

TAKE THIS ISSUE HOME!

VETERANS Health MATTERS

FALL 2021

*Award Winning Wellness Magazine for **VISN 8** Veterans
in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico & the U.S. Virgin Islands*

Advanced Registered Nurse
Practitioner Claudia Kowalski
examines Veteran patient Donald J.
Hindes for skin abnormalities during
a dermatology appointment at the
VA medical center in Gainesville, Fla.



Common Skin Conditions –
What to Look For

Your Healthy Aging Journey

Health Screenings and Vaccines



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Veterans Health Matters is a quarterly health and wellness magazine for Veterans produced by the VISN 8 Office of Communication. VISN 8 is the country's largest network of VA hospitals and clinics serving Veterans in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. Your feedback is welcome. If you'd like to comment on the content, please e-mail or write to:

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To Our Readers



Our skin is our largest organ and one of the first lines of defense against many diseases. That is why it is important to know what to look for if you notice a change in how your skin looks or feels. The article on pages four and five will help you understand more about the signs and symptoms of some common skin conditions, including one of the most serious skin diseases: skin cancer.

Veterans of all ages strive to live a healthy and fulfilling life. While there are differences that come with getting older, the key parts of living a whole and fulfilling life remain the same. That is what you will read more about on page six.

Keeping up to date with health screenings and vaccines helps you stay healthy at any age. Which ones are recommended and right for you depend on many factors, including your personal health risks, values, and preferences. On page three, learn about key health screening tests and vaccines that may be recommended for you.

Get ready for the word (un)scramble puzzle on page seven to give your brain a workout. You will also find a recipe that offers one more way to enjoy apples.

Be well and stay safe!

Miguel H. LaPuz, M.D., MBA
Network Director, VISN 8

VA Mobile App Spotlight: Live Whole Health

Live Whole Health is a free, easy to use mobile application created for Veterans and others who are ready to take the next step in their Whole Health journey. Whole Health is VA's holistic approach to care that supports your health and well-being. This approach centers care around what matters to you, not what is the matter with you. With this app, you can fill out your personal health inventory, set goals, get virtual coaching, and more.



This app is available for download in the Apple App or Google Play stores. It is not meant to replace professional care for clinical or mental health conditions. To learn more, visit **mobile.va.gov/app/live-whole-health**.

Health Screenings and Vaccines

Which ones are right for you?

Keeping up with recommended screening tests and vaccinations helps prevent many kinds of illnesses and diseases. Which ones are right for you depend on your age, sex, family history, and other risk factors. When you meet with your health care team, ask about their recommendations for screening tests and vaccines that best fit your needs and your preferences.

Health Screening Tests

These tests help find health problems or diseases before you can notice any signs or symptoms. When found early, treatments for these diseases work much better. If you have a symptom that you notice, talk with your provider. This includes if you were recently screened and no problem was detected.

Vaccinations

Getting recommended vaccines is one of the easiest and safest ways to protect your health. For adults, this includes receiving a flu shot every year and a tetanus shot every five to ten years. Other shots that may be recommended for you are for shingles, hepatitis A and B, pneumococcal disease, and Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). If you have not received a COVID-19 vaccine yet, talk to your provider. COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective in preventing serious illness.

Screening Test or Exam	Recommendation
Abdominal aortic aneurysm	Age 65–75: Talk with your provider.
Blood cholesterol	Every 5 years: Men age 35 and older. Men ages 19–34 and women age 20 and older: Talk with your provider.
Colon cancer screening	Age 50–75: Frequency depends on test. Age 76–85: Talk with your provider.
Depression	Yearly
High blood pressure	Every 1–2 years
HIV infection	At least once, and in all pregnant Veterans.
Overweight & obesity	Every year
Syphilis	Recommended for some men and women. Talk with your provider.
Tobacco use	Every visit if using tobacco

FOR MEN	Recommendation
Prostate cancer	Age 55–69: Talk with your provider to determine your need to be tested.

FOR WOMEN	Recommendation
Breast cancer for women not at high risk	Age 40–44: May begin annual screening. Age 45–74: Every 1–2 years. Age 75 & older: Talk with your provider.
Cervical cancer for women not at high risk	Age 21–29: Pap test every 3 years. Age 30–65: Every 3–5 years depending on test chosen.
Chlamydia & gonorrhea	Age 18–24: Every year. Age 25 and older: Talk with your provider.
Osteoporosis	Age 18–64: Recommended for some. Age 65 & older: Recommended once.

Talk with your health care team about screenings for diabetes, Hepatitis B and C, PTSD, lung cancer, and military sexual trauma.



Watch the Video!

Check out the video, "Health Screenings and Vaccines – Which Ones Are Right for You?" at visn8.va.gov/visn8/news/publications.asp.

