Summer Safety
Keeping Cool All Summer Long

Summer is here and it is already getting hot. With temperatures soaring, the need to stay hydrated is more important than ever. This is why VA has partnered with Three Square to have hydration stations at all of our Primary Care Clinics and the hospital.

This summer, stop by any information desk at our Primary Care Clinics or at the VA Medical Center and pick up a bottle of water to stay hydrated. We are very grateful to our generous partners at Three Square for making this possible.

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**Some Key Safety Tips:**

- Drink water, even when you’re not thirsty; avoid caffeine.
- Never leave children or pets alone in closed vehicles.
- Check on family, friends, and neighbors without A/C, who are often alone.
- In power outages, use a designated public shelter. Stay on the lowest floor out of the sun when A/C is unavailable.

**Heat Conditions:**

- Heat Watches: favorable conditions for an excessive heat event in the next 24 to 72 hours—e.g., risk of a heatwave has increased but occurrence and timing are uncertain.
- Excessive Heat Warnings: are issued within 12 hours of the onset of extremely dangerous heat conditions, when max heat index temperature is expected to be 105 degrees or higher for at least two days and nighttime air temperature not below 75 degrees. Criteria vary, especially for areas unused to extreme heat. Take immediate precautions to avoid illness or death.

**Stay Cool Outdoors!**

- Limit outdoor activity to mornings or evenings; rest in shady areas.
- If you exercise, drink two to four glasses of cool water per hour. Sports beverages can replace salt and minerals lost in sweat.
- For sun protection, wear a wide-rimmed hat, sunglasses and SPF 15 (or higher) sunscreen (“broad spectrum” or “UVA/UVB protection”)
Promoting Health Through Protein Choices

Vegetarians have lower LDL cholesterol, blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes, probably in part from fewer saturated fats, less cholesterol, and more fiber consumed per day. You do not have to be a Vegetarian to reap the health benefits of eating a plant-based diet!

The main difference is the source of protein. Meat and foods derived from animal sources provide high quality protein but are also rich in saturated fat. There is a direct connection between diets high in saturated fat and increased risk of cardiovascular diseases.

To reduce the saturated fats in the diet choose the leanest meats, such as chicken breast, fish and tuna, lean cuts of beef, reduced fat dairy products, and add in plant-based sources of protein. Protein from amino acids provides the body building blocks to maintain the muscular system and produce proteins in the body.

Aim for 3-5 ounces (12-20 grams) of protein from lean meat, low-fat dairy, or plant-based sources 2-3 times per day. Most plant-based sources of protein, aside from soybeans and quinoa, lack one or more of the nine essential amino acids that are needed. Essential amino acids cannot be made by the body, so they must come from food.

Eating a combination of various plant-based protein sources – complementary proteins – provides the essential amino acids. Research suggests that people do not necessarily need to eat complementary proteins at each meal, but should eat enough across the day to meet daily needs.

### Quinoa Salad

**Ingredient List:**
- 1 ¼ cup chicken broth
- 1 cup quinoa
- 3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp. lime juice
- 1 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- ½ tbsp. cumin, ground
- 8 ea green onions, chopped
- 1 ea red bell pepper, chopped
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 cup frozen corn kernels, thawed
- 2 cans black beans, drained and rinsed

**Instructions:**
Cook quinoa per instructions with chicken broth instead of water.
Let quinoa stand for five minutes.

In a large bowl whisk together olive oil, lime juice, vinegar, and cumin; add green onions, red pepper, cilantro, corn, and beans and toss to coat.
Fluff the quinoa with a fork; add quinoa to dressing and vegetables and mix well; season with salt and pepper to taste. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

**Nutrition Information – Per Serving**
- Calories: 255
- Total Fat: 6 grams
- Saturated Fat: 1 gram
- Carbohydrate: 41 grams
- Fiber: 9.5 grams
- Protein: 10.5 grams
- Sodium: 565 grams

### Plant-based protein sources can include:
- Legumes [Beans, chick peas, and lentils]
- Whole grains [Whole wheat, brown rice, wild rice, quinoa, buckwheat, and oats]
- Soy products [Tofu, tempeh, edamame]
- Nuts and nut butters
- Seeds
- Vegetables [Green peas, spinach, kale and potatoes]

