



Veterans Health Library

Your source for health information

The Veterans Health Library (VHL) provides Veterans, families and the public with an easy to access source of consistent, Veteran-centered, up-to-date health information.

The VHL provides information on a wide range of health topics, including:

- ★ Wellness and prevention
- ★ Understanding a diagnosis
- ★ Making treatment decisions
- ★ Preparing for a test or procedure
- ★ Rehabilitation and recovery
- ★ Managing chronic diseases

Just recently, the VHL was revamped and now has a fresh, new look that is helping Veterans and VA clinical staff get the health information they need more quickly and easily.

(continued on page 2)



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Be Tobacco Free 3
 October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month..... 4

Do I Really Need to get a Flu Shot? 5

Unlike other online health sites, the information in the VHL is designed specifically for Veterans. It includes health topics such as smoking cessation, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI) and anger management.

Tests & Treatments

Browse Tests and Treatments by letter:

DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

Tests give your provider facts about your health. They help identify the disease or condition causing your problem. Tests also help point to the best treatment options.



Browse using the A to Z guide for Diagnostic Tests

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

TREATMENTS

Treatments combat a health problem. Your provider will tell you the options you have for treating your condition. Learn more about all kinds of treatments here.



Browse using the A to Z guide for Treatments

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Browse Tests and Treatments by topic:

AGING VETERANS HEALTH



As you get older there are various things that can affect your health. Find out more about these health problems and what you can do about them.

BLOOD PROBLEMS



You need blood to live. Blood carries oxygen to your organs and tissues. It also helps fight infections and heal from injuries. Find out more about blood problems and their treatments.

You can print the information for yourself or share it using social media (Twitter, Facebook) and e-mail (including secure messages to your VA Provider). Much of the content is also available in Spanish.

The VHL provides Go-to-Guides for certain conditions. These guides are multi-media workbooks that combine video, audio, text and graphics. The VHL also offers a video library with over 150 health topics. All videos provide a closed caption option for Veterans who have trouble hearing.

There are two ways to get to the Veterans Health Library:

1. Directly – www.veteranshealthlibrary.org
2. From the My HealthVet website – www.myhealth.va.gov

Start using the Veterans Health Library today

Submitted by:
Joe Naylor
Veterans Health Education Coordinator
Madison VAMC

Source:
National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
www.prevention.va.gov



Be Tobacco *Free*

Why should I quit smoking?

- Smoking shortens your life. On average, smokers die 13-15 years earlier than non-smokers.
- Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body and increases your risk of lung disease, heart disease, stroke, cancer, and other serious conditions.
- Nearly 50,000 Americans die each year as a result of breathing other people's smoke. When you quit, the people around you, especially children, will be healthier.
- You can save thousands of dollars a year by not buying cigarettes. You may miss fewer days of work due to illness and may pay less for insurance.

I've been smoking for years. Why should I quit now?

- No matter how old you are or how long you have been smoking, quitting can dramatically improve your health.
- It is never too late to quit. In fact, older smokers are more likely to be successful than younger smokers.
- If you have tried quitting before, try again. It's hard work, but more than three million Americans successfully quit smoking every year.



Time to quit
SMOKING

How can I get help to quit smoking?

Talk to your VA health care team. We have helped thousands of Veterans quit smoking. We know what works.

Additional resources for quitting:

1-855-Quit-Vet (855-784-8838)

Smokefree VET text messaging program

www.smokefree.gov/vet

Source: www.publichealth.va.gov/smoking/quit_smoking.asp





Women's View

– October is – Breast Cancer Awareness Month



Breast cancer is the most common cancer among American women, except skin cancers. Early detection often means the cancer is easier to treat. Early detection also dramatically increases your survival rate.

Regular self-breast exams and mammograms (an x-ray image of your breast tissue) are important tools in detecting breast cancer. Women Veterans who are eligible for VA health care receive free mammograms. Most women ages 50 to 74 should have a mammogram every two years.

If you are at higher risk for breast cancer, speak with your primary care provider about beginning mammography before the age of 50. Also, speak with your provider about ways to lower your risk.