Common Skin Conditions

What to look for

When there is something that irritates, clogs, infects, or inflames it, your skin can show symptoms that include redness, swelling, burning, oozing, and itching. Some of these symptoms can signal the presence of certain diseases or problems with your immune system. While many of these skin conditions are considered minor health issues, some can signal something more serious. If you think you have one of the following common skin problems, ask your provider to check it out.

PSORIASIS

Signs & Symptoms

Thick, red patches of skin with white scales on the scalp, elbows, knees, and lower back

Possible Cause

Something triggers the immune system and skin cells grow too quickly.

ECZEMA (also called atopic dermatitis)

Signs & Symptoms

Red, dry, and itchy skin that may become swollen, sore, and leak clear fluid on the elbows, hands, and in skin folds

Possible Cause

Stress, irritants (soap), climate, or allergy triggers a flareup.

ROSACEA

Signs & Symptoms

Redness on the nose, chin, cheeks, and forehead, which can get redder over time and show blood vessels. May also include thickened skin, bumps, and pimples.

Possible Cause

Tendency to flush easily runs in families and may be related to an infection or an immune response.

RASH FROM PLANTS

Signs & Symptoms

Starts with a red rash line and swelling at the contact site, then becomes itchy. Blisters form within one to three days.

Possible Cause

Contact with plants such as poison ivy, oak, or sumac

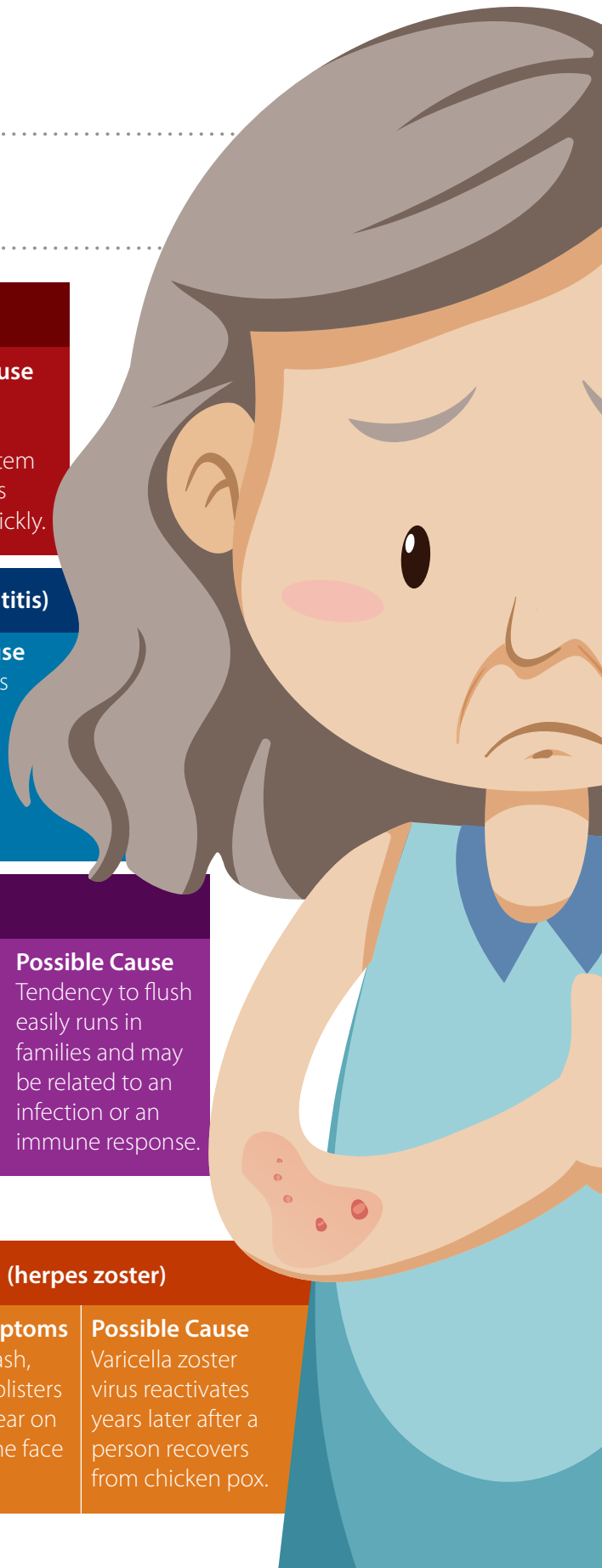
SHINGLES (herpes zoster)

Signs & Symptoms

Painful skin rash, usually with blisters that can appear on one side of the face or body

Possible Cause

Varicella zoster virus reactivates years later after a person recovers from chicken pox.





HIVES

Signs & Symptoms

Welts on the skin that often itch and appear on any part of the body. They are as small as a pen tip or can connect to form larger welts.