### Vegetarian Chili

**Ingredient List:**
- 4-16 oz cans cooked beans, kidney
- ½ c cooked beans, black
- ¼ c red onion diced
- 2 ea garlic cloves chopped
- ¼ c celery, chopped
- 2 T olive oil
- 2 T chili powder
- 1 t sugar
- ¼ t oregano
- 4-16 oz cans tomatoes, whole plum
- 1/3 c tomato paste
- 1 t cumin

**Nutrition Information – Per Serving**
- Servings Per Recipe: 12
- Serving Size: 1 cup
- Calories: 440
- Fat: 9g
- Carbs: 70g
- Protein: 14 g
- Fiber: 21g
- Sodium: 417mg

**Instructions:**
Puree 1/3 of red beans in a blender and set aside. Heat oil in pan and add garlic, onions, and celery. Sauté vegetables for 15 minutes or until tender. Add remaining ingredients to celery mixture and bring to a boil. Simmer up to 2 hours.

Eating more servings of lower-protein foods will make it a high-protein food. In order to maintain lean body mass, adequate protein must be consumed on a consistent basis. Too little protein will not sustain the body’s lean mass stores. Too much protein can overwork the kidneys and protein is not a desirable energy source like fat and carbohydrates.
Colorectal Cancer Screening

VA Encourages Veterans to Participate

A colonoscopy is a test where a doctor advances a slender tube with a light and camera at the end through the colon. This test is usually performed under sedation and is done every 10 years for average-risk people. The VA performs approximately 200,000 colonoscopies every year. The VA is the only sponsor to perform a controlled trial of screening colonoscopy in the U.S.

Things you can do to minimize your risk of getting colorectal cancer:

- If you’re between the ages of 50 and 75, get screened for colorectal cancer on a regular basis. Screening tests help prevent colorectal cancer by finding precancerous polyps (abnormal growths) so they can be removed. Screening also finds this cancer early, when treatment can be most effective.
- Exercise on a regular basis.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat plenty of vegetables, fruits, & whole grains; and limit intake of red meats.
- Avoid smoking.
- Limit alcohol consumption.

Your doctor can guide you to the get the proper screenings and tests. Cancer detected early can increase you or your loved one’s chances of survival. That’s why it’s important to stay informed, take precautions and visit your doctor regularly.

Talk to your VASNHS Primary Care Provider on getting the free colorectal cancer screening.

One of the health conditions which causes great concern for Veterans is colorectal cancer, which is cancer that is found in the colon or rectum. Symptoms of colorectal cancer are numerous and non-specific. They include fatigue, weakness, shortness of breath, changes in bowel habits, narrow stools, diarrhea or constipation, red or dark blood in the stool, unexplained weight loss, abdominal pain, cramps, or bloating.

People who experience these symptoms for any length of time, even a few days, should call their doctors right away to discuss their concerns and arrange for testing. It is important that Veterans know their medical family history for risk factors concerning colon cancer.

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S. in both men and women. Every year, about 140,000 Americans are diagnosed with colorectal cancer, and more than 50,000 people die from it. But this disease is highly preventable, by getting screened beginning at age 50.

Screening means looking for a medical problem before you have symptoms—during this time, treatment works better. During a screening for colorectal cancer, doctors ask about medical history, discuss screening options, and may recommend one or more tests. One of the most common screening methods is a colonoscopy.

It is the most common cancer in men with more than 161,000 new cases and 26,000 deaths each year.

“African American men are twice as likely to develop prostate cancer then Caucasian men,” per Dr. Maia Carter Chief of Primary Care VASNHS.

Prostate Cancer

This type of cancer occurs when cells in the prostate gland become abnormal. There are often no early symptoms, but some men have urinary symptoms and discomfort.

For more information see the Get It Checked Brochure for more on screenings for men and women:

www.GetITChecked.com
PTSD Awareness & Treatment

No matter what VA clinic you go to, PTSD treatment in the Department of Veterans Affairs is available. Each medical center has PTSD specialists who provide treatment for Veterans with PTSD.

PTSD is a type of anxiety or other types of stress-related reactions that an individual may react to. PTSD may start after a traumatic event such as; military combat exposure, being involved in a serious accident, an assault or abuse, a natural disaster, or an act of terrorism. “Understanding PTSD and reversing the stigma surrounding this mental health condition is crucial,” said former Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Robert A. McDonald.

