

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Columbia VA Health Care System

Healthy Living Resource Guide

**Your Health, Your Way
Choose Columbia VA**



6439 Garners Ferry Road, Columbia, SC 29209

www.columbiasc.va.gov



Healthy Living Matters. Prevention Works.

The Columbia VA Health Care System is committed to equipping you to take charge of your health and wellness and live your life to the fullest.

This booklet highlights Healthy Living services, programs and tools, developed by the VHA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. Each message contains information that is important for taking charge of your life and living a healthy life.

Thank you for choosing the Columbia VA Health Care System for your care.



Sleep Well



**Get Recommended Screening
Tests and Immunizations**



**Be Involved In
Your Health Care**



Manage Stress



Be Tobacco Free



Limit Alcohol



Be Safe



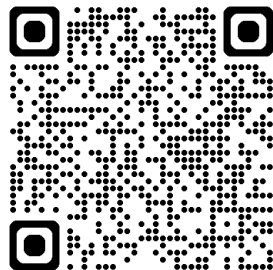
**Strive for a
Healthy Weight**



Be Physically Active



Eat Wisely



For more information on any of the following services or healthy living programming, please contact your Columbia VA Healthy Living Team at (803) 869-9988, or (803) 776-4000, exts. 55372 or 57469

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Scan QR codes, visit popular links to trusted VA websites, or call the MyVA411 hotline at (800) 698-2411 to learn more about each resource listed in this handbook.

How to scan a QR code with your smartphone camera



1

Open your smartphone's camera app or QR code scanning app.

2

Hold your device so that the single QR code appears on your smartphone's screen.

3

Once the QR code is centered on your smartphone's screen, your device will recognize the QR code and show a notification.

4

Tap the notification to open the link associated with the QR code.

Healthy Living Messages



Be Involved in Your Health Care

- Take an active role
- Work with your health care team to improve your health



Be Tobacco Free

- Quitting smoking is the single most important thing you can do to improve your health and protect the health of your family members
- Don't use tobacco in any form



Eat Wisely

- Eat a variety of foods including vegetables, fruits, and whole grains
- Limit salt, fat, sugar, and alcohol



Be Physically Active

- Avoid inactivity
- Aim for at least 2 1/2 hours of moderate intensity aerobic activity each week



Strive for a Healthy Weight

- If you need to lose weight, losing even a little will help
- If you are of normal weight, maintain it



Limit Alcohol

- If you choose to drink alcohol, drink in moderation (woman no more than 1 drink a day; men no more than 2 drinks a day)
- Avoid "binge drinking"



Get Recommended Screening Tests and Immunizations

- Recommendations for preventive services depend on your age, gender, health status, and family history
- Ask which screening tests and immunizations are recommended for you



Manage Stress

- Pay attention to stress
- Learn about ways to help you manage and reduce your stress



Be Safe

- Find out how to prevent sexually transmitted infections, falls, and motor vehicle crashes
- Take action to protect yourself and those you love from harm



Be Involved in Your Health Care Healthy Living Message



What's Important to Know?

Playing an active role in your health care is key to meeting your health goals. To get the most out of your visit, plan the questions you want to ask and the things you want to discuss. When you leave your visit, know what actions to take to best manage your health. Here are some specific ways to be more involved:

Before your visit:

- Write down your health goals, needs, questions, and concerns.
- Make a list of all the medicines you take, as well as vitamins and supplements.
- Get additional information from the [Veterans Health Library](#) and [My HealtheVet](#).

During your visit:

- Tell your team about your health goals, needs, and treatment preferences.
- Share any health questions and concerns with your team at the beginning of your visit.
- Tell your team about your past illnesses, hospital stays, surgeries, and any other health issues you may be experiencing.
- Share your list of medicines and why you take them. Ask for written instructions to take home with you for any current or new medicines.
- Work together with your team to create a treatment plan that meets your health goals, needs, preferences, and that addresses what matters most to you.
- Take notes about what you and your health care team discuss and decide. Bring a family member or friend to help.
- Ask about next steps in your health care plan, such as additional appointments and treatments or how you will access test results.

- Share steps that you plan to take to reach your health goals. If you are unsure, ask your team for help in identifying specific actions you might take to follow through with your plan.
- Ask your team any other questions you have at the end of your visit. Speak up if you have concerns or think something is wrong.

After your visit:

- Get additional information from the Veterans Health Library and My HealtheVet.
- Tell your team if you have more questions or concerns, or if there is a change in your health.

Want to Know More?

If you want to learn more about how to be involved in your health care, talk with your VA health care team. They can help you make changes to live healthier and meet your goals.