Possible Cause

Allergies to certain foods or insect bites, infection, some illnesses, exposure to sun, stress, or having contact with certain chemicals

COLD SORES

Signs & Symptoms

Small, painful, fluid-filled blisters on the mouth or nose that last about 10 days

Possible Cause

Herpes simplex virus spread through direct contact. Triggers may also include stress, too much sun, and hormonal changes.

WARTS

Signs & Symptoms

Rough, skin-colored bumps on fingers or hands but can also appear on the feet, face, knees, and genitals.

Possible Cause

Human papillomavirus (HPV) spread from direct contact with an infected person

CORNS AND CALLUSES

Signs & Symptoms

Patches of dead skin in and around toes (corns) or on the balls or heels of feet, on the hands, and knees (calluses)

Possible Cause

Footwear that fits poorly and activities that cause friction on the hands, knees, and feet

ATHLETE'S FOOT

Signs & Symptoms

Scaly red rash on one or both feet that may burn, itch, and form blisters

Possible Cause

Skin fungus that is spread through direct contact with contaminated surfaces



Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner Claudia Kowalski examines Veteran patient Houston Tyson during a dermatology appointment at the VA medical center in Gainesville, Fla.

Spotlight: Skin Cancer

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer. People of all skin colors can get skin cancer. It occurs mostly on the face, neck, hands, and arms. The most common types are squamous cell and basal cell skin cancers. Melanoma, although less common, grows and spreads quickly, which makes it a more deadly form of skin cancer.

Health screening for skin cancer includes a skin exam. Your provider checks moles, birthmarks, or other areas that look abnormal in color, size, shape, or texture. If you notice a worrisome change in your skin tell your provider.

Being exposed to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or tanning beds is a risk factor for cancer. Practice sun safety year round to reduce your risk.

What is Teledermatology?

This is telemedicine to help diagnose and treat Veterans who have skin conditions. Dermatology is a highly visual type of medicine. Smartphones, tablets, and laptops can easily take and send photos to VA providers and dermatology specialists to review. Plus, Veterans can have virtual dermatology visits when it is more convenient.

Your Healthy Aging Journey

No matter what your age is, the basics of living a healthy and fulfilling life are the same. Yes, there are some differences that come with aging. But what it takes to live a whole and healthy life does not change. Whether you are a young adult, a mature adult, or somewhere in between, how you take care of your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health will make a difference today and for years to come.



Live Your Whole Health

VA's Whole Health approach to care supports you through life's many changes, transitions, and milestones. Strive to be mindful of what truly matters to you. This will help you focus on what it takes to live your life to the fullest, at any age.



Self-Care Matters

- **Move your body.** Stay active to keep your body and mind strong, avoid or manage chronic health problems, and reduce the risk of falls. If you have physical limitations, talk to your provider about making adjustments that are right for you.
- **Prioritize mental health.** Find ways to relax to help manage stress and calm your mind. Stay connected with friends, family, and your community to avoid feeling lonely. Stay positive and keep challenging your brain. Seek help when you need it.
- **Make smart food choices.** Focus on foods that give you plenty of nutrients without a lot of extra calories to help you manage or lower your weight.
- **Support your spiritual health.** Find deep meaning, connection, and a sense of purpose. Examples include having a religious practice, connecting to nature, and volunteering.
- **Get quality sleep.** Although you may need less sleep as you get older, your need for getting quality sleep does not change. If you have sleep problems, such as insomnia, talk with your provider.
- **Limit alcohol and quit tobacco.** Reducing or quitting will help prevent or manage heart disease, some cancers, diabetes, and other serious conditions.

Regular Checkups, Screenings, and Immunizations

Schedule regular checkups with your provider, dentist, eye doctor, and other health specialists. Stay up to date with recommended health screenings and immunizations to prevent illnesses and certain diseases. Know your health numbers, such as blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood glucose levels to help manage health risks. Stay connected with your health care team to help monitor any health condition you have or medicines you take.



What Matters to You

Learn more about how you can live Whole Health at every age! Visit [va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH](https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH).

Word (Un)Scramble

Unscramble these letters to find words from the stories in this issue of *Veterans Health Matters*. Good luck!

1. NOOCL RCNAEC _____
2. V19OICD ECVCNAL _____
3. AMZECE _____
4. LAHYHET NGAGI _____
5. OMANMLAE _____
6. TEMLAN HAHETL _____
7. FNLMIDIU _____
8. RSPOIASSI _____
9. ILSGHNES _____
10. KNSI _____
11. YEELOMDGERTLTAO _____
12. NTAEUST _____
13. OHELW LHAEH _____

Apple Coleslaw

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups white or red cabbage
- 1 large apple
- 1 medium carrot
- 1/2 chopped green or red bell pepper
- 5 tablespoons low fat plain yogurt
- 1 tablespoon low fat mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon chopped dill weed (optional)
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper



DIRECTIONS

1. Wash all vegetables. Cut cabbage into fine shreds. Peel and grate the carrot with a grater. Remove the core from the apple and chop.
2. Put all the prepared vegetables in a large mixing bowl and stir together.
3. In a small bowl whisk together the yogurt, mayonnaise, lemon juice, dill weed, salt, and pepper.
4. Pour the dressing mixture over the salad and toss to mix.

