short term, being active boosts your energy and mood, and helps you sleep better. In the long-term, regular movement helps prevent and manage many health issues, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, falls, sleep problems, depression, anxiety, and dementia.

Some types of movement increase stamina while others increase strength, balance, or flexibility. These abilities make it easier to do more of the things you want to do in your life. You do not have to go to the gym or buy special equipment. The key is to do things you enjoy. The list of options is endless: swimming, gardening, playing a sport, cycling, yoga, playing with a child or your pet, and more.

Set a SMART Goal

I will make one goal I can DO!

Examples:

- I will ask my buddy to play pickle ball with me twice a week.
- I will ask my provider about doing activities to help me manage diabetes at my appointment in three weeks.

MY GOAL:

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

May 2024

RECORD minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at myhealth.va.gov

Using your smart device, scan this QR code for a 10-minute exercise routine for all abilities.



SUNDAY							MONDAY							TUESDAY							WEDNESDAY							THURSDAY							FRIDAY							SATURDAY						
APRIL 2024 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							JUNE 2024 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							 BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE: If you have a chronic condition, talk to your provider about activities that are a good fit for you.							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							Memorial Day Outpatient Clinics Closed							28							29							30							31													



Care for LGBTQ+ Veterans

All Veterans are welcome at VA, serving all who served. LGBTQ+ refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other identities. LGBTQ+ Veterans face unique challenges and health risks. All health care services are offered in an affirming, inclusive, and respectful environment. Learn about health services, resources, and support available for LGBTQ+ Veterans and their families at www.patientcare.va.gov/lgbt.

Scan this QR code to find your local facility's LGBTQ+ Veteran Care Coordinator (VCC):



Your Path to Better Sleep

Getting quality sleep gives your body time to fix and heal itself so you wake up feeling refreshed and energized. It gives your brain time to grow and learn. Quality sleep also helps you stay at a healthy weight, reduces stress, improves your mood, and reduces the risk of heart disease, depression, and diabetes. If you struggle with sleep, VA's Path to Better Sleep is a free, online program to help you find sleep solutions:

- **Sleep Check-up:** This 5-minute survey helps identify possible sleep disorders and available treatment options.
- **Sleep 101:** This course helps you identify habits that interfere with sleep and learn better sleep habits.
- **Sleep EZ:** If you can't fall asleep or stay asleep, this evidence-based course helps you manage insomnia.
- **BreatheEZ:** Learn about sleep apnea symptoms.

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Set a SMART Goal

I will make one goal I can DO!

Examples:

- I will go to www.veterantraining.va.gov/sleep to learn about sleep apnea and share it with my partner by tomorrow night.
- I will contact my local LGBTQ+ VCC by the end of this week.

MY GOAL:

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

June 2024

RECORD minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at myhealth.va.gov

Using your smart device, scan this QR code to access VA's Path to Better Sleep Program.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
<p>MAY 2024</p> <p>S M T W Th F S</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>5 6 7 8 9 10 11</p> <p>12 13 14 15 16 17 18</p> <p>19 20 21 22 23 24 25</p> <p>26 27 28 29 30 31</p>	<p>JULY 2024</p> <p>S M T W Th F S</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6</p> <p>7 8 9 10 11 12 13</p> <p>14 15 16 17 18 19 20</p> <p>21 22 23 24 25 26 27</p> <p>28 29 30 31</p>				<p>SLEEP WELL: Avoid using mobile devices when you get into bed to promote better sleep.</p>	1	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
16	17	18	Juneteenth Outpatient Clinics Closed	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
30							



Check Your Feet

Taking care of your feet is another important part of diabetes self-care. Diabetic nerve damage and reduced blood flow to your feet can make it harder to feel pain and fight infections. Follow these tips to prevent injury and reduce the risk of foot problems:

- Wash your feet every day. Use warm water. Check for sores, cuts, blisters, or redness. Apply a gentle moisturizer.
- Keep toenails trimmed straight.
- Wear comfortable footwear and avoid going barefoot.
- Stay active. This helps improve blood circulation in your feet.
- If you notice foot problems, like numbness or cuts that will not heal, contact your provider.