You can find additional information and resources at VA's Prevention website using the QR code above or the link below:

https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Be_Involved_in_Your_Health_Care.asp



MY HEALTHEVET PROGRAM

My HealtheVet (MHV) is the VHA's award-winning online Personal Health Record (PHR) located at www.myhealth.va.gov. It offers Veterans, active-duty Service Members and others anywhere, one-stop, 24/7 online access to health care information, resources, and tools. With MHV, users can access a trusted, secure, and informed VA site with health and benefits information at their convenience.



Take Control of Your Health Through My HealtheVet

Join the millions of Veterans who use My HealtheVet to help make informed decisions about their VA care.

My HealtheVet is VA's private and secure online patient portal for Veterans, active duty service members, and their dependents and caregivers. Its online resources and tools offer you greater control over your health and wellness.

What Can I Do on My HealtheVet?



View VA Health Records

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



Refill 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.



Manage VA Appointments

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

How Can I Get Started?

1. **Visit the My HealtheVet site at myhealth.va.gov.**
2. **Select the Register button.**
3. **Enter the required information and submit.**
4. **Upgrade to a free Premium account in person, online, or with a video appointment.**

Learn more at myhealth.va.gov/premium.

My HealtheVet Help Desk

Call the help desk, toll-free, at **877-327-0022** or **800-877-8339** (TTY) from Monday to Friday, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. Central time.

*** For more information, visit <https://www.myhealth.va.gov> or contact the My HealtheVet Help Desk: (877) 327-0022 or contact the Columbia VA My HealtheVet Coordinator at (803) 776-4000, ext. 54783.**

Veterans Health Library (VHL)

www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov



A health and medical information resource developed for use by Veterans and their families. The VHL provides over 2,000 health and drug information sheets in English and Spanish, health education videos, online booklets with easy-to-use, hands-on tools and quizzes.

The VHL helps Veterans stay well and well-informed.

In 2022, more than
504,000 Veterans visited
the VHL and viewed
nearly 1.4 million pages.

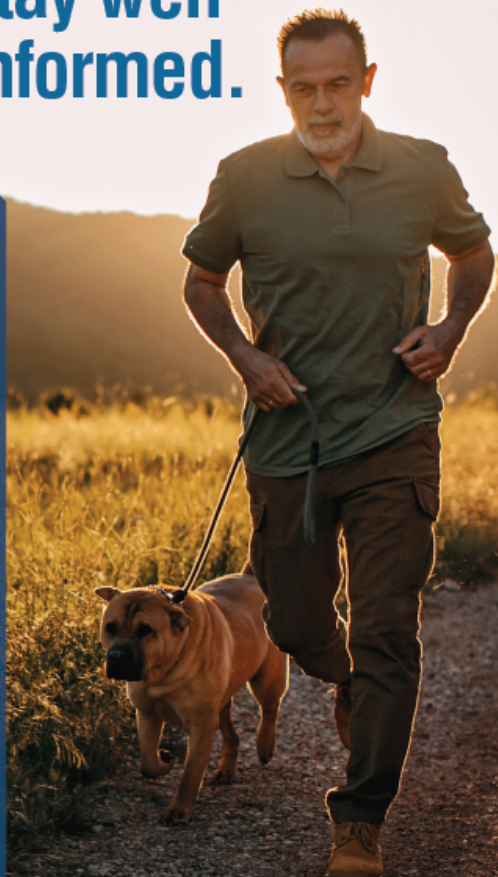
Veterans said that
because of health
information on the
VHL, more than **80%**
agree they are now:

- More prepared to ask questions at their next health care appointment.
- Changing the way they care for themselves.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE.

www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov



Self-Care Mobile Apps



www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile
MobileMentalHealth@va.gov



National Center for
PTSD
POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Mobile health apps from the National Center for PTSD were developed for Veterans and Service members with PTSD and related concerns. The apps feature coping tools, educational readings, self-assessments, and links to support. There are also companion websites with extra content as noted below; these websites are independent of the apps and offer another way to access the information. All of the apps are free, secure, and easy to use.



PTSD Coach supports the self-management of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The app may be used alone or in combination with the website PTSD Coach Online (www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/ptsdcoachonline/).



PTSD Family Coach is for partners, family members, and other loved ones of individuals who may be experiencing posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This standalone app also contains support tools for caregiving.



AIMS for Anger Management is an app for anyone with anger problems. It may be used alone, or in combination with the Anger and Irritability Management Skills online self-help course (www.veterantraining.va.gov/aims/).



Beyond MST is for individuals who experienced military sexual trauma, or MST. The app can help with coping, learning more about recovery from MST, and tracking progress over time.