Nutritional information:

(4 servings). Per serving: 66 calories, 1 g total fat, 0 g saturated fat, 13 g carbohydrates, 3 g dietary fiber, 2 g protein, and 60 mg sodium.

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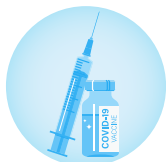
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Get Your COVID-19 Vaccine!

Talk to your provider if you have questions.
Visit va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine

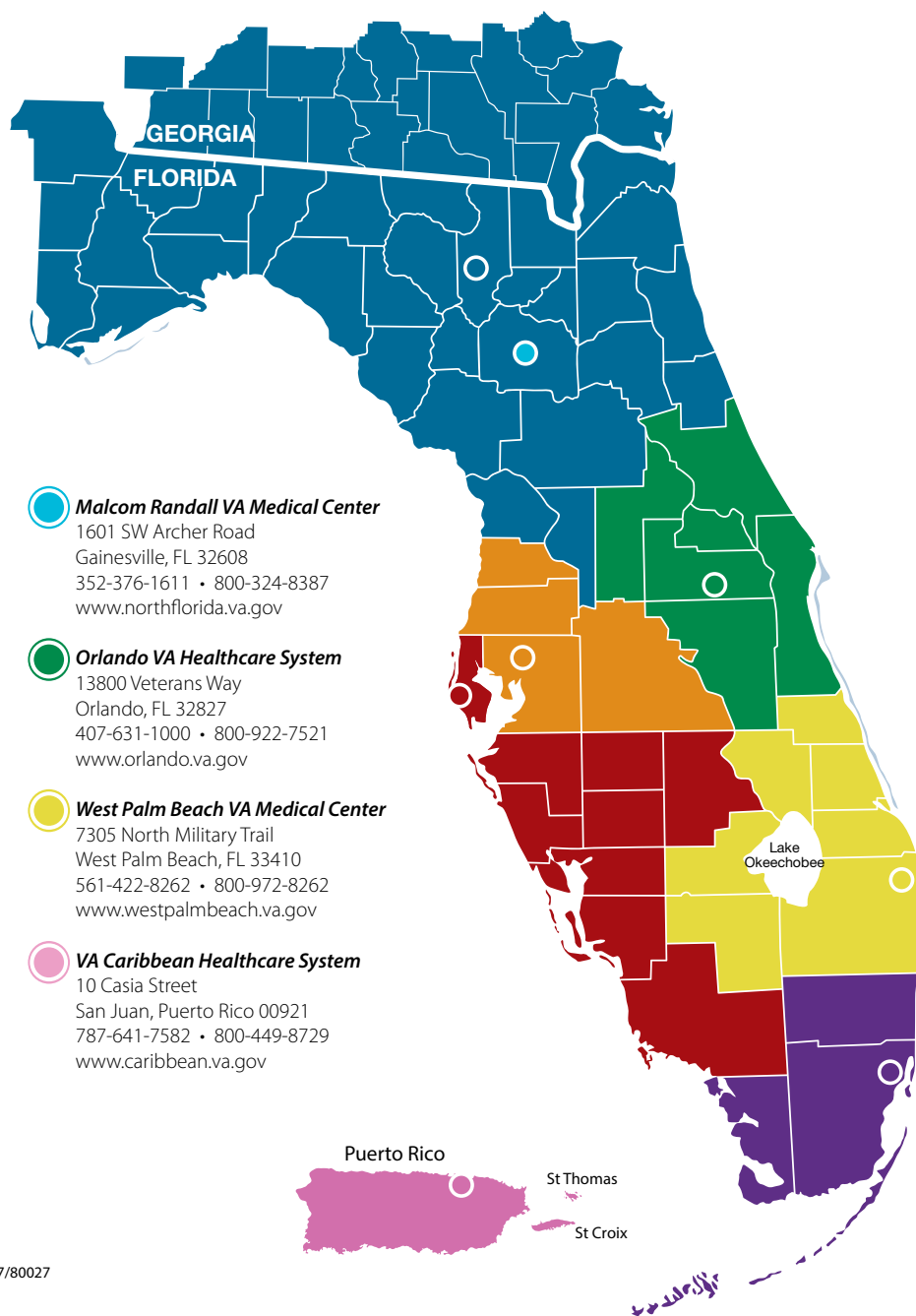
VA Sunshine Healthcare Network

www.visn8.va.gov



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Find a VA hospital or clinic near you:
www.va.gov/health/FindCare.asp



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