



Great Lakes VA HEALTHVIEWS

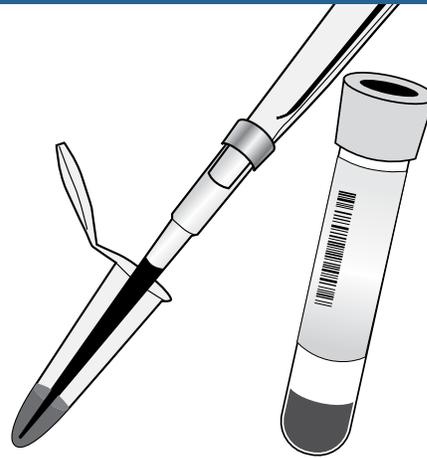
A Newsletter about Health for Veterans in VISN 12



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Say "YES" to HIV Screening



Next time you see your primary care provider, ask about the HIV Screening test. Everyone should know their HIV status; yet many people do not.

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is the virus that causes AIDS. One in five people infected with HIV or AIDS in the United States do not know they have it. You can be infected with HIV and not have symptoms for many years. During this time, you could pass the virus to others.

Screening for HIV is readily available for everyone. It is strongly recommended that everyone be screened at least once to find out his or her HIV status. Your primary care provider will tell you if you need to be tested again.

The Rapid test uses blood from a finger stick or oral fluid to look for the presence of antibodies to HIV. Results are available in 20 minutes. A negative result does not need to be confirmed. Positive results must be confirmed by a traditional blood test, and getting those results can take 1-2 weeks.

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Why should I have this test?

You are at higher risk for having HIV if you:

- Have unprotected sex with more than one partner.
- Share needles to inject drugs/steroids or for tattooing/piercing.
- Are having sex with someone to get money or drugs or with someone who has traded sex for money or drugs.
- Have sex with someone who has HIV, is bisexual, or injects drugs.
- Have another sexually transmitted disease (STD), such as syphilis.
- Have been a victim of sexual assault.
- Had a blood transfusion between 1978 and 1985.

These are not the only ways to get HIV and not the only reasons to be tested.

Here are some more reasons why it is important to know your HIV status:

- HIV infections can be passed on to others by people who are unaware they are infected.
- HIV medicines are much more effective if started early.
- If you test negative, you can take steps to stay that way.
- If you are pregnant, you can prevent passing HIV to your baby.

HIV testing is now much easier and your Primary Care Provider will order the test for you. It is important to remember that HIV testing is confidential and will only be shared with people YOU allow to see your medical records.

For more information: www.hiv.va.gov

Testing is quick and easy! Schedule your appointment for an HIV test today!

Reference: www.womenshealth.gov/hiv-aids/get-tested-for-hiv

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What is Hypoglycemia (Low Blood Sugar)?

A blood sugar reading below 70 mg/dL is considered low (hypoglycemia.)

What are the symptoms?

- Hunger
- Shakiness
- Nervousness
- Sweating
- Dizziness or light-headedness
- Sleepiness or anxiety
- Confusion
- Difficulty speaking
- Weakness



What is the treatment for low blood sugar?

1. If you think your blood sugar is low, check it with your blood glucose meter.
2. If it is below 70 mg/dL, eat or drink 15 grams of carbohydrate. Some examples are:
 - 3 or 4 glucose tablets
 - 4 ounces of any fruit juice
 - 1 tablespoon of honey
 - 4 ounces of a regular (*NOT* diet) soft drink
 - 2 tablespoons of raisins
 - 4 or 5 saltine crackers
3. Recheck your blood sugar after 15 minutes. If it is still not above 70 mg/dL, take another 15 grams of carbohydrate.
4. Repeat these steps until your blood glucose level is above 70 mg/dL.
5. If the next meal is an hour or more away, eat a snack.



Reference: American Diabetes Association. <http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/treatment-and-care/blood-glucose-control/hypoglycemia-low-blood.html>. Accessed Aug 1, 2012.

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The Women's View

The Calorie Equation

Are you part of the obesity epidemic?

Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) clearly show an obesity epidemic in the United States. About 3 out of 10 adults are obese. Almost 2 out of 10 children and teenagers are obese.

Obesity is linked to many other health conditions. These include: stroke, heart disease, diabetes, muscle and bone disorders and some cancers.

Childhood obesity can result in breathing difficulties, higher risk of fractures, heart disease and insulin resistance. Children who are obese during childhood are more likely to be obese as adults. This has a direct impact on their health and well-being.



What are the causes of obesity?

Your body weight is a result of several factors. They include: genetics, family lifestyle, eating habits, sleep habits, medicines, age, social/money issues, and medical or mental health problems.

- Your genes can play a role in the amount of body fat you store and where it is stored in the body. They can also affect how well calories are burned during exercise and how food is turned into energy.
- If one or both your parents are obese, you may be at higher risk of being overweight or obese. However, this does not always have to do with genes. Family members tend to have similar eating habits and lifestyle behaviors that cause weight problems.
- Sometimes illness, or a medicine taken to correct a health problem, can play a role in weight gain.

Managing Your Weight

Successful weight management involves learning to balance the calories taken in with those used in activities or exercise. The first step is to discuss your weight management goal with your healthcare provider.

