**Lose those extra pounds in 2018!**

Start the new year right with these health tips for losing weight.

1. **Develop a PLAN:**
   - **Specific:** make large goals into small steps
   - **Measurable:** Make the goal measurable such as weight on a scale, body fat percentage, waist size, how far you walk each day. Choose the measurements that work for you and enjoy seeing your progress.
   - **Action-oriented:** Pick a goal that requires action. Thinking about losing weight is not a goal, but choosing to be active 30 minutes a day, five days a week, with the long-term goal of weight loss is an action-oriented goal.
   - **Realistic:** make a goal that can be achieved.
   - **Time-oriented:** Set a timeline of when you want to meet certain milestones, but keep it realistic.

2. **Set yourself up for success:**
   - Keep a food and exercise diary or track your progress on an app
   - Get your body fat composition measured
   - Have a partner, phone app or computer program to check in with.
   - Plan to make healthy choices when you eat out at restaurants or parties.
   - Keep only healthy, low calorie foods in your house

* Excerpted from an article by Jessica Mooney, MS, RD, VA Portland Health Care System

**Rx Refill Web App Now Available Through My HealtheVet**

VA’s new [Rx Refill mobile web application](#) is now available in the VA App Store. The app works in conjunction with the Rx Refill feature on My HealtheVet and allows patients to:

- Request and monitor refills of their refillable VA-issued prescriptions
- Track VA prescription deliveries from VA Mail Order Pharmacies *(note: prescriptions mailed directly from VA health care facilities are not included in tracking)*
- View VA prescription history
- Access additional medication information on My HealtheVet

**To use the app, Veterans must meet these three requirements:**
1) Be enrolled in VA health care
2) Have a Premium DS Logon (Level 2) Account and
3) Have an Advanced or Premium My HealtheVet Account

Veterans now have the choice to use My HealtheVet, Vets.gov or this new web app to refill their VA prescriptions online. Click here to learn more.

National Salute in February

On the week of February 14, our country pays its thanks to Veterans through the Veterans Affairs’ National Salute to Veteran Patients Program. The program increases community awareness of the role of the VA medical center and encourages citizens to visit hospitalized Veterans and to become involved as volunteers.

At the San Diego VA Medical Center, we plan to have inpatient visitors all week and Valentine’s Day/Thank you cards to be passed out to all Veteran patients.

For more information on National Salute, visit:


For questions and information on our local National Salute to Veteran Patients Program, please call (858) 642-3267.

Call Center Direct Dial

We now have a direct dial phone number for our Call Center. When dialing this number, you will be placed directly in the queue for assistance with scheduling appointments, refilling medications, or sending a message to your provider. You can still reach the call center by calling the medical center as well. Additionally, we installed a system upgrade that will provide all callers with an estimated wait time so you have an idea of how long it will take to reach us each time you call.

To contact the VA San Diego Call Center, please dial (858) 552-7475.
San Diego Women’s Health Forum

The San Diego Women Veterans Network will be hosting a San Diego Women Veterans Health Forum on Friday, February 23, 2018 from 9:00am-3:30 p.m. at the Liberty Station Conference Center. The mission of this event is to engage the women Veterans of San Diego to learn about the broad spectrum of health care services available in the region and to encourage them to take a more active role in advocating for their overall health. The forum will feature speakers, networking and a community health resource fair. To register, please follow this link: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/women-veterans-health-forum-tickets-40926385922.

Please update your Health Insurance Information

VA is required by law to bill private health insurance providers for medical care, supplies and prescriptions provided for treatment of Veterans’ non-service connected conditions. All collections from private health insurance are paid directly to the VA facility where the health care was rendered, which helps us provide services to improve care for you and your fellow Veterans.

Reporting health insurance coverage does not reduce nor limit your access to any type of VA care for which you are eligible. You will not be billed for any amount your insurance company does not pay.

What are the advantages for providing health insurance information?

1. Most insurance companies credit VA care towards meeting any annual deductible.
2. Reduce or eliminate the deductible amount you would otherwise pay for care from a non-VA provider.
3. Payments from your insurance company may be applied to reduce your VA co-payments.
4. Money collected from health insurance reimbursements is returned directly to the VA Medical Center’s budget to hire more staff or buy medical equipment to enhance and improve Veteran’s healthcare.