Couples Coach was created for partners who want to improve their relationship and explore new ways to connect.



COVID Coach was created for everyone, to support self-care and overall mental health during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Check out “30 days of self-care with COVID Coach,” a guide to help make self-care a part of your daily life: <https://tinyurl.com/30daysofCOVIDCoach>



Insomnia Coach supports the self-management of insomnia. It can be used alone or in combination with the website Path to Better Sleep (www.veterantraining.va.gov/insomnia/).



Mindfulness Coach is designed to support independent mindfulness practice. The app also contains information about mindfulness and PTSD symptoms, increasing resilience and self-awareness, improving emotional balance, and building positive skills.



VetChange is an app for anyone who is concerned about their drinking and PTSD. The app may be used alone or in combination with the VetChange website (www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/change/).

WHOLE HEALTH



What matters to me? What do I want my health for?

Whole Health is VA's approach to care that supports your health and well-being. Whole Health centers around what matters to you. This means your health team will get to know you as a person, and will work with you to develop a health plan based on your values, needs, and goals.

Eligibility

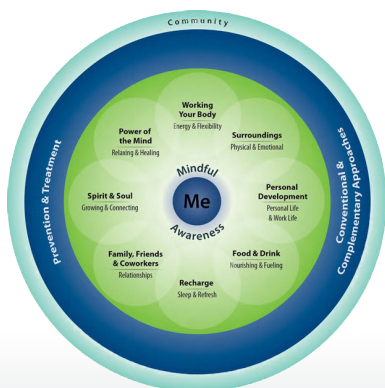
Any Veteran interested in making positive changes for their health and well-being may participate. You will start with a 2-hour Whole Health Program orientation class which will detail the activities that you can participate.

Classes & Offerings (Face-to-Face and Virtual):

Mindfulness, Guided Imagery, Yoga, Tai Chi, Battlefield Acupuncture, Whole Health Nutrition, Whole Health Coaching, Recreational Therapy (Expressive Art, Coping Skill Development, Stretching, Gardening), Taking Charge of My Life and Health, Whole Health for Women, and more! (classes subject to availability)

Just ask your provider to place a referral for the Columbia VA Whole Health program.

<http://www.va.gov/patientcenteredcare>



**Whole
Health
for Life** 



WHOLE HEALTH

Live Whole Health.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration

Whole Health Resources for Veterans

Resource	Website Address	QR Code
Whole Health Internet Site 	https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/index.asp VA's main site for all things Whole Health. Whole Health is VA's cutting-edge approach to care that supports your health and well-being. Be sure to bookmark this site for future reference!	
#LiveWholeHealth – Self Care for Veterans 	https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/tag.livewholehealth/ VA's ongoing self-care blog series highlights Whole Health resources—such as video sessions for yoga or meditation—that you can follow along at home to live healthier and happier. New videos are published on a regular basis to the Vantage Point website.	
Whole Health Videos 	https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/video/videos.asp Learn about the core concepts of Whole Health and each area of the Circle of Health.	
Whole Health Mobile Apps and Online Tools 	https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/veteran-resources/MobileApps-OnlineTools.asp Use these Web-based and mobile tools to support your whole health. The list includes resources developed within the VA as well as publicly available resources.	
Veteran Whole Health Education Handouts 	https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/veteran-handouts/index.asp Veteran whole health education handouts help to support the Whole Health journey. This site offers a wide range of helpful materials, organized around each component of self-care in the Circle of Health.	



Sleep Well

Healthy Living Message



What's Important to Know?

Maintaining healthy sleep

Getting high-quality sleep is key for good health. Sleeping well is just as important as exercise and eating wisely.

Poor sleep is related to:

- Obesity
- Heart disease and stroke
- Diabetes
- Pain
- Depression, anxiety, and irritability
- Concentration and memory problems
- Accidents and impaired work performance

One in three people have problems sleeping at some point in their lives. There's a big difference between one night of poor sleep and trouble that persists. If your sleep trouble goes on for months, you may have a sleep disorder. Concerned about your sleep? VA's **Sleep Check-Up** tool can help you understand it:

<https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/checkup/index.asp>

The two most common sleep disorders are **Insomnia Disorder** and **Obstructive Sleep Apnea Disorder**.