Blood Sugars On Target

If you have diabetes, aim to keep blood sugar levels in your target range. This will help prevent or delay long-term serious health problems and improve your energy levels and mood. Work with your health care team to set your personal targets. To keep blood sugars in a healthy range:

- **Eat a healthy, balanced diet.** Include plenty of vegetables and fruit. Eat at regular times and avoid sugary drinks and foods.
- **Be physically active.** Aim for at least 30 minutes of movement on most days.
- **Take medicines as prescribed.** This may include insulin injections.
- **Check your blood sugar levels.** Your results may mean adjusting your diet, activity, and/or medicines. Your health care team can teach you how.
- **Manage stress levels.** Try deep breathing, doing a hobby, or taking a walk.

S	Specific
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Set a SMART Goal

I will make one goal I can DO!

Examples:

- I will talk to my provider about what my target blood sugar levels should be during my visit in one week.
- I will check my feet at least three times this week after I finish taking my shower.

MY GOAL:

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

July 2024

RECORD minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at myhealth.va.gov

Using your smart device, scan this QR code to learn about the 15-15 rule for managing hypoglycemia (low blood sugar).



SUNDAY							MONDAY							TUESDAY							WEDNESDAY							THURSDAY							FRIDAY							SATURDAY													
JUNE 2024 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	Independence Day Outpatient Clinics Closed							4	5	lbs.							6																													
7							8							9							10							11							12							lbs.							13						
14							15							16							17							18							19							lbs.							20						
21							22							23							24							25							26							lbs.							27						
28							29							30							31							 BE INVOLVED IN YOUR CARE: If you have diabetes, have comprehensive foot and eye exams at least once a year.							AUGUST 2024 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																				



Breastfeeding Support

Breastfeeding can be challenging, especially for new moms. Classes are offered to help learn breastfeeding skills, including pumping and storing milk. Lactation professionals help you deal with problems, such as nipple soreness and breast engorgement. Support groups are also available so breastfeeding moms can share concerns and learn from other moms. Other VA resources include breast pumps and nursing and pumping bras.

Contact the Maternity Care Coordinator (MCC) or lactation professional at your local VA facility for more information.



Women's Reproductive Health

As a woman and a Veteran, you have specific reproductive health care needs. VA offers gender-sensitive care to help you meet your reproductive health goals.

To access these services, talk to your primary care provider or contact the Women Veterans Program Manager at your nearest VA medical center. You can also call or text the Women Veterans Call Center at 855-829-6636.

- **Maternity care and pregnancy:** From pre-pregnancy to postpartum
- **Birth control:** Devices for contraception and hormonal methods
- **Infertility:** Counseling, genetic testing, fertility medications, and surgery
- **Cancer:** Screenings and recommended vaccines
- **Sexual health:** Screenings for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and mental health support

S	Specific
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Set a SMART Goal

I will make one goal I can DO!

Examples:

- I will contact my local MCC this week to sign up for the next available breastfeeding class.
- I will ask my provider about STI screenings recommended at next month's appointment.

MY GOAL:

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

August 2024

RECORD minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at myhealth.va.gov

Using your smart device, scan this QR code to learn about health care services for women Veterans.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>JULY 2024</p> <p>S M T W Th F S</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6</p> <p>7 8 9 10 11 12 13</p> <p>14 15 16 17 18 19 20</p> <p>21 22 23 24 25 26 27</p> <p>28 29 30 31</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 2024</p> <p>S M T W Th F S</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>8 9 10 11 12 13 14</p> <p>15 16 17 18 19 20 21</p> <p>22 23 24 25 26 27 28</p> <p>29 30</p>		 <p>BE SAFE: If you are being treated for an STI, your partner may also need to be treated to prevent you from being re-infected.</p>	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



Hydrate for Health

Every part of your body needs water to work properly. Drinking 6 to 8 cups of water is reasonable for most adults to stay well hydrated. More water is needed when you exercise and in hot and humid conditions. Other drinks can help, such as fruit and vegetable juices, milk, tea, and coffee, even those with caffeine. Try to avoid or limit sugary drinks.

Foods can also make up part of your daily water intake. Those with high water content include cucumber, watermelon, cantaloupe, orange, grapefruit, pineapple, and tomato. Include some of these foods in your hurricane-preparedness kit.



Flu Shot Season

Getting a flu shot every year is the best way to protect yourself from the flu. Vaccination can reduce flu illnesses and severity, doctor visits, and flu-related hospitalizations. Having chronic conditions, like lung disease, heart disease, or diabetes, can cause more severe flu symptoms. Flu shots also protect your family at a greater risk for serious flu illness, including babies and those with chronic conditions.

