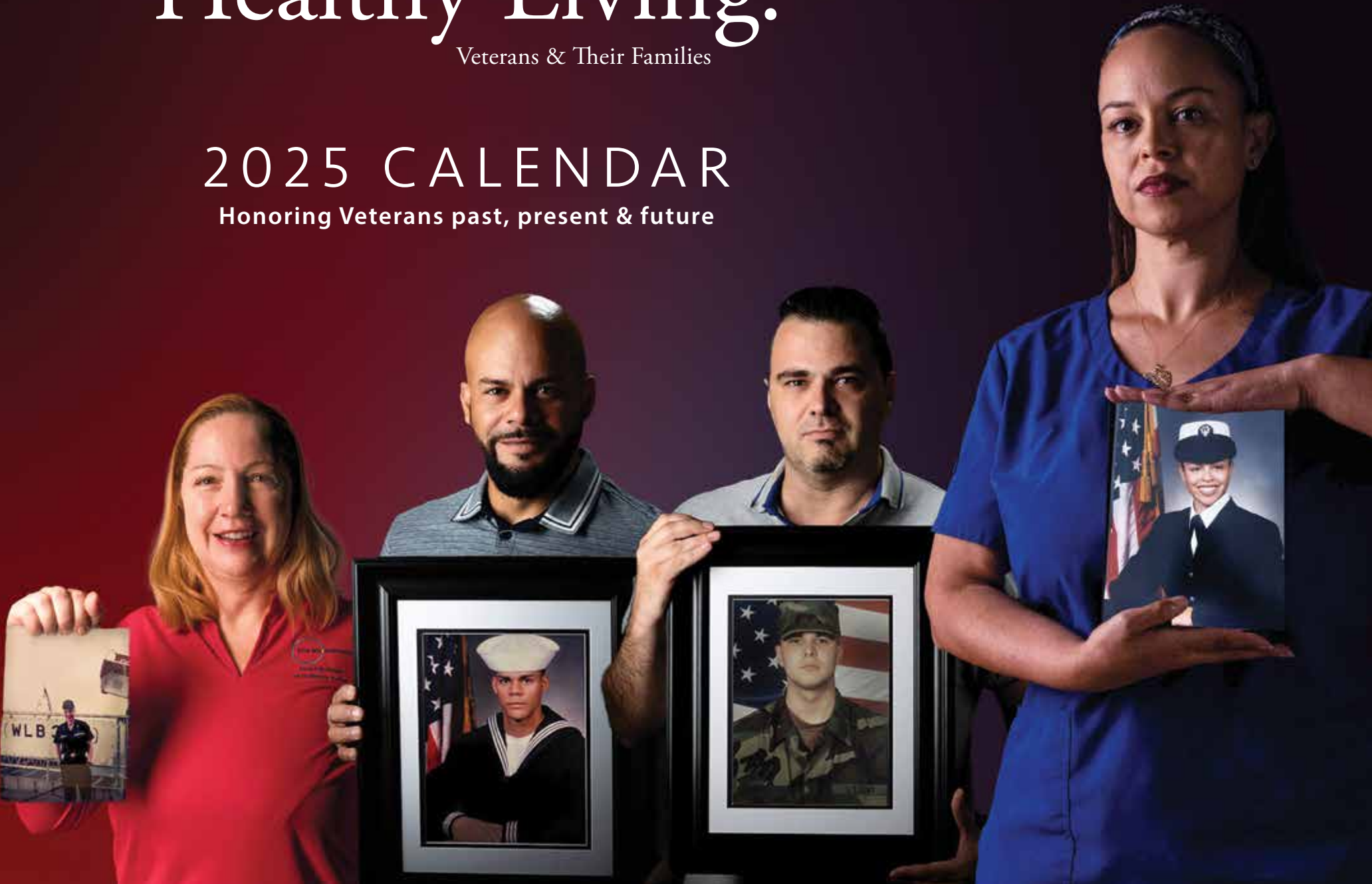


Healthy Living!