Insomnia symptoms include difficulty with:

- Falling asleep
- Staying asleep
- Waking too early

Obstructive sleep apnea is a sleep disorder caused by blocking of the airway during sleep. Symptoms can include:

- Loud snoring
- Excessive daytime sleepiness
- Observed episodes of stopped breathing during sleep
- Waking up gasping or choking
- Difficulty concentrating during the day

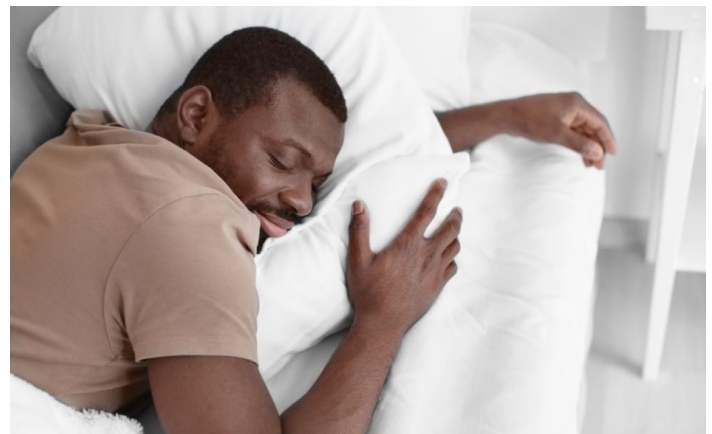
Effective treatments are available for both Insomnia and Sleep Apnea.

Want to Know More?

Talk to your health care team to learn about alternatives to sleep medications, including virtual insomnia treatment options.

You can find additional information and resources at VA's Prevention website using the QR code above or the link below:

https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Sleep_Well.asp



INSOMNIA COACH



Insomnia Coach is a **free, easy-to-use mobile application** created for everyone, including Veterans and Service members, who are suffering from insomnia. It was developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 2020. The app is based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I)—an evidence-based treatment—and scientific research about how people can change their behaviors and thoughts to improve their sleep. Insomnia Coach is not meant to replace professional care related to sleep problems or mental health conditions, such as PTSD.

LEARN ABOUT INSOMNIA AND SLEEP

Insomnia Coach provides information to help you learn about sleep, insomnia and factors that affect your ability to fall and stay asleep.

- Learn about sleep basics—why we sleep, the stages of sleep and factors that affect sleep
- Get information about how insomnia develops, problems related to insomnia and treatment options

FOLLOW A TRAINING PLAN TO BETTER SLEEP

Your Training Plan will guide you to better sleep over 5 weeks (and beyond).

- Get started by completing a sleep diary and checking your insomnia symptoms
- Improve your “sleep hygiene”—learn how to set up your sleep environment, limit caffeine intake and work on other habits to improve sleep quality
- After you complete your first week of the plan, the app will help you set time in bed recommendations to help limit time you spend awake in bed

TRACK DAILY AND WEEKLY PROGRESS

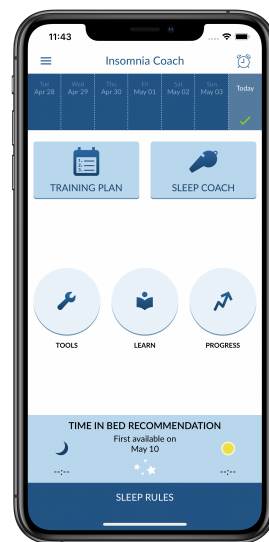
Just as sleep problems probably didn't start in 1 night, it's not realistic to expect them to change in 1 night. Seeing how your sleep changes over time will help you stick to your Training Plan.

- Review tips from the Sleep Coach to get personal feedback
- View graphs that show your sleep patterns over time
- Set reminders to visit the app each day to enter a sleep diary, wind down for sleep and more

GET YOUR SLEEP BACK ON TRACK WITH HELPFUL TOOLS

Whether you want to quiet your mind, relax your body or work on sleep habits, Insomnia Coach has 17 tools to help. Just a few minutes a day can have a big impact on your sleep.

NOTE: It's recommended that before using this app you consult a health care professional if you have any of the following conditions, as they may be affected by changes to your sleep habits: sleep apnea or restless leg syndrome; bipolar disorder; seizure disorder/epilepsy; sleep walking; night terrors; excessive daytime sleepiness; or, frailty and risk of falling if getting up at night. This app may not be right for you if you are a shift worker, or if your job requires you to be awake at night.





Be Tobacco Free

Healthy Living Message



What's Important to Know?

Quitting tobacco use is the single most important thing you can do to improve your health and protect your family's health. If you quit smoking or other forms of tobacco, you and your family will experience short and long-term health benefits. It's never too late to quit—your health will improve at any age after quitting!

All forms of tobacco use—including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, snuff, snus, chewing tobacco and more—are harmful. Tobacco use harms nearly every organ of the body and causes:

- Cancers
- Heart disease and stroke
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and other lung/breathing problems
- Complications in those who are pregnant

Secondhand smoke is the smoke released from a burning cigarette, cigar, or pipe, as well as the smoke exhaled by the smoker. There is no safe level of secondhand smoke. It can harm the non-smokers' health and can increase their risk of heart disease, lung cancer, and other health problems by 20-30%.