It’s estimated that at least 20 percent of the soldiers who have been deployed in the past six years have experienced some type of PTSD and many other Veterans can be experiencing signs of PTSD from previous deployments. PTSD is the third most common mental condition among Veterans who use the VA hospital system.

Fortunately the VA offers support and treatment for PTSD through group and one-on-one counseling therapy. Options for recovery may include therapy such as; PTSD Group 1, Post-Traumatic Growth Group, Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), HU Meditation, Yoga for PTSD- Mind Body Group, Tai Chi/Chi Gong, Mantra, Anger Management, National Alliance on Mental Illness Family to Family Group, Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Program (PRRC) Art Group, Ending Self Stigma, Pathways to Recovery.

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“Yoga for PTSD: The “Mind Body Group” is an eight-week series offered in both PTSD programming and VAMC General Mental Health. For Veterans interested in attending, this is a closed group that requires a referral from your mental health or primary care provider. “Yoga can reduce stress levels by lowering cortisol (the stress hormone). When you take deep yoga breaths, you are lowering cortisol and adrenaline levels, and increasing your oxygen flow to the brain. “So yoga postures that are called inversions (putting feet up against the wall, for example) is a great position to help with insomnia, lowering heart rate, and anxiety,” said Dr. Nicole Anders, Clinical Psychologist and PTSD yoga instructor at VASNHS. Some of the symptoms associated with PTSD are:

- Lack of feelings or emotions toward loved ones
- Problems sleeping, reoccuring nightmares
- Having flashbacks, bad memories of the event
- Paranoia, being scared or startled easily, feeling irritable or mad
- Uncomfortable reactions to daily activities, avoiding routine activities
- Not wanting to talk about traumatic events, general feeling of the world being dangerous
- Adverse reactions to crowds, feelings of detachment, emotional numbness, inability to concentrate

Stories of Recovery Art Exhibition

“Stories of Recovery with PTSD” is an art exhibition that Veterans enrolled in the program display their various art projects to illustrate growth through treatment in understanding ways to overcome PTSD. It is a positive experience for Veterans looking for change from the struggles with a major life crisis or a traumatic event. These changes can result in a renewed sense of purpose and direction, wisdom and self-awareness, forged strengths and sense of resilience, and empowerment.

- VASNHS LCSW Megan Adams with a Veterans artwork display.
DID YOU KNOW...

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) emotional support animals are not considered Service Animals.

VA staff are only allowed to ask two questions:

- Is the animal required because of a disability?
- What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

Animals are **NOT permitted in areas where patient care, patient safety and infection control standards would be compromised by the presence of an animal.**

For example: Operating Rooms, Hemodialysis, Intensive Care Units, Infusion Clinic, Procedure Rooms, Select Areas of SPD, Radiology, Microbiology Lab, Nutrition and Food Service Kitchen Areas and Pharmacy.

**IMPORTANT:**

Bring someone to watch your Service Animal. VA staff are NOT allowed to babysit dogs, Service Animal or not. Also, it’s unreasonable to ask any employee to accept liability should something happen to their animal.

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Service Animals

Understanding the Rules at VASNHS

- VA Police Chief Reginald Winbush

There have been concerns about “pets” being allowed on VA owned and leased property. Although it may appear that VA Police are allowing all animals on the property, we are being very diligent to follow proper directives. I’d like to explain what VASNHS staff members can and cannot do.

In accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act, 28 C.F.R 36.102 et. Seq. (1990), persons who require the use of a Seeing-Eye dogs and other Service Animals will be allowed access to common areas of the VASHNS where patients, visitors and employees are normally allowed.

The issue we face today is when we suspect that a pet is not a “Service Animal.” We receive complaints of Veterans having two Service Animals or the animal is riding in a wheelchair. Service Animals are very valuable working animals because they are specially trained to accommodate that patient’s specific disability.

They are trained not to bark at other animals, urinating on the floor, become uncontrollable by the owner, etc. If you see an animal that is behaving in any of those manners, contact the VA Security Police (Extension 14073) to address the situation.

The VA will always welcome bonafide Service Animals because we understand the important role they play, so Veterans can fully participate in everyday life.

