

WELCOME TO

My Health, Roger That!

STVHCS Veterans Newsletter

From the Office of Patient Education



In this newsletter, we aim to empower and equip you with knowledge about various aspects of health and wellness. From tips on leading a healthy lifestyle to updates on upcoming health events. Our goal is to keep you informed and engaged in your healthcare journey.

Each edition will feature different medical specialties, sharing information and services available to you. We believe that informed patients make the best decisions regarding their health, and we're here to support you every step of the way.

We encourage you to explore, learn, and share this newsletter with your friends and family. Together, we can build a community that values and prioritizes health education. Thank you for being a part of our Patient Education family, and we look forward to sharing more valuable insights with you in the future.

Patient Orientation

Join us for our informative sessions dedicated to discussing the healthcare benefits provided by the South Texas Veterans Health Care System. Whether you're eager to learn about your coverage choices, need help navigating the system, or simply wish to stay informed about recent updates, our gatherings offer the ideal platform for you. Each session provides an opportunity for you to ask questions and engage with our patient advocate, patient experience staff, and patient education team. We are excited to welcome you every Tuesday at 10 a.m. and look forward to supporting you in your healthcare journey.



Scan the QR code or go to the STX VA homepage under Events: <https://www.va.gov/south-texas-health-care/events/>

March Healthy Living Message

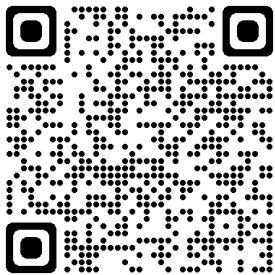


EATING WISELY / HEALTHY FOOD MATTERS

Eating wisely can help prevent chronic diseases like obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure and Type 2 diabetes. It is one of the most powerful tools we have to reduce the onset of disease. The benefits of eating wisely add up “bite by bite”. Healthy eating is based on choosing the right types and amounts of food.

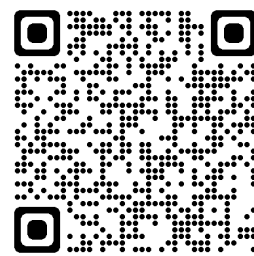
Improve your health with nutrition!

FIND OUT MORE!



National Institute
on Aging

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/healthy-eating-nutrition-and-diet>



Eating Wisely - Healthy
Living Message

<https://www.prevention.va.gov/docs/NCP-HL-Eat-Wisely-v01.pdf>

<https://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov>

New Nutrition Classes Starting in 2024

Virtual - Eating Heart Healthy Nutrition Class

Classes Held: 1st Tuesday of every month from 1-2pm

Topics Discussed:

- Understand how body weight and shape affect heart health
- Learn the benefits of exercise, stress management and sleep to preserve heart health
- Explore heart-healthy eating habits and goal setting



Virtual - Diabetes and Nutrition Class

Classes Held: 1st Friday of every month from 9-10 am OR
3rd Tuesday of every month from 10-11 am



Topics Discussed:

- Eating healthy using the Plate Method
- Identify foods that can raise your blood sugars and how they affect your blood sugars
- Learn how to read the nutrition facts on a food label to help manage your blood sugars

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
South Texas Veterans Health Care System

**Contact Nutrition Scheduling
to register: 210-949-3995**

APPROVED
Care Services
SOUTH TEXAS

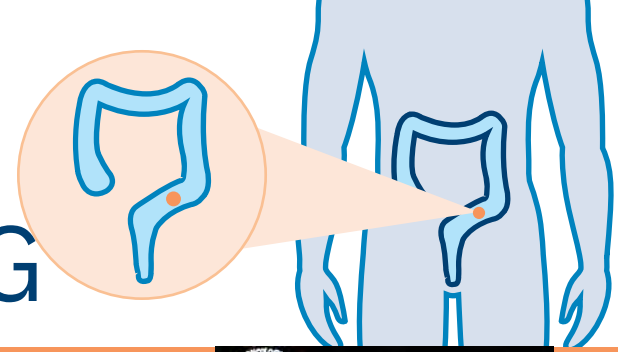
COLON CANCER SCREENING

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Colorectal cancer (CRC) is one of the most common cancers in the United States, and each year, VA diagnoses approximately 4,000 new cases of colorectal cancer in Veterans. The risk of colorectal cancer increases with age and screening is recommended for all adults aged 45 to 75. This cancer typically begins as an asymptomatic growth (polyp) on the lining of the colon or rectum. Screening is crucial to detect polyps early before they have a chance to become cancer, or to detect cancer at an early stage when treatment is most effective.

