



VISN 8
VA Sunshine Healthcare Network

Veterans HEALTH MATTERS

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

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TAKE ONE HOME



SPRING
IS IN THE AIR

LOSE
WEIGHT
FROM
HOME
WITH
TELEMOVE!

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To Our Readers

Spring is so refreshing, isn't it?

But for those of us with seasonal allergies, it's not all baby ducks and daisies. For allergy sufferers, spring means stuffy noses and itchy eyes. If you're dreading this sneezy season, we have tips on page 3 for helping you breathe a little easier.



Spring is also a great time to get moving, and the VA's TeleMOVE! Program can help you make a plan to get active, lose weight, and improve your health -- from the comfort of your own home. Learn how, and read the story of one Veteran's inspiring weight loss success, on pages 4 and 5.

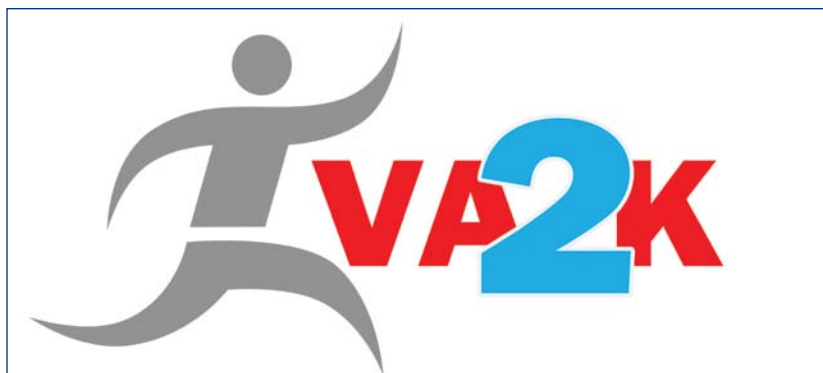
You know about the danger of drinking and driving. Do you know about the other things that put you at risk for driving accidents? On page 6, we share tips for improving your driving skills.

Will carbs make you gain weight? Are carrots too sugary? We bust a few myths about food and share a delicious recipe for in-season blueberries (page 7).

As always, thank you for letting us serve you. We wish you a safe, healthy spring.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nevin M. Weaver".

Nevin M. Weaver, FACHE
VISN 8 Network Director



Join us on May 16, 2012, for a VA2K "Walk, Run and Roll" event being held at VA hospitals throughout VISN 8 to benefit homeless Veterans and to promote health and wellness. The event is open to the public and there is no registration fee. Check with your local VA Health Promotion Disease Prevention Program Manager for details on the VA2K event closest to you. Also check the Events Calendar on your local VA hospital's web site or go to www.visn8.va.gov for links to all VISN 8 facilities.

BREATHE EASY

Spring is in the air – and so are things that make you itch, sneeze, and wheeze. Weeds, trees and grasses release tiny grains of pollen into the air in the spring. This pollen can stick to our clothes, our skin, and enter our bodies through our eyes, ears and nose.

Are you allergic?

Watch for these symptoms of allergies caused by pollen -- also known as hay fever or seasonal allergies:

- Stuffy, runny, or itchy nose
- Sneezing
- Red, watery eyes
- Itchy ears, eyes, or roof of the mouth

Allergies and asthma

Allergies can also cause asthma attacks. As many as 10 million Americans suffer from some form of allergic asthma.

Symptoms of allergic asthma can be the same as seasonal allergy symptoms, but may also include:

- Coughing and/or wheezing
- Shortness of breath or rapid breathing
- Chest tightness

Allergic asthma needs to be treated with prescription medication. Since a severe asthma attack can be life-threatening, it's important to see your VA health care provider if you think you might be at risk.

What can I do?

- **Get diagnosed.** See your provider if you think you might have allergies. Your provider can help you decide which treatment options might be best for you.
- **Treat yourself.** If your allergies are mild, you may be able to treat yourself with over-the-counter medications. Antihistamines, decongestants and eye drops may help you feel better. Talk to your VA health care provider first, though, as some medication can make you drowsy or interact with other medicines you take.
- **Stay inside.** Check pollen counts for your area. Keep the windows closed when pollen counts are high. Usually, pollen is worst mid-day, and not as bad late at night, or on cloudy or rainy days.
- **Freshen up.** If you have air conditioning, make sure you install a clean air filter every season.
- **Play it safe outdoors.** Avoid touching your face when you're outside. If you do yard work, wear a filter mask to avoid inhaling pollen. Leave your yard clothes and shoes outside, and take a shower right away. If you garden, choose non-allergic plants such as cacti, cherry, dahlia, daisy, geranium, iris, magnolia, rose, tulip, and snapdragon.
- **Quit smoking.** Cigarette smoke can make your allergies worse. Don't smoke or allow others to smoke in your home or car.