Veterans & Their Families

2025 CALENDAR

Honoring Veterans past, present & future





Whole Health for You

VA's Whole Health approach is about the whole you! This means providing care for all parts of your health and well-being: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. You are at the center of your care with what matters most to you – your values, needs, preferences, and goals. The Circle of Health (above) shows that all parts of your health are connected. Self-care, like strengthening relationships or getting quality sleep, is a key part of your whole health. Mindful awareness helps to keep you grounded so you can 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 Opinion Counts!

We are always looking to improve the Healthy Living Calendar. We invite you to take less than five minutes to tell us how we are doing. Your feedback will help us present topics that matter to you.

Using your smart device, scan the Quick Response (QR) 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. A message with a link will pop up. Tap the link.





Make This Calendar 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 web links 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, etc. in the grids. Or keep track in My HealthVet at **myhealth.va.gov**.
- **Try it.** Make one of the healthy recipes near the back of the calendar. Explore new dishes or new ways to prepare them.



SMART Goals Your Way

Use SMART goals to help create a path to a healthier you. First, think about why you want to make a change in your life. Reflect on how it fits with your life's purpose and personal values. Next, 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.



Breathe to Relieve Stress

When stress levels are high, breathing becomes shallow and often fast. Breathing exercises can help slow your breathing, take deeper breaths, and control your exhales. This allows your body to release “feel good” hormones and reduce stress levels. Here is one simple breathing exercise to try:

- Square (Box) Breathing: Breathe in and hold for two to four counts, breathe out and hold for two to four counts. Repeat for two to five minutes.

- Scan this QR code for more breathing exercises to try:



Reflect and Plan

A new year can be a good time to reflect on how you want to live your life to the fullest. Perhaps you want to strengthen a personal relationship or learn ways to manage stress. Whatever it is, your VA health care team is here to help every step of the way. A good place to start is to complete a Personal Health Inventory (PHI) to pinpoint some priorities (see more in October: **Your PHI**).

Your health care team will help you set SMART goals to stay on track with your priorities. They will recommend and connect you with a wide range of VA’s medical care, programs, and services that are a good fit for your whole health. VA’s Whole Health approach to care and the Healthy Living Messages will personalize your care so that it meets your unique needs, values, and preferences.

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 read about the PHI at www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/phi.asp within the next two weeks.
- I will practice box breathing for three minutes before bedtime, three times this week.

MY GOAL:

Blank area for writing a SMART goal.

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

Blank area for explaining the motivation for the goal.

January 2025

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

Scan this QR code for effective ways to manage stress.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<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>FEBRUARY 2025</p> <p>S M T W Th F S</p> <p>1</p> <p>2 3 4 5 6 7 8</p> <p>9 10 11 12 13 14 15</p> <p>16 17 18 19 20 21 22</p> <p>23 24 25 26 27 28</p>		<p>New Year's Day Outpatient Clinics Closed</p> <p>1</p>	2	3	<p>4</p> <p>lbs.</p>
5	6	7	8	9	10	<p>11</p> <p>lbs.</p>
12	13	14	15	16	17	<p>18</p> <p>lbs.</p>
19	<p>Martin Luther King Jr. Day Outpatient Clinics Closed</p> <p>20</p>	21	22	23	24	<p>25</p> <p>lbs.</p>
26	27	28	29	30	31	<p> Healthy Living</p> <p>MANAGE STRESS: If you feel stressed, connect with a trusted friend for support.</p>



MOVE! Program

VA's weight management program is geared to help you lose weight, keep it off, and make lasting lifestyle changes. Whether you participate in person or virtually, MOVE! teaches you how to make small changes over time to improve your eating habits and be more physically active.