Fecal immunochemical testing (FIT) is a screening done at home to check for blood in stool that you can't see, which can be due to polyps or cancer. VA's Mailed FIT Program delivers FIT kits to the homes of Veterans eligible for CRC screening, meaning Veterans have access to high quality CRC screening without leaving their home. In alignment with President Biden's Cancer Moonshot goal of reducing the cancer death rate by half within 25 years, VA is at the forefront, leveraging innovative technology and making screening more accessible for all Veterans.

COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING



PATIENT EDUCATION FACT SHEET



Colon or rectal (colorectal) cancer is cancer in the colon or rectum and, unfortunately, is one of the most common cancers in the United States. This cancer typically starts as asymptomatic growths on the lining of the colon or rectum known as polyps. Screening is important because it can detect these polyps before they have a chance to become cancer. It also can detect cancer at an early stage when treatment can be curative.

What is colorectal cancer screening?

Colorectal screenings check for polyps in the colon or rectum. VA offers the following tests to screen for colon cancer:

- o Fecal immunochemical test (FIT)
- o Flexible sigmoidoscopy
- o Colonoscopy

Each year, VA diagnoses

4,000

NEW CASES of colorectal cancer in Veterans

FIT screening is done at home to check for blood in stool that you can't see. Flexible sigmoidoscopy and colonoscopy involve insertion of a flexible tube with a camera through the anus into the rectum and colon to look for any abnormalities. Colonoscopy is typically performed with sedation. With colonoscopy, precancerous polyps can be removed, preventing them from developing into cancer. If either FIT or flexible sigmoidoscopy detects an abnormality, colonoscopy is necessary. Delaying follow up on an abnormal stool test can increase your risk of cancer.

Who should get screened?

Adults aged 45-75 without any known increased risk of colorectal cancer should be screened with one of the following, based on a conversation with their primary care provider:

- o Home-based FIT every year
- o Flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years, or every 10 years with a FIT every year
- o Colonoscopy every 10 years

Colonoscopy may be recommended if you have any symptoms of colorectal cancer (e.g., rectal bleeding), a personal history of polyps, or a family history of colon or rectal cancer or polyps.

What are my next steps for colorectal screening?

- ✓ Ask your doctor about your individual risk level and options for colorectal cancer screening.
- ✓ Learn more at cancer.va.gov or email cancer@va.gov
- ✓ Share this information with other Veterans. **You just might save a life.**



ON THE MOVE!



CARDIOLOGY CLINIC IS MOVING!

The Cardiology Clinic at Audie L. Murphy Campus is excited to announce its move to the 2C Clinic! This transition marks a significant milestone for our clinic and we are looking forward to welcoming our patients to this space starting on March 4, 2024.

Rest assured, even though we are moving locations, our commitment to providing top-quality care remains unchanged. Our phone extensions will remain the same, ensuring a seamless transition for our patients who wish to reach out to us for appointments, inquiries, or any other needs.

We are grateful for the trust and support of our patients, and we are dedicated to continuing to deliver the highest standard of cardiology care in our new location. We can't wait to see you at the 2C Clinic and continue our journey towards better heart health together.



PHYSICAL MEDICINE & REHABILITATION'S (PM&R) ORTHOTIC & PROSTHETIC LAB CHANGES

Clinicians in this clinic are now working in the department of PM&R rather than Prosthetics Department. These changes are aimed at improving the quality of care provided to South Texas Veterans. By having clinicians work within the PM&R department, a more specialized and focused approach can be taken to address the needs of each individual.

