



Great Lakes VA HEALTHVIEWS

The Newsletter about Health for Veterans in VISN 12



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Holding It Down Over the Holidays

...Your Weight That Is!

Do you remember last year about this time? You may have said something like “This year it’s going to be different and I’m NOT going to gain any weight!” Well, maybe you were successful and congratulations if you were. If you are like most Americans though, you

probably ended up gaining a pound or so. This might not seem like a big deal, but these pounds tend to hang around year after year and keep adding up. Here are a few tips that can help you make it through Thanksgiving and into the New Year without that extra weight gain.

(continued on page 2)

Eat Breakfast

Having a good morning meal has been shown to help prevent weight gain. It keeps us from getting overly hungry later and reaching for those fattening and sugary foods.

Breakfast is more important than ever during the holidays because there tends to be more candy, cookies and other temptations wherever you go. Not being as hungry can help you avoid those temptations.

Whatever you do...Don't go to a party hungry

This is a surefire recipe for overeating, because there are usually a lot of goodies at a party. But you also don't want to overdo it by having a huge meal before going to a party. Sometimes having a light snack right before you go out can help.

Be Choosy

When going to an event where there is a lot of buffet style food, be picky! Look at all the delights available and decide on a select few that look the best to you. Try to include some vegetables and fruits, of course.

Many make the mistake of trying "just one of everything" and end up eating more than they planned. Instead of grazing throughout the whole party, decide on the food that you will be eating and eat it at one specified time.

Enjoy Your Food - Really!

The holidays ARE a special time for food. Completely denying yourself the things you love can backfire into eating without control. It's more realistic to allow those special foods, but in moderate amounts.

At dinners or parties, practice portion control and slow down to focus on enjoying your food. This can help prevent overeating.

Set a "one a day" goal - one goodie per day, that is. This helps for some people. Remember, you can enjoy yourself and avoid going overboard!

Be a Trendsetter

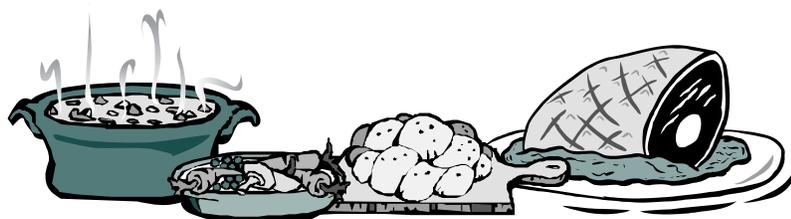
Set a good example by showcasing lower calorie homemade goodies and increasing your activity. Take a walk to look at the holiday lights, do a little dance groove session after dinner, or participate in a Turkey Trot Run. Many towns have organized walking events during the holidays.

Start a new holiday tradition. Give your friends and family the gift of better health for the holidays!

Sources:

- 1) MOVE! website <http://www.move.va.gov/>
- 2) Fletcher, Anne M., MS, RD. Thin For Life: 10 Keys to Success from People Who Have Lost Weight and Kept It Off. Houghton-Mifflin Co.: 1994.

Submitted by:
Sarah Wolf
Dietetic Intern
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The USDA Food Pyramid has a new look! A brightly colored wedge identifies each food group. The thickness of each wedge shows how much of that food group we should be eating. The stick figure walking up the stairs of the pyramid stands for activity.

The number of servings we can eat depends on our age, sex, and activity level. People who are more active have greater food needs than those who are less active. To find out how much you can eat:

1. Go to the web site www.mypyramid.gov.
2. Click on the heading “My Pyramid Plan.”
3. Fill in the fields for your age, sex, and activity level.
4. The web page will figure out the number of calories you need in a day. For example, a 65-year-old male with less than 30 minutes of physical activity daily needs to eat 2,000 calories per day.

The new “Pyramid” encourages us to choose from a variety of foods

within each food group. In addition, it suggests choosing lower fat foods. Depending on the food group, serving sizes are listed as either cups or ounces.

GRAINS



Half of your grain servings should be whole grain. For example, someone on a 2,000-calorie diet should eat a total of 6 ounces of grains. Three of those ounces should be whole grain foods.

Grain Facts

- ☼ Whole grains contain fiber, which helps you feel full longer and may help lower cholesterol.
- ☼ Grains are a good source of iron, B-vitamins, and minerals.

What counts as one ounce of grains?