Risk factors for breast cancer include:

- ✂ Being young when you had your first menstrual period
- ✂ Never giving birth or being older at the birth of your first child
- ✂ Starting menopause at a later age
- ✂ Using hormone replacement therapy for a long time
- ✂ Getting older
- ✂ A personal history of breast cancer, dense breasts, or some other breast problems
- ✂ A family history of breast cancer (parent, sibling, or child)
- ✂ Changes in your breast cancer-related genes (BRCA1 or BRCA2)
- ✂ Having radiation therapy in the breast or chest area
- ✂ Being overweight, especially after menopause

Some warning signs of breast cancer are:

- ✂ A lump or pain in the breast
- ✂ Thickening or swelling of part of the breast
- ✂ Irritation or dimpling of breast skin
- ✂ Redness or flaky skin on the breast
- ✂ Pulling in of the nipple or pain in the nipple area
- ✂ Fluid other than breast milk from the nipple, especially blood
- ✂ A change in the size or the shape of the breast



If you have questions about your breast cancer risk factors or mammography, talk to your VA primary care provider.

Reference:
www.cdc.gov

Submitted by:
Jenny Garretson Sitzer, LCSW
Women Veterans Program Manager
Jesse Brown VAMC



Ask an Expert

Do I Really Need to Get a Flu Shot?

Yes - the Centers for Disease Control recommends that everyone age 6 months and older get the flu shot (vaccine) every year.

Flu – short for influenza – is a respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. These viruses cause many people to become ill every year, usually during fall, winter, and spring. Thousands die and many more are hospitalized because of the flu.

Some people are at higher risk for complications:

- ➡ people age 65 and older
- ➡ people with health problems like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, chronic lung disease, and other chronic illnesses or conditions
- ➡ pregnant women or people caring for an infant or a family member with health problems

When should I get a flu shot?

Get your flu shot in the fall, as soon as it is available. One shot will protect you for the entire flu season.

You do need to get a new flu shot every year, because the flu viruses can change from year to year. Every year, the flu vaccine is updated to protect against the viruses most likely to spread that year.



Is the flu shot safe?

Yes. Most people who get the flu shot do not have serious side effects or reactions to it.

Some people may have redness or swelling on their arm where the shot was given.

A very small number of people get minor body aches, a headache, or a low fever that lasts only a day or two.

If you have a severe allergy to chicken eggs, talk with your health care provider before getting the flu shot. Many people with egg allergies can still get a flu shot or other flu vaccine.

Only inactive (dead) flu virus is used to make flu shot vaccine, so you cannot get flu from a flu shot.

How does a flu shot protect me from flu?

- A flu shot helps your immune system build antibodies that fight flu viruses.
- Once you get a flu shot, it takes about 2 weeks for antibodies to protect you from flu.

Can I still get the flu after I get a flu shot?

It is possible:

- If you are exposed to the flu before the shot has time to take effect.
- If the flu viruses change after the flu shot is made (but you will still get some protection).
- If you have an illness or weak immune system that causes your body to take longer to make antibodies.

Remember:

- Stay home when sick.
- Wash your hands.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.

Where can I learn more?

www.publichealth.va.gov/flu

www.cdc.gov/flu

www.flu.gov

Source:
Flu Shots: General Information 2014
www.publichealth.va.gov/InfectionDontPassItOn



HELP A FELLOW VET

Always **CALL** to **cancel or reschedule** if you can't keep your appointment!



Great Lakes VA

Healthviews

VA
HEALTH CARE | Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

Newsletter Team

Jill Zahn
Senior Editor
Milwaukee VAMC

Richard Mahario
Hines VAH

Daniela DenBoer
Iron Mountain VAMC

Opokua Osei-Yeboah
Jesse Brown VAMC

Alfreda Rhodes-King
Lovell FHCC

Joe Naylor
Madison VAMC

Denise Vander Koy
Tomah VAMC

Kim Chapman
Layout and Design
Milwaukee VAMC



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:	800-393-0865
Madison:	608-256-1901
Milwaukee:	888-469-6614
Tomah:	800-872-8662

“Ask An Expert” Question or Idea for Future Articles

Do you have an “Ask An Expert” question or a suggestion for future topics for articles? Your ideas can be e-mailed or mailed to the Senior Editor.

E-mail: SrEditorGreatLakesVAHealthviews@va.gov

Mailing address:

Jill Zahn

Milwaukee VA Medical Center Library

5000 W. National Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53295

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
One Renaissance Boulevard, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181
1-800-994-6610

Copies of Great Lakes VA Healthviews are available in the waiting rooms of the VISN 12 Medical Centers and community outpatient clinics.

You can view online or subscribe to the electronic version of this newsletter by going to the VISN 12 home page www.visn12.va.gov