You will learn strategies and use tools to set SMART goals, solve problems, and overcome challenges. The skills you learn will also help manage chronic conditions, including diabetes. Scan this code to learn more:



Healthy, Happy Heart

Having added weight puts extra strain on your heart to work harder. This increases the risk for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and high blood pressure. Managing these conditions also becomes more challenging if you are overweight. Losing weight is not easy, but it is worth the effort. Getting started is often the hardest part. It may help to know that losing as little as 5-10% of your weight can improve your heart health.

- List the reasons you want to have a healthy weight. Focus on the possible benefits, such as improved blood pressure or more energy.
- Gradually build healthy eating habits, such as eating more vegetables and lean proteins, and fewer high-fat and sugary foods.
- Work up to 30-60 minutes of physical activity each day. It may help to have an exercise buddy for support.

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 sign up for a fitness class at my local community center within the next two weeks.
- I will ask my provider about heart health screenings that are recommended for me at next month's appointment.

MY GOAL:

Blank space for writing a SMART goal.

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



Blank space for providing reasons for the goal.

February 2025

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

Scan this QR code to learn more about lifestyle changes to improve heart health.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
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	MARCH 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				 STRIVE FOR A HEALTHY WEIGHT: If you stray from your eating plan, be kind to yourself and get back on track at the next meal.	 1	
2	3	4	5	6	7	 8	
9	10	11	12	13	14	 15	
16	Presidents' Day Outpatient Clinics Closed	17	18	19	20	21	 22
23	24	25	26	27	28		



Balance Gut Bacteria

A good balance of helpful bacteria in your gastrointestinal system (gut) is important for it to work properly and for your whole health. Your diet plays a key role in this. Prebiotic foods encourage helpful bacteria to grow. Sources include asparagus, oatmeal, bananas, and beans. Probiotics are active cultures of helpful bacteria in fermented foods like some yogurts, kefir, and sauerkraut.

To learn more about sources of probiotics, scan this code:



Food Security

Many Veterans, like other Americans, struggle to put enough healthy food on the table for themselves and their families. Food security means having enough food for an active and healthy life. Your social worker and dietitian on your VA health care team can help. They can connect you with VA and community resources for better access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food.

Learn more about food assistance at www.usa.gov/Food-Help and these websites:

- Feeding America (www.feedingamerica.org): Provides free food, including mobile pantries and senior food programs
- SNAP & WIC (www.fns.usda.gov): Includes the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and food benefits for pregnant and postpartum women and their children.

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 VA social worker to connect me with local food assistance within the next week.
- I will check labels to make sure my yogurt contains live active cultures the next time I go grocery shopping.

MY GOAL:

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

March 2025

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

Scan this QR code to learn more about getting help with food insecurity.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>FEBRUARY 2025</p> <p>S M T W Th F S</p> <p>1</p> <p>2 3 4 5 6 7 8</p> <p>9 10 11 12 13 14 15</p> <p>16 17 18 19 20 21 22</p> <p>23 24 25 26 27 28</p>	<p>APRIL 2025</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</p>				 <p>EAT WISELY: Talk to your VA dietitian about helpful tips on cooking low-cost meals and shopping on a budget.</p>	 1
2	3	4	5	6	7	 8
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					



Cyber Security Tips

Protect your data and devices from scams and cyber attacks:

- Use strong passwords with more than eight characters that combine numbers, letters, and symbols. Change passwords every six months.
- Do not open attachments, click on links, or respond to emails from unknown senders or companies that ask for personal information.
- Use multi-factor authentication (MFA) as an extra layer of security when accessing accounts or devices.
- Scan this QR code for more tips:



Mental Health Support

VA is here to support your mental health and well-being with the care and resources you need, when you need them. You have many options for accessing VA mental health services before a mental health concern becomes a crisis, such as feeling depressed or having problems managing anger. Talk with your VA provider about these and other care options:

- Vet Centers for individual and group counseling

- Online VA training and smartphone apps for self-help courses and tools
- Telemental health through a virtual connection at your home or VA health facility
- If you are a Veteran in crisis, connect with the Veteran Crisis Line 24/7. Dial 988 then press 1. Veterans in suicidal crisis can also go to any VA or non-VA facility for free emergency health care.