Good things happen as soon as you quit. You'll breathe easier, save money, smell better, sleep better, and have more energy. If you're pregnant, your baby will be healthier. You'll also be protecting your health and protecting your family and friends from secondhand smoke.

Want to Know More?

Talk with your VA health care team about help with quitting tobacco. They can provide medications, tips, tools, behavioral counseling, and support. They can also help you join other Veterans in a group led by your hospital's expert in quitting smoking.

Behavioral counseling and use of FDA-approved tobacco cessation medications work together to help you quit for good.

You can find additional information and resources at VA's Prevention website using the QR code above or the link below:

https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Be_Tobacco_Free.asp



VA TOBACCO CESSATION RESOURCES



COUNSELING

Call **Quit VET (1-855-QUIT-VET)** to speak to a tobacco cessation counselor between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. Eastern time, Monday through Friday. Quit VET connects Veterans to a trained counselor who can help develop a quit plan and provide ongoing counseling and support to prevent relapse.



TEXT SUPPORT

Sign up for **SmokefreeVET** to receive texts with tips and tools to beat cravings by texting **VET** to **47848**. Benefits of signing up for SmokefreeVET include regular text messages and extra support at your fingertips when you text the keywords URGE, STRESS, SMOKED, and DIPPED to 47848.



ONLINE SUPPORT

Follow the SmokefreeVET Facebook page for tips and encouragement from other Veterans facebook.com/smokefreevet



MEDICATIONS

Talk to your doctor about using the patch, gum, lozenges, or other medications to help you quit. Watch a video to learn about VA's proven approach, combining **counseling with medication**.



SELF-HELP

Find VA resources and more tips for quitting at mentalhealth.va.gov/quit-tobacco and veterans.smokefree.gov



LOCAL RESOURCES

One-on-one Appointments can be ideal if you prefer scheduled, individual appointments and are interested in tobacco cessation medications.

Ask your provider about an appointment with your team Clinical Pharmacist Practitioner.

The Freedom From Nicotine Group: Can be ideal if you appreciate support in a group setting. Current group offerings: Mondays from 11am-12pm (virtual), Wednesdays from 2-3pm (virtual), and Fridays from 9a-10a (in-person).



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Stay Quit Coach Mobile App

STOP SMOKING AND PREVENT RELAPSE

This app addresses the psychological, physical, and behavioral components of smoking, providing on-the-go tools that are easily accessible when they are needed most, including:

- Education on the risks of smoking, the benefits of quitting, and medication and nicotine replacement therapies
- Perspectives and coping tools for those who smoke after quitting
- Tools for coping with urges to smoke
- Reminders to take medications or nicotine replacement therapies
- Motivation by reminding users of reasons for quitting
- Help track the benefits of having quit smoking



STAY QUIT COACH 2.0

TRACK PROGRESS

- Set goals and record your reasons for quitting or reducing tobacco use.
- Log your tobacco use in real time and track your progress over time.
- See how much money you've saved throughout your journey to quitting or staying quit.

CREATE A PLAN AND ACCESS COPING TOOLS

- Identify and track your triggers for tobacco use.
- Create a coping plan to help you stay on track towards your goals.
- Learn how to practice controlled breathing as a safe, effective stress management tool.
- Get support via the Veterans Quit Line or Veterans Crisis Line.

LEARN AND FIND RESOURCES

- Learn about the benefits of quitting and how to prepare for quitting.
- Learn new habits and develop strategies for coping with nicotine withdrawal.
- Find help and get back on track if you lapse in your journey to a tobacco-free lifestyle.



Eat Wisely

Healthy Living Message



What's Important to Know?

Eating wisely is one of the best tools you have to prevent chronic diseases like obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, and Type 2 diabetes. The keys to better health through nutrition are to:

1. Follow a healthy eating pattern that is right for you.
2. Choose nutrient-dense food and drink choices that you enjoy, reflect your culture, and fit your budget.
3. Use nutrient-dense foods and drinks to meet food group needs and stay within appropriate calorie limits. A healthy eating pattern includes:
 - **Vegetables of all types** - dark green, red, and orange, and legumes (beans, peas, and lentils)
 - **Fruits** - especially whole fresh fruits - but they may be canned or frozen too
 - **Grains** - at least half of which are high fiber whole-grains
 - **Dairy** - fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese, and/or lactose-free versions or fortified soy alternatives
 - **An assortment of protein foods** - lean meats, poultry, and eggs; seafood; legumes (beans, peas, lentils); and nuts, seeds, and soy products
4. Maintain or strive for a healthy weight by balancing the energy (calories) from foods and drinks with the energy burned through physical activity. To lose weight, most people need to reduce the number of calories consumed and increase their physical activity.
5. Limit foods and drinks high in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium, as well as alcoholic beverages. For example:
 - **Added sugars** - Consume less than 10% of your daily calories from added sugars. These are sugars and syrups that are added to foods or drinks when they are processed or prepared.
 - **Saturated fat** - Consume less than 10% of your daily calories from saturated fats and avoid trans-fats.
 - **Sodium** - Limit to no more than 2,300mg of sodium per day. Choose foods with little added salt and make meals without salt when possible. Adults with high blood pressure may benefit from limiting to 1,500mg of sodium per day.
 - **Alcoholic beverages** - Adults of legal drinking age can choose not to drink, or to drink in moderation by limiting to 2 drinks or less in a day for men and 1 drink or less per day for women and people over age 64. Drinking less is better for health than drinking more. Children, pregnant women, and those with certain medical conditions should not drink any alcohol.

Want to Know More?

If you want to learn more about how to eat wisely, talk with your VA health care team. They can help you make changes to live healthier and meet your goals.

You can find additional information and resources at VA's Prevention website using the QR code above or the link below:

https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Eat_Wisely.asp





Be Physically Active

Healthy Living Message



What's Important to Know?

To feel better and improve your health, you can:

- Avoid inactivity
- Move more
- Sit less

Being active can lower the risk of:

- Depression
- Type 2 diabetes
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Stroke
- 8 types of cancer

Being active may:

- Reduce the risk of weight gain, dementia, and falls
- Improve bone health and endurance
- Help you feel more energetic

Anything that gets the body moving counts as physical activity. It can be moderate intensity, when you can talk while being active, or it can be vigorous intensity, when you can only say a few words without taking a breath. Choose activities that you enjoy. Start at a comfortable level and gradually increase the intensity.

Any amount of activity is better than none. Aim for at least 2½ hours of moderate-intensity or 1¼ hours of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity each week, or a combination of both.

Do strength activities at least twice each week using muscles from all parts of your body—the legs, hips,

back, chest, abdomen, shoulders, and arms. Stretching regularly can improve flexibility, joint motion, circulation, and help relieve stress.

Being active is safe for almost everyone, and its health benefits far outweigh the risks. If you have symptoms such as chest pain or pressure, dizziness, or joint pain, or are concerned about a chronic condition, talk to your health care team before increasing activity.

Want to Know More?

To learn more about being active, or making a healthy living change, talk with your VA health care team.

You can find additional information and resources at VA's Prevention website using the QR code above or the link below:

https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Be_Physically_Active.asp





Strive for a Healthy Weight

Healthy Living Message



What's Important to Know?

Maintaining a healthy weight can help you feel good and have energy to do the things you want to do. It can also help you prevent and manage many chronic conditions. Having overweight or obesity increases your risk for diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol problems, heart disease, gallbladder disease, female health disorders, arthritis, some types of cancer, and sleep apnea. If you currently have a higher body weight, losing as little as 5-10% of your current weight can lower your risks for these diseases.

Body weight is linked to energy balance. There are complex factors that affect your weight and your energy balance, which can be thought of as calories in and calories out. These factors may be from a person's body, mind, environment, and society. Weight management focuses on some of the factors within your control like:

- Adjusting your daily calorie intake
- Adjusting your daily activity level
- A combination of both

Striving to Maintain a Healthy Weight

- Find joy in moving your body and becoming more physically active in your everyday life. Strive to include at least 2½ hours each week of moderate-intensity activity.
- Eat when you are hungry, pay attention to when you are full, and seek satisfying foods, such as sources of fiber and protein that you enjoy.
- Enjoy the flavor of nutritious foods by using herbs and spices to gradually reduce excess salt, sugar, and dietary fat. Know that there is still room for less nutritious choices in the context of an overall healthy eating plan and lifestyle.

- Make a commitment. Write down the reasons you want to manage your health and weight. Focus on the many benefits you could experience including improved sleep, better mood, decreased pain, improved blood pressure or blood sugar.

Want to Know More?

If you want to learn more about managing your weight, talk with your VA health care team. For tools, resources, and programs to help you achieve a healthy weight, talk to a member of your facility's MOVE!® team. They can also help if you have questions about making a healthy living change.

You can find additional information and resources at VA's Prevention website using the QR code above or the link below:

http://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Strive_for_a_Healthy_Weight.asp



Dietitians

An individual telephone or in-person appointment can be made with a Dietitian for individualized nutrition education for general health or disease-specific interventions. Significant others are welcome to attend appointment.