To Protect & Serve Those Who Have Served.
Hepatitis Treatment

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) leads the country in hepatitis screening, testing, treatment, research and prevention.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is proud of the progress made in curing hepatitis C (HCV) across the country at VA Medical Centers. In 2016 alone, the VA treated 38,358 patients with HCV, with approximately 94 percent cured. For the 2017 year, the VA will continue its efforts with a special focus on reaching out to patients who have not yet been tested or have not yet come to VA for treatment.

Chronic infection with the hepatitis C virus (HCV) is the most common blood-borne infection in the world and a major public health concern in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the United States.

If untreated, HCV infection can progress to liver damage leading to cirrhosis, cancer, and other life-threatening conditions. Although many of these complications are treatable or even preventable, about three out of four individuals with HCV infection in the U.S. are unaware they are infected. Veterans have unusually high rates of hepatitis C, especially Veterans born between 1945 and 1965. Hepatitis C is a disease of the liver caused by a virus; it is generally spread through blood-to-blood contact.

Veterans with any of the following risks should be tested for hepatitis C:

- Anyone born during 1945-1965
- Anyone with liver disease or who has had abnormal liver tests
- Anyone who has ever injected illegal drugs
- Anyone who had a blood transfusion or organ transplant before 1992
- Anyone who received a tattoo or body piercing in a non-regulated setting
- Anyone with HIV or a weakened immune system

Every VA Medical Center in the country is actively screening for HCV as well as providing educational resources to those Veterans who want to know more about the disease and the successful treatment that is available. “The VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System has successfully treated over 500 Veterans with chronic hepatitis C,” said Christina Delrosario, a registered nurse assigned to VASNHS’ Infectious Disease Clinic. “We encourage the Veterans who we serve to be screened for hepatitis C and to get treatment if they have it so we can prevent further transmission of the disease to others. Current medications have minimal side effects with a single course of treatment lasting approximately 12 weeks.”

Veterans treated at VASNHS have seen positive results.

“It’s an oral medication that you take,” said U.S. Army Veteran Sydney Smith. “For me it was painless, I didn’t have any side effects and the staff never left me alone and worked with me week by week through the program...In my opinion, the program was a success and my life has more meaning.”

“It’s great that there’s a cure,” said U.S. Army Veteran David Novikoff “The doctor and nurses encouraged me and they were more excited than me when I found out when it didn’t show up (in my system) any longer. I want to tell every Veteran that has the opportunity to get tested (and treated, if need be) to go for it.”

For more information on hepatitis, visit:

Understanding STROKES
Knowing the F.A.S.T. Test

June 22, 2016, U.S. Marine Veteran Reginald Banks had a 1 p.m. appointment in the Pain Clinic at VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System. He had checked in for his appointment as usual, except this time something was different. When his nurse Ebony Rains went to the waiting room to call on him, he wasn’t there. At first, she just thought he was in the restroom. A few minutes later, she started getting concerned because she knew it was out of character for Mr. Banks to just disappear. Ms. Rains started checking restrooms and, with the help of other nursing staff members, started searching the campus. She called Mr. Banks’ wife, Cynthia to see if she had seen him or heard from him; she hadn’t. At this point, Ms. Rains notified VA Police and accompanied them to the parking lot to search for Mr. Banks’ vehicle. Ms. Rains spotted Mr. Banks’ car in the parking lot not running in the 107-degree heat and saw a figure slumped over in the seat. Without hesitation, Ms. Rains ran toward the vehicle, and called out to one of the police officers to radio for help. Mr. Banks was found unresponsive with a weak pulse. A Code Blue was initiated and Ms. Rains and the police officer poured water on Mr. Banks to try to cool him down. Once help arrived, Mr. Banks was transported to UMC where it was discovered that he had suffered two strokes.

Ms. Rains stated that, “If you don’t talk to the patients, you don’t get to know the intricate delicate parts of who they are. I knew Reggie enough, he wasn’t just going to leave and not say anything. That would never happen.” If it wasn’t for Ms. Rains taking the time to get to know each of her patients, she may have never known anything out of the ordinary had happened.