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 visit www.va.gov/find-locations within one week to find the nearest Vet Center.
- I will sign up for MFA for my online bank accounts by the end of this week.

MY GOAL:

Blank area for writing a goal.

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





Blank area for explaining the goal.

April 2025

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

Scan this QR code to learn more about VA mental health care services and programs.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>MARCH 2025</p> <p>S M T W Th F S</p> <p>1</p> <p>2 3 4 5 6 7 8</p> <p>9 10 11 12 13 14 15</p> <p>16 17 18 19 20 21 22</p> <p>23 24 25 26 27 28 29</p> <p>30 31</p>	<p>MAY 2025</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 30 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			



BE INVOLVED IN YOUR CARE: Log out when you are finished accessing your My HealthVet account.



Plan for Hurricanes

Being prepared will help protect you and your family from hurricane danger and damage.

- Find ways to protect your home where wind and water can enter.
- Make an evacuation plan. Know your flood and evacuation zones. Arrange for where you would stay.
- If you live in Florida, watch for tax-free days to save money on emergency supplies.
- Assemble a disaster supply kit. Include a two-week supply of medicine and food. Scan this QR code for a complete kit list of what to include:



Stay Moving

When you stay physically active, it reduces the risk of many chronic conditions, like depression, heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and high blood pressure. Movement also helps to manage these conditions. Plus, staying active allows you to be more independent and continue doing the things you enjoy. Aim for a variety of activities to improve endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility.

- Fit movement and exercise into your day. Start slowly to reduce the risk of injury, especially if you have not exercised in a while.
- Build a walking routine with a friend or join a group fitness class.
- Reward yourself with something special when you reach a SMART goal.
- Try something new. Go dancing, take a swimming class, or join a sports club.

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 do yardwork or gardening for at least 30 minutes a day for the next week.
- I will make an evacuation plan for this hurricane season by June 1st.

MY GOAL:

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

May 2025

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

Scan this QR code to view online exercise classes for older adults.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>APRIL 2025</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</p>	<p>JUNE 2025</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 PHYSICALLY ACTIVE: Talk to your provider if you have a chronic condition about physical activities and movement that are right for you.</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	<p>Memorial Day Outpatient Clinics Closed</p>	26	27	28	29	30 
						31



Pride Counts

June is Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Queer+ (LGBTQ+) PRIDE month. It is a time to recognize and accept the diversity within our community. LGBTQ+ Veterans, who have served since the American revolution, have often not received the recognition they deserved.

Pride is more than a theme. It is about coming together, being seen, and feeling like you belong. Let us acknowledge the contributions of LGBTQ+ Veterans, caregivers, and allies. The VA is working to make sure LGBTQ+ Veterans feel safe and respected, so everyone gets the care they need. Happy PRIDE!



Sleep Matters

Follow supportive daily sleep habits or routines. This will help you set up for the quality sleep your mind and body needs.

- **Sleep schedule:** Try to wake up and go to bed about the same time every day.
- **Healthy daily habits:** Get outside for the best exposure to daylight to help set your body clock. Be physically active. Avoid or limit caffeine and alcohol later in the day or evening.
- **Sleep environment:** Keep your bedroom cool. Block out light with curtains or wear an eye mask. Drown out noise with earplugs, a fan, or a white noise app.
- **Bedtime routine:** Wind down and relax for 30 minutes before bed. Read something light, listen to calming music, or do relaxation exercises. Turn off digital devices and screens and dim the lights.

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 avoid caffeine in coffee, tea, soda, and other caffeinated beverages and products after 2 p.m.
- I will contact my LGBTQ+ Veteran Care Coordinator within the next week.