TeleMOVE! Lose Weight From Home (and Keep It Off!)

A sobering fact: About 70 to 74 percent of Veterans who receive their care at VA facilities are either overweight or obese. On a national scale, poor diet and a lack of physical activity may overtake smoking to become the country's leading cause of preventable death.

If you're a Veteran who needs to lose weight (and keep it off!), the VA is here to help. You may be able to take part in a weight management program from the comfort and ease of your own home.

TeleMove! is the national VA weight management program that emphasizes health and wellness through a change in nutrition, behavior and physical activity.

With on-going support, Veterans are encouraged to take part in some type of physical activity and to eat nutritionally. They are also asked to set weekly SMART goals—those that are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic and **T**imely.



When you enroll in TeleMOVE!, the assigned Care Coordinator will talk to you about the Telehealth Weight Management Program. This program uses a simple, in-home messaging device to record daily information you provide about your height and weight. During this process, you will learn how to make healthy lifestyle changes.

The critical aspect of this 90 to 180-day, self-managed program is that Veterans who may seem to struggle with their weight and have diet and exercise challenges can be guided on a path to success with new knowledge and the help of a strong support system, according to program experts.

“We’re there to guide them on their meal plans, exercise options, medication adherence, coping with stress, and other educational needs,” said Joan Howell, RN, the TeleMOVE! Coordinator at the Orlando VA Medical Center. “By making minor lifestyle changes, Veterans can achieve positive steps. And although it can be a slow process, every step forward is a step closer to a patient’s weight loss goals,” she said.

- Michelle G. Williams, RN, Bay Pines VA Medical Center
- Joan Howell, RN, Orlando VA Medical Center



Q: What is MOVE! ?

A: MOVE! is VA's national weight management program for Veterans. MOVE! can help you lose weight, keep it off and improve your health.

Q: What is TeleMOVE!?

A: The TeleMOVE! program gives Veterans the opportunity to participate in the MOVE! Program from the comfort of their own home through professional support and use of Telehealth monitoring equipment.

Q: Is the MOVE! Program free?

A: Yes! The MOVE! program is free to any Veteran enrolled in the VA health care system.

Q: How do I enroll in MOVE! or TeleMOVE!?

A: Contact your VA health care provider to find out how to enroll.

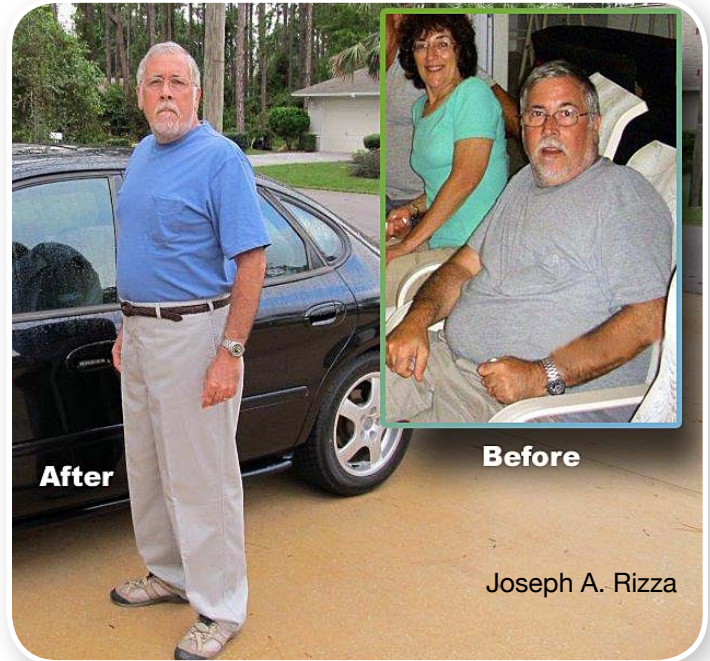
Q: Where can I get more information about MOVE!?