- ☼ 1 slice of bread.
- ☼ 1 tortilla.
- ☼ 1/2 cup of rice, noodles, or hot cereal.
- ☼ 1 cup dry cereal.
- ☼ 1/2 of an English muffin or hamburger bun.

VEGETABLES



There are five vegetable groups: dark green, orange, starchy, dried beans and peas, and other vegetables. The idea is to “vary your veggies”. For a 2,000-calorie diet, you should eat 2-1/2 cups of vegetables daily.

Vegetable Facts

- ☼ Rich in vitamins A, C, E, and folic acid.
- ☼ Naturally cholesterol free and low in fat and calories.
- ☼ Great source of fiber.

What counts as one cup of vegetables?

- ☼ 1 cup of cooked or raw vegetables.
- ☼ 2 cups of leafy greens.
- ☼ 1 cup of vegetable juice.



FRUITS

Eat fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruit. It is also wise to eat less of those with added sugar, and limit the juices. For a 2,000-calorie diet, you should eat 2 cups of fruit daily.

Fruit Facts

- ☼ Rich in vitamin C.
- ☼ Naturally cholesterol free and low in fat.
- ☼ Great source of fiber.

What counts as one cup of fruit?

- ☼ 1 cup of chopped fruit.
- ☼ 1 orange, apple, or banana.
- ☼ 1/2 cup of dried fruit.
- ☼ 1 cup of juice.

MILK



The milk group includes dairy foods such as milk, yogurt, and cheese. Choose low fat, reduced fat or fat free dairy foods. For a 2,000-calorie diet, you should have a total of 3 cups of milk daily.

Milk Facts

- ☼ Rich in calcium, vitamin D, and protein.

What counts as one cup of milk?

- ☼ 1 cup of milk or yogurt.
- ☼ 1-1/2 oz of hard cheese or 2 oz of processed cheese.

MEAT AND BEANS



The meat and beans category includes meat, fish, poultry, beans, and nuts. The idea is to choose lean varieties of these foods more often and less of the fatty meats, and fried meat, chicken, and fish. Based on a 2,000-calorie diet, you should eat a total of 5.5 ounces daily.

Meat and Bean Facts

- ☼ Rich in protein.
- ☼ Great source of vitamins and minerals.

What counts as one ounce of meat or beans?

- ☼ 1 ounce of meat, fish, or chicken.
- ☼ 1 egg.
- ☼ 1/2 ounce of nuts.
- ☼ 1 tablespoon of peanut butter.
- ☼ 1/4 cup of cooked dry beans or tofu.



OILS

Foods in this group include canola, olive, vegetable, and corn oil, margarine, nuts, avocados, and olives. For a 2,000 calorie diet, you should limit yourself to 2 to 3 servings daily.

Fat and Oil Facts:

- ☼ Contain essential fatty acids.
- ☼ Major source of vitamin E.

What counts as one serving of oil?

- ☼ 1 tablespoon of canola, corn, olive, or vegetable oil.
- ☼ 1 tablespoon of soft tub margarine, or mayonnaise.
- ☼ 2 tablespoons salad dressing.
- ☼ 1/2 medium avocado.
- ☼ 2 tablespoons peanut butter or 1 ounce of nuts.

DISCRETIONARY CALORIES

These are the calories left over after you have eaten the right number of servings from the other food groups. These calories can be additional choices from any food group or higher calorie choices such as sweets, gravy, sweet drinks, or alcohol.

Remember – “MyPyramid” is not a diet for any specific health condition. Talk to your health care provider or dietitian to learn what diet is best for you.

Source: www.mypyramid.gov

Submitted by:
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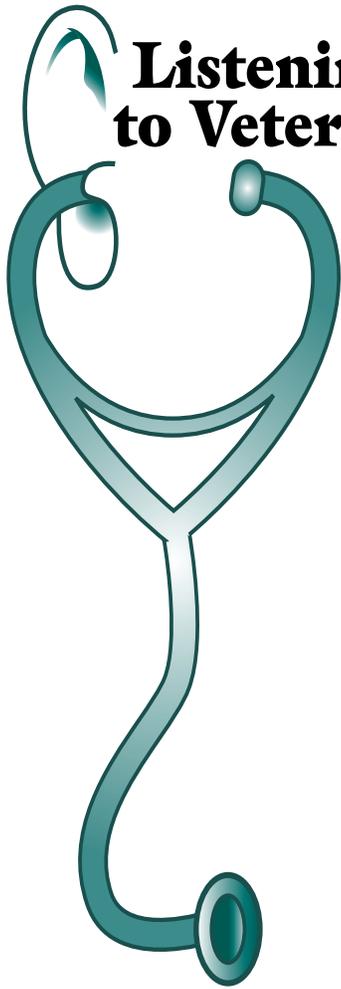
Please Don't be a No Show

Each year, many appointments are wasted because someone did not show up or call to reschedule.