Flu shots are free for eligible Veterans. To check your eligibility, call 800-698-2411 or your local VA facility.

To find a nearby location where you can get your flu shot, visit **www.va.gov/find-locations**. Under facility type, select VA health, in-network pharmacy, or urgent care. You can also call your local VA facility to locate an in-network location. Always call ahead to make sure they offer the flu vaccine.

S	Specific
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Set a SMART Goal

I will make one goal I can DO!

Examples:

- I will get my free flu shot from a neighborhood in-network pharmacy by the weekend.
- I will keep oranges in my hurricane-preparedness cooler during peak hurricane season.

MY GOAL:

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

September 2024

RECORD minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at myhealth.va.gov

Using your smart device, scan this QR code for a tool to learn about the flu shot, and to help you think about the reasons for getting a flu shot.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY																																										
1 Labor Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	2	3	4	5	6	7 lbs.																																										
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 lbs.																																										
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28 lbs.																																										
29	30	<p>GET RECOMMENDED SCREENINGS & SHOTS: Get your flu shot as soon as it is available to protect you for the entire flu season.</p>			<p>AUGUST 2024</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>Th</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td></tr> <tr><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td></tr> </table>		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
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Toxic Exposure Screening

Under the PACT Act, all enrolled Veterans can receive a toxic exposure screening at any VA hospital or clinic. During your screening, you are asked if you think you were exposed to toxic materials during your military service. These may include burn pits, Gulf-war related exposures, Agent Orange, and others. Once your responses are reviewed, you may be connected to services to support your current and long-term health care needs.

This screening takes only 10 minutes. Ask your provider about getting screened or contact your local VA health facility.



FIT to Fight Cancer

Colorectal cancer usually develops from polyps (growths) in the colon or rectum. Screening is done to find cancer earlier when treatments are more effective.

Screening is recommended for people aged 45 to 75 years old with an average risk. Talk to your provider if you have a family history of colon or rectal cancer.

You have options for which screening test you choose. One easy test is the fecal immunochemical test (FIT) that you can do in the privacy and convenience of your own home. It works by detecting small amounts of blood in the stool sample.

You can receive a test kit from your VA provider, or ask about other colorectal cancer screening options, such as a colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy.



S	Specific
M	Measurable
A	Action-oriented
R	Realistic & Relevant
T	Time-based

Set a SMART Goal

I will make one goal I can DO!

Examples:

- I will complete my FIT test I received from my provider and put it in the mail this week.
- I will make an appointment to be screened for toxic exposures this week.

MY GOAL:

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

October 2024

RECORD minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at myhealth.va.gov

Using your smart device, scan this QR code to learn more about screening options for colorectal cancer.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
<p>SEPTEMBER 2024</p> <p>S M T W Th F S</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>8 9 10 11 12 13 14</p> <p>15 16 17 18 19 20 21</p> <p>22 23 24 25 26 27 28</p> <p>29 30</p>		1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13	<p>Columbus Day Outpatient Clinics Closed</p> <p>Indigenous Peoples' Day</p>	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
27	28	29	30	31	<p> Healthy Living</p> <p>GET RECOMMENDED SCREENINGS & SHOTS: If you are 76-85 years old, ask your provider about colorectal cancer screenings.</p>	<p>NOVEMBER 2024</p> <p>S M T W Th F S</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>3 4 5 6 7 8 9</p> <p>10 11 12 13 14 15 16</p> <p>17 18 19 20 21 22 23</p> <p>24 25 26 27 28 29 30</p>	



Your Reasons to Quit

If you are thinking about quitting tobacco, do you know why you want to quit? If you are not sure, below are some common reasons people want to quit. Their reasons may help identify your reasons:

- **My Health:** I will breathe easier. My risks of having cancer and heart attacks will go down.
- **My Lifestyle:** I will have more money. I don't want it to control my life.
- **My Family Life:** My children will be healthier. I will be around to share in my family's special moments in the future.

For more quit tobacco tools and resources, scan this code:



Quit Benefits -

You may know that quitting tobacco is one of the best things you can do for your health. Did you know the benefits of quitting start almost immediately? Whether you are thinking about quitting or are currently on your quit journey, remind yourself of the rewards of quitting:

- **20 minutes:** Heart rate and blood pressure drops.
- **12 hours:** Carbon monoxide in blood drops to normal.