A: For MOVE! information, go to www.move.va.gov/
For weight management tips and information, visit www.choosemyplate.gov

SUCCESS STORY: 50 Pounds Lighter, Veteran Embraces Lifestyle Changes

In 1990, Joseph E. Rizza weighed 168 pounds, a normal weight for a five foot, eight inch man. But less than 10 years later, the Vietnam Veteran was seriously overweight and had multiple health problems including high blood pressure, elevated blood sugar and high cholesterol, and other issues like snoring, back and joint pain, along with restless, sleepless nights.

Today, thanks to his successful participation in the MOVE! Program, the 63-year-old Palm Coast, Florida resident is maintaining a 50-pound weight loss and his overall health is greatly improved. "In fact, we call on Joe to be a motivational speaker with our MOVE! 2 class," said Teresita Janiola, RN, of the William V. Chappell, Jr., VA Satellite Outpatient Clinic in Daytona Beach, FL. "He's a great success story and a great motivator for others in the MOVE! program," she said.



JOE'S STORY:

Joe found himself in his 40's with a demanding, yet sedentary job, sitting for hours in front of a computer screen. As younger people, Joe and his wife had been very active, however, as Joe's job responsibilities became more demanding and his personal life became more complex, his level of physical activity decreased.

Then, health problems started to appear. In the mid-1990's, his provider put him on medication for high blood pressure and cholesterol, and his weight slowly crept up, until in 2009, he weighed in at 230 pounds. Despite the weight gain, Joe says he didn't perceive himself as significantly overweight. Instead, he thought his problems were the typical signs of aging.

Then the bomb dropped. In August 2010, Joe's VA Primary Care Provider Dr. Bruce Crewe, along with Joe's family provider, delivered some frightening news.

"They told me that I was at best, three years away from diabetes, and that my heart and kidneys were at serious risk. I needed to lose weight," Joe said.

At Dr. Crewe's invitation, it was then that Joe adopted a "lifestyle change" that permanently changed his behavior with very positive results. "The MOVE! folks helped me, made me feel good when I succeeded, and supported me, but didn't coddle me," he said.

THE KEYS TO SUCCESS: IN JOE'S OWN WORDS

Education: Know what you are about to eat and the need for a balanced diet.

Exercise: You don't need to run five miles a day and pump iron to stay healthy, but you do need about 20 minutes of brisk daily activity including walking.

Food Diary and Meal Planning: Keep track of what you eat every day. You can't lose weight if you don't know how many calories you consume.

Accountability and Support: The weekly weigh-in at the MOVE! Clinic and reporting your progress is very important. I felt a personal obligation to my MOVE! coordinators--they were so invested in me.

Creativity and Enthusiasm: Come up with enjoyable, balanced meals within your calorie budget. I look forward to eating healthy, properly sized meals today with the same enthusiasm I used to have for junk food and excess.

Rewards: I feel good that I have more energy, like what I see in the mirror, and enjoy life more!

Contact your VA health care provider to find out how to enroll.
To learn more about MOVE!, go to www.move.va.gov/

ROAD SAFETY

Improve your driving

Drivers who are on their cell phones are **4 times** more likely to be injured in a car crash.

Driving is complex. It requires good vision, physical coordination, mental focus, problem solving and complete attention. That's why driving can become more difficult as people age.

“Even with a lifetime of experience behind the wheel, you may have to change your driving habits,” says Bob Shogren, Chief of VA Police Service at Bay Pines VA Healthcare System. “But with awareness and common sense, you will still be able to maintain your independence as a driver for many years to come.”

Drivers who text are **23 times** more likely to be injured in a car crash.

Stay alert

Do you feel overwhelmed, confused, dizzy, sleepy, or become lost easily while driving? Improve your attention and reaction time:

- Plan your route. Drive where you are familiar with the roads.
- Drive during the day and avoid rush hours.
- Keep a safe distance from the car ahead of you.
- Look both ways as you approach an intersection.

Your fitness

Do you have trouble looking over your shoulder to change lanes? Is it hard for you to turn the steering wheel or move your foot from the gas to the brake pedal? Driving will be easier if you improve your physical fitness.

- Talk to your care provider about starting a low-impact fitness program, such as stretching.
- Walk more often. Walk around the block or at the mall. Try to walk 3-4 hours a week.
- Choose a car with automatic transmission, power steering and power brakes.

Your vision

Do you have problems seeing and reading highway signs? Can you see lane lines clearly at night? Does the glare of oncoming headlights cause discomfort? Declining vision can impair your driving.