MY GOAL:

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

June 2025

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

Scan this code for tips on how to set up your sleep environment.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY																																										
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14																																										
15	16	17	18	19 Juneteenth Outpatient Clinics Closed	20	21																																										
22	23	24	25	26	27	28																																										
29	30	<p>SLEEP WELL: Download VA's Insomnia Coach mobile app to help manage insomnia at mobile.va.gov/app/insomnia-coach.</p>			<p>MAY 2025</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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Stay Sun Safe

Spending unprotected time in the sun is not so fun for your skin. The sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays are the major cause of skin cancer, the most common cancer in the U.S.

- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, a wide-brimmed hat, and wrap-around sunglasses.
- Limit time in the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Seek some shade or create your own with an umbrella.
- Shield exposed skin with sunscreen or sunblock of 30 SPF or higher. Scan this QR code for more tips to stay sun safe:



Know Your Medicines

Taking medicine is often an effective part of treating, preventing, or managing diseases and their risk factors. Understanding your medicines will help you get the most benefit to your health. This includes prescription and non-prescription medicine and dietary or herbal supplements. Always keep an up-to-date list of all your medicines and share it during health appointments.

Before starting a new medicine, tell your provider about any allergies or problems you have with other medicines. Be sure to ask:

- How will this help me and why is it a good choice?
- How and when do I take it?
- What types of side effects may occur and what should I do about them?
- Are there any medicines I should avoid while taking this medicine?

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 update the list of all the medicines I take by the end of this week.
- I will take my daily walk before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m. to avoid the sun's strongest UV rays.

MY GOAL:

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

July 2025

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

Scan this QR code to learn more about managing high blood pressure.



SUNDAY							MONDAY							TUESDAY							WEDNESDAY							THURSDAY							FRIDAY							SATURDAY													
JUNE 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							AUGUST 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							1							2							3							Independence Day Outpatient Clinics Closed							4							5						
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13							14							15							16							17							18							19													
20							21							22							23							24							25							26													
27							28							29							30							31							 BE INVOLVED IN YOUR CARE: Make sure you understand why you take your medicine and what side effects to look for.																				



Testing for STIs

If you think you may have a sexually transmitted infection (STI) or have been exposed to one, talk to your VA PACT about being tested and treated. Examples of STIs include gonorrhea, chlamydia, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Most STIs can be effectively treated or managed.

If you prefer to get tested at a non-VA facility, contact your local health department. They may offer free or reduced-cost testing services. Scan this QR code to find STI testing sites near you:



Community Care Network

You may be eligible to get health care from non-VA providers in communities closer to where you live. This VA-community partnership means that VA will pay for your care. Covered health care services include:

- Medical and surgical care
- Behavioral health
- Pharmacy services
- Mind-body therapies, such as hypnotherapy and massage therapy

To be eligible for community care, you must be enrolled in, or eligible for, VA health care and have approval from your VA health care team. You must meet one more requirement, such as you have to drive too far for VA care. Exceptions include urgent or emergency care, which you can access anywhere. Scan this QR code to learn more:



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:

- This week, I will ask my VA provider about accessing behavioral health counseling near where I live.
- I will contact my local health department about getting tested for gonorrhea today.

MY GOAL:

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

August 2025

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

Scan this QR code to learn more about VA's Community Care.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>JULY 2025</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>SEPTEMBER 2025</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</p>			 <p>BE SAFE: Talk with your VA provider about getting vaccines to help prevent certain STIs.</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						



Get Your Flu Shot

It is that time of the year to get your annual flu shot. This is a simple way to protect you and your family. Flu viruses are constantly changing so flu shots (vaccines) are updated every year. Flu shots also help reduce the severity of symptoms if you get the flu. This is even more important if you have a chronic condition, like lung disease or diabetes, which can cause more severe flu symptoms.