To schedule appointments, individuals can call centralized scheduling at (210) 949-9702, making the process more streamlined and convenient. Orthotic fitter appointments are currently available at Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital and San Antonio Northwest Health Care Center, with the addition of appointments soon to be offered at the New Braunfels Community Based Outpatient Clinic.

For those who have previously received orthotic devices, it is advised to bring them along to appointments for evaluation by the orthotic fitter. This will help ensure that the best possible care and recommendations are provided based on individual needs and experiences. These changes are part of ongoing efforts to enhance the services and support offered to veterans in the South Texas region.

Spotlight

STVHCS Dental Service

Our dental team is dedicated to delivering exceptional patient-centered dental care focused on enhancing, preserving, and restoring oral health in accordance with established standards of practice. With a skilled and diverse team of dental professionals, including general dentists and specialists in endodontics, periodontics, prosthodontics, and oral surgery, we are well-equipped to address your oral health needs. Additionally, our experienced dental hygienists and assistants complement our comprehensive care approach.

At STVHCS, we adopt a phased strategy that emphasizes health promotion and disease prevention to ensure optimal treatment outcomes. We leverage Community Care Consults to facilitate the completion of the Acute and Disease Control Phases for eligible Veterans, with subsequent phases managed by your VA Primary Care Dentist.

Our Phased Care model comprises five key phases: the Acute Phase, Disease Control Phase, Re-evaluation Phase, Definitive Control Phase, and Maintenance Phase. The Acute Phase focuses on resolving urgent or emergent conditions, while the Disease Control Phase aims to manage active oral diseases and infections, including addressing contributing risk factors such as tobacco use and HbA1C levels.

Upon successful control of active disease, patients transition to the Definitive Control Phase, which involves procedures like tooth replacement. Subsequently, the Maintenance Phase is tailored to sustain optimal oral health, featuring periodic recall exams and personalized dental hygiene plans adjusted to individual needs.

In cases of dental emergencies involving acute pain, bleeding, or swelling, our Northwest Health Care Center and Datapoint Dental Clinic are designated for immediate attention. For non-urgent matters or appointment scheduling, please contact our scheduling clerks at 210-949-9702 or the STX Clinical Contact Center Triage at 1-833-284-7212.

If you need to cancel an appointment, kindly inform us at 210-949-9702 well in advance to allow for efficient scheduling and avoid any inconvenience to other patients. Please make a note of the details when canceling to assist in maintaining accurate records and avoid any miscommunications.

Our team at STVHCS is committed to delivering exceptional dental care to enhance your oral health journey. Whether you require routine check-ups or specialized treatments, we are dedicated to supporting you every step of the way. Should you have any inquiries or require assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. Your oral health is our priority, and we are here to help you achieve and maintain a healthy smile.



Veterans Day 2023 marks the 20th anniversary of **My HealthVet, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' online patient portal**. My HealthVet enables Veterans, active duty Service members, and their dependents and caregivers to access resources and tools to manage their VA care.

The platform was piloted in 1999 at nine VA Medical Centers across the country. It launched nationally on November 11, 2003, which was Veterans Day.

Over the past 20 years, more than **6 million people** have used My HealthVet to connect to VA care and take control of their health and wellness.

My HealthVet gives Veterans the tools to manage their VA health care.

Using My HealthVet, you can:



View your VA health records.

View, download, or print information from your VA medical record.



Refill your VA prescriptions.

Refill your VA prescriptions, track their delivery, and view a list of your VA prescriptions.



Send secure messages.

Communicate securely with your VA care team to ask nonurgent health questions, send updates on your condition, and more.



Schedule your VA appointments.

View, schedule, and cancel your VA care appointments, set up email reminders, and join your video telehealth visits.



For more information, visit
myhealth.va.gov

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



Carrying extra weight? Losing weight and keeping it off can be one of the best things you can do to protect your health. Excess weight puts you at risk for problems like heart disease, diabetes, some cancers, sleep apnea and can also worsen back and joint pain.

The *MOVE!* Weight Management Program is a comprehensive nutrition, behavioral, and physical activity program designed for Veterans enrolled in the VA health care system who want assistance with managing their weight. *MOVE!* can help Veterans lose weight, keep it off, and improve their health.