Because she knew Mr. Banks, and the fact it was out of character for him to ever be late for an appointment, she was able to save his life. For that Mr. and Mrs. Banks have an unbreakable bond with Ms. Rains that they are truly grateful for. Mrs. Banks stated “Ebony, you are a miracle, an amazing woman, and a kind spirit. You have this aurora about you that just lights up a room when you walk in. Thank you so much from the bottom of mine and Reggie’s heart. Because of you, I still have him here with me.”

If you suspect someone has had a stroke, follow the F.A.S.T. test

FACE: Ask for a smile. Does one side droop?

ARMS: When raised, does one side drift down?

SPEECH: Can the person repeat a simple sentence? Does he/she have trouble or slur words?

TIME: Time is critical! Call 911 immediately if any of these symptoms are present.

Upcoming Events July-Sept 2017 (Go to www.lasvegas.va.gov for current dates & times)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>4 July</td>
<td>Federal Holiday: Independence Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 July</td>
<td>SNVCEB Hiring Fair Prep Sessions at VAMC</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 July</td>
<td>Veterans Hiring Fair &amp; Quarterly Town Hall</td>
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<td>21 July</td>
<td>Dept of Veterans Affairs Anniversary (established in 1930)</td>
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<td>Aug 11</td>
<td>VASNHS Voluntary Service: Summer Youth Volunteer Awards</td>
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<td>Aug 26</td>
<td>Womens Equality Day</td>
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<td>Sep 15 - 15 Oct</td>
<td>Hispanic Heritage Month</td>
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<td>Sep 23</td>
<td>Fisher House Community Open House</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Sep</td>
<td>Retired Veterans Appreciation Day @ Nellis AFB</td>
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If you are a Veteran enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system, the Veteran Appointment Request mobile application (app) allows you to self-schedule or request primary care appointments and request mental health appointments. You can also view appointment details, track the status of requests, send messages about the requested appointments, and get notifications about appointments and cancel appointments.

For directions go to: https://mobile.va.gov/appstore/veterans
Special Events

Veterans Hiring Fair and Quarterly Town Hall

The VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System, in partnership with the Southern Nevada Veterans Community Engagement Board (SNVCEB), will be co-hosting a Veterans Hiring Fair and Town Hall, Thursday, July 13, at the North Las Vegas VA Medical Center located at 6900 N. Pecos Road. The Veterans Hiring Fair runs from noon to 3 p.m. and will include local companies accepting applications on-site from Veterans, active-duty, Guard, Reserve and their spouses for job opportunities and potential on-the-spot hires. In preparation for the Veterans Hiring Fair, the SNVCEB will host a Hiring Preparation Seminar in the VA Medical Center Auditorium from 4:30-6 p.m., Tuesday, July 11. Individuals interested in RSVPing for the Hiring Fair or Seminar may do so at the following link: https://go.usa.gov/xNwqy

Following the Hiring Fair, the Department of Veterans Affairs will hold its quarterly Veterans Town Hall which includes a VA Information Fair from 4-5 p.m. and moderated Town Hall from 5-6 p.m. The VA information Fair will include information tables, as well as other displays and information for Veterans, their families and caregivers. Services that will be present include benefits claims assistance from the Reno Regional Office (with an on-site clinic before, during and after the town hall), Billing, Enrollment and Eligibility, Human Resources, Medicine, Mental Health, VA Community Care (Choice/Non-VA Care), Pharmacy, Transition & Care Management Program, Primary Care/Women’s Health Center, Social Work/Homeless Program, Veterans Transportation Service, Veteran Experience Service (Patient Advocate, My HealtheVet), Vet Centers, Health Promotion Disease Prevention, Voluntary Service, Health and Wellness/MOVE, Nutrition, Privacy/FOIA, Special Emphasis Program—LGBT Veterans Care Coordinator, and Nevada Department of Veterans Services.

The Town Hall will include updates from Veterans Health Care and Veterans Benefits leaders on national and local activities and initiatives, followed by a question and answer session where leaders will answer pre-submitted questions or questions of general interest submitted on a comment card during the session.

Veterans can submit questions in advance to: vhalaspao@va.gov

Questions of a personal nature or those unable to be addressed during the town hall will be sent to the appropriate representative for a direct response back to the submitter.

(Note: Listing of participating non-government organizations is for informational purposes only and does not infer or imply endorsement by the Department of Veterans Affairs)