Scan this QR code to find a nearby VA facility, in-network pharmacy, or urgent care location where eligible Veterans can get a free flu shot:



Cholesterol Screening

A simple blood test is the only way to know if you have high blood cholesterol. One type of cholesterol, low-density lipoprotein (LDL cholesterol), can lead to plaque buildup in your arteries if it is too high. This can raise your risk for heart disease or stroke. Once you know your cholesterol numbers, you and your PACT can create a plan to keep them in a healthy range or reduce levels if they are high.

A personalized plan is based on your family history, age, sex, lifestyle, preferences, and other factors. It includes ways to develop or maintain heart-healthy eating habits and regular physical activity.

You may also need to take medicine to lower cholesterol. Talk with your VA provider to see if a cholesterol screening test is recommended for you.

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:

- At my next visit, I will ask my VA provider if I should have my blood cholesterol checked.
- I will make an appointment at my local pharmacy to get my free flu shot within one week.

MY GOAL:

Blank area for writing a SMART goal.

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

Blank area for explaining the motivation for the goal.

September 2025

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

Scan this QR code to learn more about cholesterol screening tests and a heart-healthy lifestyle.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>AUGUST 2025</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>Labor Day Outpatient Clinics Closed</p> <p>1</p>	2	3	4	5	<p>6</p> <p>lbs.</p>
7	8	9	10	11	12	<p>13</p> <p>lbs.</p>
14	15	16	17	18	19	<p>20</p> <p>lbs.</p>
21	22	23	24	25	26	<p>27</p> <p>lbs.</p>
28	29	30				
					<p> Healthy Living</p> <p>GET RECOMMENDED SCREENINGS & SHOTS: Use your cholesterol numbers to set target goals for heart health.</p>	<p>OCTOBER 2025</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>



Your PHI

Completing a Personal Health Inventory (PHI) will help you decide what really matters to you in your life and what you want your health for. This tool takes you through the eight self-care areas from the Circle of Health to see how they affect your health (see inside cover). For example, do you feel well rested or do you have people around you that you care about?

You can complete the PHI on your own or with help from your PACT or a Health and Wellness Coach. You can also join a class with other Veterans. Scan this QR code to learn more:



Hearing Screening Tests

Only about one in five people who could benefit from using hearing aids use them. The high cost of hearing aids and other assistive listening devices is one of the main barriers. Veterans enrolled or eligible for VA health care can access audiology care and technologies for their hearing problems. You can schedule a hearing test directly with a VA audiology clinic by contacting your nearest VA care facility. No referral is needed.

If a hearing loss is detected, your audiologist (hearing specialist) will discuss the best treatment options for you. This may include hearing aids, personal amplifiers, assistive devices, or cochlear implants.

Audiology care also provides help in managing tinnitus (ringing in the ears). This may include hearing aids and sound-masking devices, as part of VA's Progressive Tinnitus Management program.

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 audiologist to review how to use my hearing aid at my follow-up appointment in two weeks.
- I will contact my VA clinic to ask about getting help completing my PHI in the next two weeks.

MY GOAL:






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

October 2025

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

Scan this QR code to learn how VA tests for tinnitus.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
<p>SEPTEMBER 2025</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</p>	<p>NOVEMBER 2025</p> <p>S M T W Th F S</p> <p>1</p> <p>2 3 4 5 6 7 8</p> <p>9 10 11 12 13 14 15</p> <p>16 17 18 19 20 21 22</p> <p>23 24 25 26 27 28 29</p> <p>30</p>	 <p>GET RECOMMENDED SCREENINGS & SHOTS: Ask your VA provider or make an appointment directly with your nearest VA audiology clinic for a hearing test.</p>	1	2	3	 4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	 11	
12	<p>Columbus Day Outpatient Clinics Closed</p> <p>Indigenous Peoples' Day</p>	13	14	15	16	17	 18
19	20	21	22	23	24	 25	
26	27	28	29	30	31		