Appointments

(803) 776-4000, ext. 56812

Dates and Times

Monday through Friday
8:00 am - 4:30 pm excluding
Federal Holidays

[https://
www.nutrition.va.gov](https://www.nutrition.va.gov)



MOVE/TELEMOVE! WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

MOVE! is VA's weight management program. MOVE! assists Veterans to achieve weight loss to improve their health and reduce their risk for chronic health conditions, like diabetes. MOVE! features lifestyle interventions that provide Veterans with support to make changes to eating patterns, increase physical activity, and use goal setting and problem solving that help with these changes.

MOVE! Weight Management Program: Virtual or In-Person 16-week groups; Individual MOVE! nutrition counseling (virtual or in-person). Columbia VA (803) 776-4000, ext. 54913 or Upstate MOVE! group classes: (864) 299-1600, ext. 22688



TeleMOVE! is a 3-6 month telehealth virtual program that uses daily in-home education and weight monitoring. (803) 776-4000, ext. 56989

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

VA CLASSES & GROUPS

Ask your PACT team about classes for blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, nutrition, Whole Health, better sleep, stress relief, mindfulness, guided imagery, yoga, tai chi, spirituality, and more!

#gerofitexercise

Check out the Gerofit Channel: 17 videos focused on a variety of activities including cardio, interval training, resistance bands, bodyweight strengthening, tai chi, core strengthening, yoga, and seated yoga.



Team RWB is a community of Veterans, service members, military families, and supporters, united by a common goal to help Veterans lead healthier lives through fitness events, training, and programs. <https://teamrwb.org/>

VA Healthy Teaching Kitchen Program

Classes include nutrition education and discussion on different nutrients, meal balancing, grocery shopping, meal planning, cooking skills, quick and tasty recipes and more. Contact your PACT dietitian or https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Healthy_Teaching_Kitchen.asp



MOVE! Coach App



MOVE!® Coach is a weight loss app for Veterans, service members, their families, and others who want to lose weight. This 19-week program guides the participants to achieve success with weight loss through education, and use of tools, in an easy and convenient way. Participants can monitor, track, and receive feedback regarding their progress with weight, diet, and exercise goals.

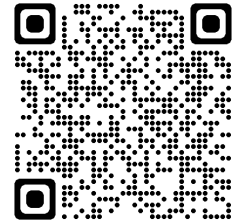
- **Self-Management Guides** – educate the participant on a variety of weight-management success strategies using videos, worksheets, games, and other tools.
- Guides will be made available weekly or bi-weekly, based on your progression through the 19-week program.
- **Weight, Diet and Physical Activity Diaries** – for daily tracking of weight, diet, and physical activity
- **My Goals and Progress** – participants can set weight loss and SMART goals, and see progress reports and summaries
- **How to Solve Problems** – additional resources for overcoming barriers. This app can be used by itself, but additional benefit may be achieved if used in combination with treatment with your healthcare provider.





Limit Alcohol

Healthy Living Message



What's Important to Know?

If you choose to drink alcohol, drink in moderation. This helps reduce your risk for alcohol-related health problems. Here are the recommended drink limits:

- Female: No more than 1 drink in a single day and no more than 7 drinks per week
- Male: No more than 2 drinks in a single day and no more than 14 drinks per week
- All adults age 65 and older: No more than 1 drink a day and no more than 7 drinks per week
- Pregnant people or those who might be pregnant: Do not drink any alcohol

Do not binge drink. Binge drinking means drinking:

- 4 or more drinks on one occasion for females and all adults age 65 and older.
- 5 or more drinks on one occasion for males.

Note: The above guidelines for female and male are based on binary sex assigned at birth and not on gender identity. There are no established drinking guidelines for transgender, non-binary, gender diverse, and intersex people. There are differences in how their bodies handle or process alcohol. These individuals should talk with their health care team about recommended drink limits.

One standard drink is equal to any one of the following:

- 12 oz. regular beer, usually about 5% alcohol
- 8-9 oz. malt liquor (7% alcohol)
- 5 oz. table wine (12% alcohol)
- 1.5 oz. 80-proof hard liquor (40% alcohol)

For many adults, drinking small amounts of alcohol does not cause serious health problems. However, as we age,

our bodies do not process alcohol as easily. People who drink within recommended limits are at lower risk for developing problems with alcohol use. Some people, such as children, anyone who is pregnant or might be pregnant, and those with certain medical conditions, should not drink any alcohol.

Want to Know More?

Talk with your VA health care team if you have questions about limiting alcohol or are concerned about your drinking. They can help you reduce risky drinking. Alcohol dependence can be treated.