- **2 weeks – 3 months:** Circulation and lung function improves; heart attack risk begins to drop.
- **1 – 9 months:** You cough less and breathe easier.
- **2 – 5 years:** Risks of some cancers are cut in half.
- **10 years:** Risk of dying from lung cancer is cut in half.
- **15 years:** Risk of coronary heart disease is the same as a nonsmoker's risk.

S	Specific
M	Measurable
A	Action-oriented
R	Realistic & Relevant
T	Time-based

Set a SMART Goal

I will make one goal I can DO!

Examples:

- I will set a date to quit tobacco by the end of next week and circle it on my calendar.
- I will text VET to 47848 to sign up for SmokefreeVET to receive daily texts to help me stay motivated and on track.

MY GOAL:

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

November 2024

RECORD minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at myhealth.va.gov

Using your smart device, scan this QR code to identify your triggers for using tobacco and get tips to help deal with them.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
<p>OCTOBER 2024</p> <p>S M T W Th F S</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>6 7 8 9 10 11 12</p> <p>13 14 15 16 17 18 19</p> <p>20 21 22 23 24 25 26</p> <p>27 28 29 30 31</p>	<p>DECEMBER 2024</p> <p>S M T W Th F S</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>8 9 10 11 12 13 14</p> <p>15 16 17 18 19 20 21</p> <p>22 23 24 25 26 27 28</p> <p>29 30 31</p>			<p>BE TOBACCO FREE: Once you make a list of your reasons to quit, put it in a place where you can see it often to help you stay motivated to quit.</p>	1	2	
<p>Daylight Saving Time Ends (Turn clocks back one hour.)</p> <p>3</p>	4	5	6	7	8	9	
10	Veterans Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
24	25	26	27	Thanksgiving Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	28	29	30



S.A.V.E. Helps Prevent Suicide

VA S.A.V.E. Training will help when you are with a Veteran who is in crisis or at risk for suicide:

- **S:** Learn to recognize the signs of suicidal thinking. These include hopelessness, withdrawing from loved ones, rage or anger, anxiety, sleeplessness, excessive guilt, and mood swings.
- **A:** Ask “Are you thinking of killing yourself?”
- **V:** Validate their experience. Make encouraging comments.
- **E:** Encourage them to get treatment. Try to get them to seek immediate help by calling 911 or the Veterans Crisis Line at 988 and press 1.



Enjoy Alcohol Responsibly

Set an intention to drink responsibly that fits with your wellness goals. Practice saying ‘no thanks’ so you will be ready with a response when offered a drink. Choose alcohol-free drinks more often or have an alcohol-free ‘spacer’ between drinks.

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.

S	Specific
M	Measurable
A	Action-oriented
R	Realistic & Relevant
T	Time-based

Set a SMART Goal

I will make one goal I can DO!

Examples:

- I will offer non-alcoholic drinks to guests this month.
- I will ask my provider about S.A.V.E. training classes in my area within one week.

MY GOAL:

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

December 2024

RECORD minutes exercised, blood pressure & blood sugar and/or log these on My HealthVet at myhealth.va.gov

Using your smart device, scan this QR code for Veterans' stories you can relate to about alcohol use disorder.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
22	23	24	Christmas Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					



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

NOVEMBER 2024

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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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JANUARY 2025

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	



Appointment Checklist

If you are newly enrolled in VA health care, here is a checklist of what you can do to get started and things you may bring to your first appointment:



What to Do

- Learn the names of your Primary Care PACT members, and how to contact them.
- Gather medical records from private care providers.
- Register for "Secure Messaging" at My HealthVet at **www.myhealth.va.gov**.
- Learn how to make, change, or cancel appointments.
- Learn how to fill, refill, and renew prescriptions.
- Learn where to get care after hours and what to do in case of an emergency.



Outpatient Resources

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In addition to seeing doctors and nurses at your outpatient appointment, you may see other health care specialists, such as:

- **Pharmacist:** Reviews your medications and helps you understand why your medicine was prescribed.
- **Social Worker:** Sends referrals for financial assistance, housing, support groups, caregiver programs, legal aid, transportation, and more.
- **Psychologist:** Provides short-term treatment for behavioral health issues. Helps connect you to mental health clinics.
- **Dietitian:** Develops a personalized nutrition plan to help prevent or manage a chronic condition.
- **Audiologist:** Assesses hearing and recommends hearing aids and ear implants. Helps with managing tinnitus.