Quit Tobacco Help

- Join a VA quit tobacco group or call a VA Quit VET counselor at 1-855-QUIT VET.
- Visit mentalhealth.va.gov/quit-tobacco or veterans.smokefree.gov.
- SmokefreeVET: Text VET (or VETESP for Spanish) to 47848.
- Community quit lines: 877-44U-QUIT (1-877-448-7848) or 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669). **Puerto Rico residents** call 877-335-2567 or text ESP to 47848.
- Florida residents: www.ahectobacco.com
- Georgia residents: dph.georgia.gov/readytoquit



Create a Gratitude Practice

Many of us express gratitude during Thanksgiving. What about expressing what we are thankful for more often? Having a regular gratitude practice can improve your sleep, mood, and create positive emotions like hope and happiness. This practice can decrease symptoms of depression, anxiety, and chronic pain. Things you are grateful for can range from small, like a smile, or big, like being in recovery.

Here are some tips to try:

- **Reflect during the day.** Identify one or more times a day to reflect on the positive things that happen to you.
- **Make it a part of your bedtime routine.** Write down three good things that happened each day.
- **Express your gratitude.** Set a weekly goal to tell one person that you are grateful for them and why.

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 write down three good things that happened during my day at bedtime, at least three days a week.
- I will use VA's Stay Quit Coach (mobile.va.gov/app/stay-quit-coach) for the next four weeks.

MY GOAL:

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

November 2025

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

Scan this QR code to learn more about practicing gratitude.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY		
<p>OCTOBER 2025</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>DECEMBER 2025</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>BE TOBACCO FREE: Ask your VA provider about medicine to help you quit tobacco.</p>	 1		
<p>Daylight Saving Time Ends (Turn clocks back one hour.)</p> <p>2</p>	3	4	5	6	7	 8		
9	10	<p>Veterans Day Outpatient Clinics Closed</p>	11	12	13	14	 15	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	 22	
23	24	25	26	<p>Thanksgiving Day Outpatient Clinics Closed</p>	27	28	29	 29
30								



Women and Alcohol

Did you know that alcohol affects women differently than men? This is because women generally have smaller bodies that contain less water and different body chemistry.

These differences mean that alcohol can be more harmful to women. Alcohol blood levels become high faster and stay high longer. The immediate effects of alcohol happen more quickly and last longer. Women also have a greater risk for liver disease, heart disease, and some cancers. Be mindful of these differences if you drink. Scan this QR code to learn more:



Reach Out and Listen

For some Veterans, the holidays can be lonely and isolating, especially if they also struggle with their mental health. If you know a Veteran who is having a tough time, reach out to them and be ready to listen.

- Invite them to holiday gatherings or get together for coffee if they prefer.
- Offer to drive or go with them to the Vet Center or other appointments.

- Call or text regularly to check in. Stay calm and do not judge what they say. Remind them that they are not alone.
- Learn to spot the warning signs of a crisis. Encourage them to get emergency crisis care or contact the Veterans Crisis Line by dialing 988 then press 1 for immediate support. You can also call to learn about how to best help or support another Veteran.

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 learn to spot the warning signs of a crisis at **www.veteran-crisisline.net/signs-of-crisis** within one week.
- I will limit my alcohol to no more than one drink per day for the next two weeks.

MY GOAL:

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

December 2025

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

Scan this QR code for a reminder about "being there" to support the people you care about.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 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	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	<p>LIMIT ALCOHOL: Your VA health care team can help you reduce risky drinking or provide treatment options for alcohol dependence.</p>	
						JANUARY 2026 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



Veterans Crisis Line



OR text to 838255 • veteranscrisisline.net

If you are a Veteran in crisis, or know someone who is, you are not alone. The Veterans Crisis Line is free, confidential, and available 24/7. You do not have to be enrolled in VA health care.

- Responders will listen, help you through the crisis, and connect you with emergency care, if needed.