Enroll in *MOVE!* today!

Receive information about the *MOVE!* program and a brief introduction to the basics of weight loss. *Orientation class is by appointment only, please follow instructions below to schedule your appointment.*

Virtual *MOVE!* Orientation Classes Available

Audie L. Murphy VA Clinic (ALM)	1 st Monday of month from 9:00-10:30 am
ALM Internal Medicine Clinic 1G	1 st Friday of month from 9:00-10:30 am
Balcones Heights Clinic (BHO)	4 th Wednesday of month from 2:00-3:30 pm
North Central Federal Clinic (NCF)	4 th Friday of month from 1:00-2:30 pm
New Braunfels VA Clinic (NBR)	3 rd Thursday of month from 1:00-2:30 pm
Walzem VA Clinic	4 th Friday of the month from 9:30-11:00 am

In-Person *MOVE!* Orientation Class Available

Northwest SA VA Clinic (NWHCC)	3 rd Wednesday of month from 11:00-12:30 pm
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Schedule to attend a class: call (210) 949-3995

MOVE! Weight Management Program Coordinator: Clarissa Rivera (210) 956-4359

Healthy Teaching Kitchen

Spring 2024

South Texas Veterans Health Care System

HTK Orientation: Learning the Basics

Mondays & Tuesdays @ 12:00 p.m.

January 8th — Monday
January 23rd — Tuesday
February 26th — Monday
March 26th — Tuesday
April 23rd — Tuesday
May 21st — Tuesday
June 18th — Tuesday



Basics Class 6-Week Series:

Tuesdays @ 12:00 p.m.

January 2nd
February 6th
March 5th
April 2nd
May 7th
June 4th



Diabetes Management 1:

Wednesdays @ 10:00 a.m.

January 3rd	April 3rd
February 7th	May 1st
March 6th	June 5th

Diabetes Management 2:

Thursdays @ 10:00 a.m.

January 25th	April 25th
February 22nd	May 23rd
March 28th	June 27th

Healthy Eating 1:

Mondays @ 12:30 p.m.

January 22nd	April 15th
February 12th	May 13th
March 4th	June 10th



Healthy Eating 2:

Wednesdays @ 5:00 p.m.

February 21st
April 17th
May 15th



Food as Medicine 1:

Thursdays @ 10:00 a.m.

January 18th	April 18th
February 15th	May 16th
March 21st	June 20th

Food as Medicine 2:

Wednesdays @ 10:00 a.m.

January 24th	April 24th
February 28th	May 22nd
March 27th	June 26th

Audie L. Murphy Memorial

Veterans Hospital

Ground Level, Room H001.4

To Schedule call: (210) 949-3995

Nutrition and Food Service

Hosted by: Tamara Sugarek, MBA, RD

VA Health Connect is available in South Texas

Call 877-469-5300

Press 3 to access our 24/7 Nurse Line



**Get your health
concerns
addressed 24/7
by our team of
nurses**

With VA Health Connect, you can also:

- Press 1 for Pharmacy
 - Refill, request medication renewals and check the status of your medications
- Press 2 for Scheduling
 - Schedule, cancel, verify or reschedule primary care appointments
- Virtual Clinic Visits available when appropriate via Nurse Line

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Coming Soon!

KERRVILLE VETERAN HEALTH EDUCATION FAIR!

Come and join us in the beautiful hill country for our Veteran Health Education Fair! Discover a range of health programs with representatives from Diabetes Education, Cardiology, Women's Veterans Program, Tobacco Cessation, Whole Health, Telehealth, and more. Don't miss the opportunity to sign up for My HealtheVet instantly and engage with a patient advocate. Mark your calendars and spread the word to friends and family as this event promises to be both informative and engaging!

For further details, reach out to Margaret Romo at 726-206-6889. We look forward to meeting you!



PHOTO COURTESY OF OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

**MAY 10, 2024 AUDITORIUM
10AM - 2PM**

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. We hope you found it enjoyable. Keep an eye out for the upcoming newsletter next quarter!