Things to Bring

- Any medical records, reports, test results, etc., from another facility or from your local doctor
- All pill bottles of medicines you take, including over-the-counter medicines, supplements, and/or herbal remedies
- If you have one, a Living Will or Advance Directive
- Your blood pressure or blood sugar readings, if you have them. Also, bring your blood sugar and/or blood pressure machine if you have one.
- Any health insurance information you have

Health Screenings

These recommended screenings apply to persons of average risk. Always discuss which health screenings you need with your VA provider based on your personal health risk and medical history.

Screening Test or Exam	Recommendation	Date Done
High cholesterol	Talk with your provider.	
Colon cancer screening	Age 45–75: Frequency depends on test. Age 76–85: Talk with your provider.	
Depression	Every year	
High blood pressure	Every year	
HIV infection	At least once; annually with ongoing risk factors and all pregnant Veterans	
Overweight & obesity	Every year	
Tobacco use	Every visit	

FOR MEN	Recommendation	Date Done
Abdominal aortic aneurysm	Age 65–75: Talk with your provider.	
Prostate cancer	Age 55–69: Talk with your provider.	
Syphilis & other STIs	Talk with your provider.	

FOR WOMEN	Recommendation	Date Done
Breast cancer	Age 40–44: May begin annual screening Age 45–54: Every year Age 55–74: Every 1–2 years Age 75 & older: Talk with your provider.	
Cervical cancer	Age 21–29: Every 3 years Age 30–65: Every 3–5 years depending on test chosen	
Gonorrhea, Chlamydia & Syphilis	Talk with your provider. Screening for syphilis is recommended for all pregnant Veterans.	
Osteoporosis	Age 18–64: Recommended for some Age 65 & older: Recommended once	

Talk with your health care team about screenings for Hepatitis B and C, PTSD, lung cancer, military sexual trauma, and diabetes. Visit prevention.va.gov for the full recommended list.

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	> 130/80		

Discuss your target goal with your VA provider. Prehypertension or elevated blood pressure 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 generally acceptable for those with no health issues.

Body Mass Index (BMI)	Ranges	My Goal	Keep Records
Find your BMI at cdc.gov/healthyweight			
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		
Prediabetes (for diagnosing)	100–125		
Diabetes (for diagnosing)	126+		
A1C (for diagnosing prediabetes)	5.7–6.4		
A1C (for diagnosing diabetes)	6.5+		



Chimichurri Sauce

Ingredients

- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and left whole
- 1 cup packed fresh parsley leaves
- 1 tablespoon packed fresh oregano leaves
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Pinch crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- Pinch ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup olive oil

Directions

Put the garlic cloves, parsley, and oregano in a food processor and pulse about 30-50 seconds, scraping down the sides as needed. Add the vinegar, salt, crushed red pepper (if using), and black pepper. Pulse to combine, about 30 seconds. Transfer the mixture to a medium bowl and add the oil, stirring gently to combine. Serve or store in the refrigerator for up to 7 days. Serve with seafood, poultry, rice, vegetables, or roasted potatoes.

Serves 6 (2 Tbsp.). Per Serving: 90 Calories, 9 g total fat, 3 g saturated fat, 100 mg sodium, 1 g carbohydrates, 1 g fiber, and 0 g protein



Virgin Piña Colada

Ingredients

- 1 cup lite coconut milk
- 2 cups chopped fresh or frozen ripe pineapple (about 1/2 whole pineapple)
- 1-2 teaspoons sweetener (e.g., honey, agave, sugar, etc.), or 2 drops of liquid stevia, to taste (optional and not included in nutritional analysis)
- 1 cup ice cubes

Directions

Add the coconut milk, pineapple, and selected sweetener (if using) to a blender. Blend until completely smooth, about 2-3 minutes. Add the ice and blend until smooth, about 1-2 minutes. Pour the mixture into drinking glasses. Serve cold. For a thicker milkshake-like texture, use frozen pineapple and leave out the ice cubes.

Serves 2. Per Serving: 172 calories, 8 g total fat, 6 g saturated fat, 26 mg sodium, 24 g carbohydrates, 2 g fiber, and 1 g protein.



Air-Fried Chicken Drumsticks

Ingredients

- 1/2 teaspoon sweet or smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 4 (4- to 6-ounce) chicken drumsticks (about 1 pound total), pat dry with paper towels
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

Directions

In a small bowl, stir together the paprika, garlic powder, black pepper, and salt. Coat the drumsticks with the olive oil and sprinkle with the seasoning mixture, rubbing to coat evenly. Preheat an air fryer to 400°F. Place the drumsticks in the basket and cook for 10 minutes. Use tongs to flip the drumsticks over and cook for 8 minutes. Check the internal temperature for doneness of 165-175°F. If not cooked through, cook for 2-5 minutes until done.