If these appointments were cancelled in advance, other veterans could have been seen by a healthcare provider.

Please help your fellow veterans by ALWAYS calling in advance to cancel or reschedule if you cannot keep your appointment.





Is it Okay to Take Herbal Medicines for My Enlarged Prostate?

Treatment for an enlarged prostate may include both over-the-counter and prescription medicines. It can be confusing to know which one to take, so talk to your provider about it.

Prescription Medicines

“Alpha Blockers” work by causing the areas around the urethra to relax. This increases urine flow.

- **Pro:** These medicines work more quickly than the others do.
- **Con:** Can cause dizziness, especially the first time you take them.

“5-Alpha Reductase Inhibitors” are medicines that block the production of certain hormones in the body. This causes the prostate gland to shrink.

- **Pro:** These medicines are safe for most patients.
- **Con:** For many people, these medicines do not completely end the urinary problems.
- **Con:** It can take six months for these medicines to work.
- **Con:** They can cause sexual side effects in some people.

Herbal Products

Saw Palmetto is an herbal product that appears to work like the “5-Alpha Reductase Inhibitors.” Saw Palmetto may not be as strong as the prescription medicines. It does not reduce the size of the prostate.

- **Pro:** It works like some prescription medicines and may have fewer side effects.
- **Con:** You are counting on the manufacturer to be sure the medicine is pure and as strong as they claim it is.

Beta-sitosterol is another herbal product available for the prostate. A cholesterol-lowering margarine called “Take Control” contains beta-sitosterol. It appears to work by preventing the prostate from growing.

Answered by:

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Hines VA Hospital

- **Pro:** It improves urination and, as an added benefit, it may lower cholesterol.
- **Con:** You are counting on the manufacturer to be sure the medicine is pure and as strong as they claim it is.

There are other herbal products that are available for the prostate. These two seem to be fairly useful and safe.

Herbal Medicine vs. Prescription

When making your decision, remember that there is an important difference between herbal products and prescription medicines. For prescription medicine, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) tests to be sure it is safe and useful. The FDA has strict rules for drug makers to

follow.

However, for herbal products, only the manufacturer (the company that makes the product) decides if the product is safe and useful. The FDA does not control the quality of any herbal product. Companies can make herbals and put them on the market at any time. You have to trust that the company has made a pure product with the right amount of ingredient in the pill. For this reason, healthcare providers do not usually recommend herbal products.

If you do decide to take an herbal product, it is important to take it ONLY if your prostate is enlarged. Do not take an herbal for general “prostate health”. Always tell your doctor if you are taking herbal products. Work with your doctor to find out what is best for you.

	Brand Name	Generic Name
Alpha-Blockers	Uroxatral ®	alfuzosin
	Cardura ®	doxazosin
	Minipress ®	prazosin
	Flomax ®	tamsulosin
	Hytrin ®	terazosin
5-Alpha Reductase Inhibitors	Avodart ®	dutasteride
	Proscar ®	finasteride
Herbals	Standardized Saw Palmetto Extract	saw palmetto
	Take Control ®	beta-sitosterol

Sources:

- 1) Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database Natural Medicines in Clinical Management of Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia. Accessed from <http://www.naturaldatabase.com> on 5/8/06.
- 2) NIH-ODS Dietary Supplements Factsheet. Accessed from: <http://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/DietarySupplements.asp> on 5/8/06.
- 3) Oesterling J. E. Drug Therapy: Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia — Medical and Minimally Invasive Treatment Options. N Engl J Med 1995; 332:99-110, Jan 12, 1995.
- 4) FDA Overview of Dietary Supplements Jan 3, 2001. Accessed from: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov> on 5/8/06.

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You can also subscribe to the electronic version of this newsletter by going to www.visn12.med.va.gov/subscribe.htm



Your best source for information about your health will always be your health care team. We hope this newsletter will encourage you to ask questions about your health concerns.

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or Idea for Future Articles**

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