- Make sure you always wear your glasses and that your prescription is up-to-date. (If you are 60 or older, see your eye doctor every year.)
- Keep your windshield, mirrors, and headlights clean.
- Sit high enough in your seat so you can see at least 10 feet in front of your car.

Your medication

Most people are able to take medications and still drive safely. However, some medications can cause side effects – such as sleepiness, dizziness or blurred vision – that can interfere with your driving.

- Talk to your VA health care provider about any medications you take. Ask about the side effects for any medications you are prescribed.
- Be able to tell your care provider about all of your medications.
- Track how you feel. Learn how your body reacts to new medications. If you notice that you feel weak, dizzy, or drowsy after taking a drug, talk to your VA provider before you get behind the wheel.

Put your phone AWAY!

Don't use your cell phone while you're driving. Having a phone call while you're driving – even on a hands-free device – delays your reaction time as much as someone who has a blood alcohol level of .08. That's the legal limit for drunk driving.

Don't text while driving. You may think it only takes a second to read or send a text message. However, when you text while driving, you take your hands, your eyes, and your mind off of your driving.

If you absolutely must use your cell phone while driving, pull over to the side of the road.



Busting FOOD Myths

Ban all “white” foods from your diet.

“White” foods generally refer to those that are white in color and have been processed and refined such as white bread and rice, baked goods, pasta, crackers, and simple sugars like table sugar and high-fructose corn syrup. These foods are not as nutrient dense as whole grain foods. When you choose whole grain foods, you get more vitamins, minerals and fiber. They are also more filling than “bad carbs.” For these reasons, it’s best to minimize “white foods,” but you don’t need to completely eliminate them. Moderation is the key.

Artificial sweeteners will kill you

Sweeteners have been available for many years without general side effects. There are individuals who cannot tolerate them, but they are safe to consume in reasonable quantities. No one should consume excessive amounts of sugar-substitute/diet beverages. Water is your best source for hydration.

I can’t eat greens because of Coumadin

Don’t automatically eliminate this important source of nutrients. If your provider prescribes the drugs Coumadin or Warfarin, you need to eat a consistent or the same amount of green leafy vegetables on a regular basis.

Your medication can be adjusted. Talk with your provider or pharmacist before making a change in the amount of leafy green vegetables you consume.

“Only carbs will make me gain weight.”

Any calories beyond what your body is expending (from fueling the body and exercise) will lead to weight gain. We get calories from carbohydrates (4 calories/gram), protein (4 calories/gram), fat (9 calories/gram) and alcohol (7 calories/gram).

“If I exercise, I can eat whatever I want.”

Most people overestimate the calories they burn through exercise. So while there are numerous benefits to exercise, pay attention to portion sizes and overall calories consumed.

Carrots are high in sugar

Carrots are not high in sugar. In fact, they are low in calories and make an excellent snack. One half or one cup is a great serving size.

Contributors: Amy Sindler & Mary Lu Williams
Registered Dietitians, Orlando VA Medical Center

Blueberry Crisp

It’s blueberry season! These tiny fruits are packed with fiber, Vitamin C, and cancer-fighting antioxidants. Make the most of this superfood with this easy, lower-fat blueberry cobbler. Use fresh or frozen blueberries. (For frozen fruit, defrost in the microwave in 10-second intervals.)

Ingredients

4 cups blueberries	1/4 cup sugar
1 tbsp cornstarch	1 tbsp lemon juice
3/4 cup oats	1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1/8 tsp salt	3 tbsp butter
1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar	

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Place blueberries in a large bowl with cornstarch, sugar and lemon juice. Toss well and leave to sit for a few minutes while you prepare the topping.

In a medium bowl, stir oats, flour, brown sugar and salt together. Use two forks to cut the butter into the oat mixture. Empty blueberries into an 8 x 8 inch baking dish and top the blueberries with the oat mixture.

Bake for 45 minutes or until bubbly and golden.



Serves 6.
289 calories,
7.6g fat.





Defining
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To enroll or renew your VA health benefits, call 1-877-222-VETS (8387), Monday thru Friday between 8AM and 8PM (Eastern Time). You can also go on-line at www.va.gov/healthbenefits. Click "VA Health Care - Apply Now"

For medical care and clinic appointments, call your local VA health care facility.

VA Sunshine Healthcare Network

www.visn8.va.gov



at all
Medical Centers