Serves 2. Per Serving: 300 calories, 19 g total fat, 5 g saturated fat, 380 mg sodium, 1 g carbohydrates, 0 g fiber, and 29 g protein. (To reduce the fat content, remove the skin before cooking, if desired.)

VA Services and Resources – When You Need Them

Veteran Benefits

1-800-827-1000

va.gov

vets.gov

choose.va.gov

www.ebenefits.va.gov

Health Benefits

1-877-222-VETS (8387)

va.gov/health-care

MyVA411 Information Line, 24/7

1-800-MYVA411 (800-698-2411)

Ask VA (AVA)

ask.va.gov

Access and Quality in VA Healthcare

www.accesstocare.va.gov

Burials & Memorials

1-800-827-1000

va.gov/burials-memorials

Center for Minority Veterans

va.gov/centerforminorityveterans

Community Care (MISSION Act)

1-800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411)

va.gov/communitycare

Devices for the Deaf (TDD)

Dial 711

Education & Training

1-888-442-4551

va.gov/education

Emergency Medical Care

va.gov/communitycare/programs/veterans/emergency_care.asp

Homeless Programs

1-877-424-3838

va.gov/homeless

LGBTQ+ Health Program

patientcare.va.gov/LGBT

Mental Health

mentalhealth.va.gov

Military Exposures

(Agent Orange, Gulf War Illnesses, etc.)

publichealth.va.gov

National Center for Patient Safety

patientsafety.va.gov

National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

ptsd.va.gov

Office of Survivors Assistance

va.gov/survivors

Quit VET Quitline & SmokeFreeVET

1-855-QuitVET (855-784-8838)

veterans.smokefree.gov

Traveling Veteran Coordinator

va.gov/health-care/about-va-health-benefits/where-you-go-for-care

VA Caregiver Support Program

1-855-260-3274

caregiver.va.gov

VA Facility & Urgent Care Locator

va.gov/find-locations

VHA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

prevention.va.gov

Whole Health

va.gov/wholehealth

Women Veterans Health Care

1-855-829-6636

womenshealth.va.gov



youtube.com/VeteransHealthAdmin

youtube.com/DeptVetAffairs

Mobile Health

VA Mobile Apps - mobile.va.gov



Health Chat



Live Whole Health



Ask a Pharmacist



Pain Coach



COVID Coach



PTSD Coach



Mental Health Checkup



Stay Quit Coach



Insomnia Coach



OR text to 838255 • veteranscrisisline.net



VA Sunshine Healthcare Network

visn8.va.gov



at all Medical Centers



The Right Care, Right Now

1-877-741-3400 24/7/365 Virtual Urgent Care

NOTE: This map shows medical center locations only and associated service areas. To locate a VA healthcare center, outpatient clinic, or community based outpatient clinic near you, please use VA's facility locator at: www.va.gov/find-locations.

Bruce W. Carter VA Medical Center
1201 NW 16th Street
Miami, FL 33125
305-575-7000 • 888-276-1785
www.va.gov/miami-health-care

C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center
10000 Bay Pines Blvd.
Bay Pines, FL 33744
727-398-6661 • 888-820-0230
www.va.gov/bay-pines-health-care

James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital
13000 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33612
813-972-2000 • 888-716-7787
www.va.gov/tampa-health-care

Lake City VA Medical Center
619 South Marion Avenue
Lake City, FL 32025
386-755-3016 • 800-308-8387
www.va.gov/north-florida-health-care

Malcom Randall VA Medical Center
1601 SW Archer Road
Gainesville, FL 32608
352-376-1611 • 800-324-8387
www.va.gov/north-florida-health-care

Orlando VA Healthcare System
13800 Veterans Way
Orlando, FL 32827
407-631-1000 • 800-922-7521
www.va.gov/orlando-health-care

West Palm Beach VA Medical Center
7305 North Military Trail
West Palm Beach, FL 33410
561-422-8262 • 800-972-8262
www.va.gov/west-palm-beach-health-care

VA Caribbean Healthcare System
10 Casia Street
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00921
787-641-7582 • 800-449-8729
www.va.gov/caribbean-health-care