- If you are not in immediate danger, the responder will help you stay safe. They will connect you with VA suicide prevention services for ongoing support and local services, including your local Vet Center.

- Scan this QR code for a small step you can take to help prevent Veteran suicide:



Stay Safe with Naloxone



Using opioids, whether prescribed or illegally, has a significant risk of overdose. Naloxone is an emergency medicine that can rapidly reverse an opioid overdose for a short time. Call 911, and you might need to give a second dose before help arrives. If you or a family member uses opioids, have naloxone on hand. Naloxone is often given as a nasal spray or a pre-filled auto-injection device.



How to Get Naloxone

- If you are a Veteran who uses opioids, your VA provider will prescribe it free of charge.
- If you are not enrolled in VA health care, talk to your local pharmacist, health department, or community group. Many can provide it without a prescription.

Signs of Opioid Overdose

- Fainting, limp body
- Slowed breathing, choking
- Slowed heart rate
- Small pupils; pale, blue, or cold skin

Scan this QR code to learn more about naloxone and how to use it.



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	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 or 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.

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+		



Baked Oatmeal

Ingredients

Nonstick cooking spray

3 cups old-fashioned, rolled oats

1/2 cup brown sugar

2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice or ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

3/4 cup canned pumpkin purée

3 eggs

1-1/2 cups low fat milk or unsweetened plant milk

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray the inside of an 8x8-inch baking dish. In a large mixing bowl, stir together the oats, brown sugar, pumpkin pie spice, baking powder, and salt. Stir in the pumpkin and eggs, then the milk and vanilla. Transfer the mixture to the prepared baking dish. Bake about 30-35 minutes. The center should be firm when tapped and not indent. Let cool for 5 minutes and serve.

Serves 6. Per Serving: 190 Calories, 4 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 255 mg sodium, 32 g carbohydrates, 3 g fiber, and 8 g protein.



Chicken Tortellini Soup

Ingredients

8 cups low-sodium chicken broth

1 can (14.5-ounce) diced tomatoes

1 (10-ounce) package frozen chopped kale

1 teaspoon Italian seasoning

1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper

1 (9-ounce) fresh cheese tortellini

2-1/2 cups cooked diced chicken

1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Directions

In a large pot over medium heat, combine broth, tomatoes, kale, Italian seasoning, and pepper. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to simmer and cook uncovered for 10 minutes. Add pasta and chicken and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to simmer and cook covered until heated through, about 5 minutes. Top with cheese and serve.

Serves 8. Per Serving: 222 calories, 4 g total fat, 2 g saturated fat, 450 mg sodium, 25 g carbohydrates, 4 g fiber, and 22 g protein.



Bean & Vegetable Tacos

Ingredients

4 (6-inch) corn or flour tortillas

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 cup sliced mushrooms

1 cup sliced bell pepper

1/2 medium onion, sliced (about 1 cup)

1/4 teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons chili powder

1/2 teaspoon ground cumin

1/2 cup canned tomato sauce

1 cup canned beans, drained and rinsed

1 teaspoon packed brown sugar

Directions

Heat a medium skillet over medium heat and add oil. Add the mushrooms, bell pepper, onion, and salt and cook about 8-10 minutes. Add the chili powder and cumin, then the beans, tomato sauce, and brown sugar and cook about 3 minutes. Divide between the four tortillas and add your favorite toppings, such as diced avocado and chopped fresh cilantro.

Serves 2. Per Serving: 300 calories, 10 g total fat, 2 g saturated fat, 600 mg sodium, 47 g carbohydrates, 11 g fiber, and 10 g protein.

VA Sunshine Healthcare Network

visn8.va.gov

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

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

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

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

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

VA Caribbean Healthcare System

10 Casia Street
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00921
787-641-7582 • 800-449-8729
www.va.gov/caribbean-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

Orlando VA Healthcare System

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



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 or scan this QR code with your smart device.