Fad diets, over the counter diet pills, or harsh exercise routines may cause harm. Focus on realistic, achievable goals and positive behavior changes. Gradual changes in diet and exercise are easier to stick with than drastic changes.

For example:

- Drink water or calorie free beverages rather than soda.
- Try putting a little less on your plate.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Stay away from supersized meals.

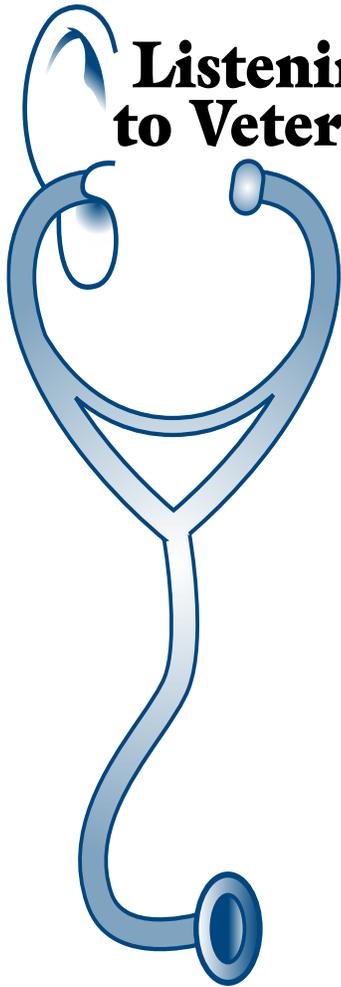
Cutting back on your calories will help. You will see greater results if you also increase your activity level.

There are many chances in your everyday life to increase your activity level:

- Mall walking and window shopping can be fun.
- Try dancing to the oldies in the comfort of your home.
- Ask a friend to start walking around the neighborhood with you.
- Work out with a friend. You can encourage each other.
- Join the MOVE! class at your local VA or clinic.

Successful weight management does not have to mean depriving yourself of the foods you love or suffering through a sweaty workout. The key is to work with your health care team to create a plan with realistic goals.





What is the purpose of the Minority Veterans Program?

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense (DOD) is committed to ensuring that all Veterans, Service Members, Retirees and their families are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of race, origin, religion, or gender.

In 1994, the VA created the Center for Minority Veterans. Soon after, a Minority Veterans Program (MVP) was established in each Medical Center.

The primary emphasis of the MVP program is to assist Veterans who are:

- ✓ Asian American
- ✓ Pacific Islander
- ✓ African American
- ✓ Hispanic/Latino
- ✓ Native American
- ✓ Alaskan Native
- ✓ Native Hawaiian

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How the Minority Veterans Program Can Help You

Your local Minority Veterans Program Coordinator can help by:

- Addressing your issues and concerns regarding VA benefits and services.
- Educating and helping you access VA programs and benefits.
- Linking you with resources in your community.
- Identifying gaps in transition assistance for all service members and Veterans.

The Minority Veterans Program Coordinator (MVPC) provides education and awareness to VA/DOD staff. The MVPC is also involved with community outreach, consultation and communication within the minority communities.

For more information, contact the Coordinator at your local facility:

Hines VA Hospital	Marisa Riis 708-202-2090
Jesse Brown VAMC	Floretta Strong-Pulley 312-569-6531
Captain James A. Lovell FHCC	Alfreda Rhodes-King 224-610-5744
Madison VAMC	Julie Hayes 608-280-7266
Milwaukee VAMC	William Johnson 414-384-2000, ext. 47129
Tomah VAMC	Susan Schwab 608-372-3971, ext. 64201
Iron Mountain VAMC	Kathleen Truax 906-774-3300, ext. 32708

Source: Center for Minority Veterans

For more information, visit www.flu.gov

 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1. Who needs a flu vaccine?

- a) You
- b) You
- c) You
- d) All of the above

Even healthy people can get the flu, and it can be serious.

Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine. **This means you.**

This season, protect yourself—and those around you—by getting a flu vaccine.

Great Lakes VA HEALTHVIEWS

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Important note: We are not able to mail this newsletter to you. It can be found in waiting rooms of your VA Medical Center and outpatient clinics.

You can also subscribe to the electronic version of this newsletter by going to the VISN 12 webpage www.visn12.va.gov Click on the Newsletters link on the left side of the page.



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.

Phone Numbers for VISN 12 Hospitals

Hines:	708-202-8387
Iron Mountain:	906-774-3300
Jesse Brown:	312-569-8387
Lovell:	1-800-393-0865
Madison:	608-256-1901
Milwaukee:	1-888-469-6614
Tomah:	1-800-872-8662

"Ask An Expert" Question or Idea for Future Articles

Do you have an "Ask An Expert" question or an idea for a future article? Your ideas can be e-mailed or mailed to the Senior Editor.

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VISN 12 VA Healthcare facilities are accredited by The Joint Commission. Joint Commission evaluates healthcare facilities on quality, safety of patient care and safety of the environment.

If you have any concerns about patient care or safety in your facility, first contact the person in charge. If your concern cannot be resolved, the VA encourages you to contact Joint Commission. You may request a "public information interview." Requests can be made to:

Division of Accreditation Operations
Office of Quality Monitoring
The Joint Commission
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