For more information, you may also visit: https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/cost/insurance.asp
Know Someone in Mental Distress?

You can make a difference in the life of a Veteran who’s going through a tough time. Here are some things you can do to show that you care:

- A simple act of kindness can help someone feel less alone.
- Small actions of support are thoughtful ways to show you care.
- Starting a conversation or approaching the subject of suicide can seem very difficult.
- The most important thing is to show genuine support for someone going through a tough time in life.

If you notice these changes in a Veteran loved one, encourage him or her to contact the Veterans Crisis Line, or you can reach out yourself:

- Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1.
- Chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net.
- Text 838255.

Get Motivated to Live Your Life Right!

ARE YOU LOOKING TO:

- Manage Stress?
- Quit smoking?
- Eat more wisely?
- Exercise more?

Gateway to Healthy Living can help you get motivated, set a goal and link up with resources to be successful.

GATEWAY TO HEALTHY LIVING CLASS
Tuesdays 10:00 - 11:30 am
Patient Education Classroom, Rm 1493
1st Floor, San Diego VAMC

Upcoming Dates in 2018:

- January 16th and 30th
- February 20th
- March 6th and 20th
- April 3rd and 17th
- May 1st and 15th
- June 5th and 19th

No appointment needed for class. For more information, please dial (858) 552-8585 x5501 or x5507
Appointment Access

**Appt. wait times:**
(completed appts as of 11/30/17)

- Primary Care: 1.97 days
- Specialty Care: 6.26 days
- Mental Health: 2.88 days

**Choice referrals:**
In fiscal year 2017, VASDHS referred **35,891** Veteran episodes of care to the community for a total cost of **$69,891,170**.

Calendar

- **Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration:** Jan. 11, 10 a.m., Chapel Rm. 1414
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday:** Jan. 15
- **National Wear Red Day:** Feb. 2
- **World Cancer Day:** Feb. 4

Facebook Question

We’d like to hear from you on Facebook. Here’s this month’s question: *What service deserves a shout out as your favorite in our facilities?*

Other Newsletter Comments/Suggestions? Christopher.menzie@va.gov

About VA San Diego Healthcare System

The VA San Diego Healthcare System (VASDHS) provides a wide range of inpatient and outpatient services at the medical center in La Jolla; and at six community clinics located in Chula Vista, Escondido, Imperial Valley, Mission Valley, Oceanside, Sorrento Valley and at the Rio Clinic. We provide medical, surgical, mental health, geriatric, spinal cord injury and advanced rehabilitation services. VASDHS has 296 authorized hospital beds including skilled nursing beds and operates several regional referral programs including cardiovascular surgery and spinal cord injury care.

We are affiliated with the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine and provide training for 1,440 medical interns, residents and fellows as well as 751 other health profession trainees in areas such as nursing, pharmacy, dental and dietetics. VASDHS has one of the largest research programs in the VA nationally with a budget of $41.3 million, 210 principal investigators and 698 projects.

**Number of Veterans who received care from VASDHS in FY 2017:** .................................................. 83,014

*Number of Veterans in San Diego County: ..................243,369
*Number of Veterans in Imperial Valley: ......................6,225

Total Veterans living in SD & Imperial Valley Counties: ...249,594

*from VetPop, 9/30/2017

Important Phone Numbers:

- **VASDHS Main Line:** .................................. (858) 552-8585
- **VASDHS Patient Call Center** (Appointments/Questions): ........... (858) 552-7475
- **Health Benefits & Enrollment:** ..................... (858) 552-7523
- **Billing (Copays, etc.):** ................................ (866) 802-6381
- **Billing (Community Care):** ......................... (858) 657-1313
- **Billing (Choice Program):** ......................... (855) 722-2838
- **Suicide Prevention:** ................................... (800) 273-8255, press 1

VA’s Top 5 Priorities:

1. Greater Choice for Veterans
2. Modernize Our Systems
3. Focus Resources More Efficiently
4. Improve Timeliness of Services
5. Suicide Prevention