You can find additional information and resources at VA's Prevention website using the QR code above or the link below:

https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Limit_Alcohol.asp





Get Recommended Screening Tests and Immunizations

Healthy Living Message



What's Important to Know?

It is important to keep up with your screening tests and immunizations to prevent certain kinds of illness. Recommendations for preventive services depend on your age, sex, health status, and family history—every person is different.

All preventive services have possible benefits (pros) and harms (cons). Depending on your values and preferences about these benefits and harms, you may wish to receive additional, fewer, or different services from those that are recommended. Talk with your health care team about the recommendations for screening tests and immunizations that are right for you.

Screening means looking for a condition before there are any signs or symptoms of that condition. If you already have a symptom of the condition, you should talk with your provider about it, even if you were recently screened and no problem was found.

Regardless of age, sex, health status and family history, most Veterans should be screened for alcohol abuse, depression, high blood pressure, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), military sexual trauma, obesity, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and tobacco use.

Veterans should follow the appropriate cancer screening guidelines. Most Veterans should receive a flu shot every year and a tetanus shot once every 10 years.

If you are a woman who is considering pregnancy, it is important to check with your health care team to be sure you are up to date with immunizations.

Want to Know More?

If you want to learn more about getting recommended screening tests and immunizations, talk with your VA health care team. They can also help you make changes to live healthier and meet your goals.

You can find additional information and resources at VA's Prevention website using the QR code above or the link below:

[https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Get Recommended Screening Tests and Immunizations.asp](https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Get_Recommended_Screening_Tests_and_Immunizations.asp)



VACCINATION CLINICS

Vaccination Clinics available at
Dorn, Anderson, Florence, Greenville, Orangeburg, Spartanburg, and Sumter Clinics
Dorn Vaccination Clinic: M-Fri: 730a-3p, 1st Tues/month: 730a-2p

Vaccines available: COVID-19, Influenza, *Hepatitis A (HepA), *Hepatitis B (HepB), *Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), *Meningitis A (MenA), *Meningitis B (MenB), *Mumps Measles Rubella (MMR), Rabies, *Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), *Pneumococcal (PCV20 & PPSV 23), Tetanus/Diphtheria (Td), Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis (Tdap), *Zoster (Shingles) **provider order needed*

Please call (803) 776-4000, ext. 5CURE (52873) for an appointment.

SCREENING RESOURCES

Healthy Goals Screenings

Video: https://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/Search/142,86193_VA

Preventing Cancer:

https://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/Search/142,84669_VA

Breast Cancer Screening:

<https://www.va.gov/health/mammography/>

Cervical Cancer Screening:

Why have Cervical Cancer Screening: https://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/Search/142,86193_VA

Colorectal Screening and FIT Testing:

Colorectal Cancer Decision Tool:

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

FIT Testing: https://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/Search/142,71720_VA

Lung Cancer Screening:

Low Dose CT Scan: <https://www.prevention.va.gov/docs/2023-Veterans-LCS-Decision-Aid.pdf>

Prostate Cancer Screening:

Prostate Cancer Screening: https://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/Search/142,87091_VA

9 out of
10 cases of
colorectal cancer
can be treated
successfully when
found early.



Manage Stress

Healthy Living Message



What's Important to Know?

If you are having difficulty coping with the demands in your life, you are experiencing stress. Everyone has stress. While some challenge is healthy, too much stress creates problems.

If you are overly stressed for too long, it can put your health at risk. Too much stress may be experienced as:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling worried and fearful
- Feeling "wound up"
- Irritability towards others
- Feeling tired

If you or someone you know is in emotional crisis, you can call the **Veterans Crisis Line**. Dial **988**, then **press 1**. You can also text 838255 or chat online at:

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/chat/>



Want to Know More?

You will find a variety of stress management strategies to help you better problem solve, relax, be more physically active, and plan rewarding activities in the Manage Stress Workbook and the resources below.

Your VA health care team can also help you manage stress. They can provide information or classes and stress-management tools such as the PTSD Coach and Mindfulness Coach, mobile apps that are available at:

<https://mobile.va.gov/appstore>

You can find additional information and resources at VA's Prevention website using the QR code above or the link below:

https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Manage_Stress.asp

MOVING FORWARD

Overcoming Life's Challenges

Moving Forward

Overcoming Life's Challenges

Feeling stressed or stuck? Life is filled with daily obstacles—financial difficulties, relationship problems, health issues, balancing work and family responsibilities. Over time, these challenges can build up and start to feel overwhelming.

Moving Forward can help. It's a self-guided web program that teaches you problem-solving skills for overcoming life's challenges.

Proven Strategies That Help You

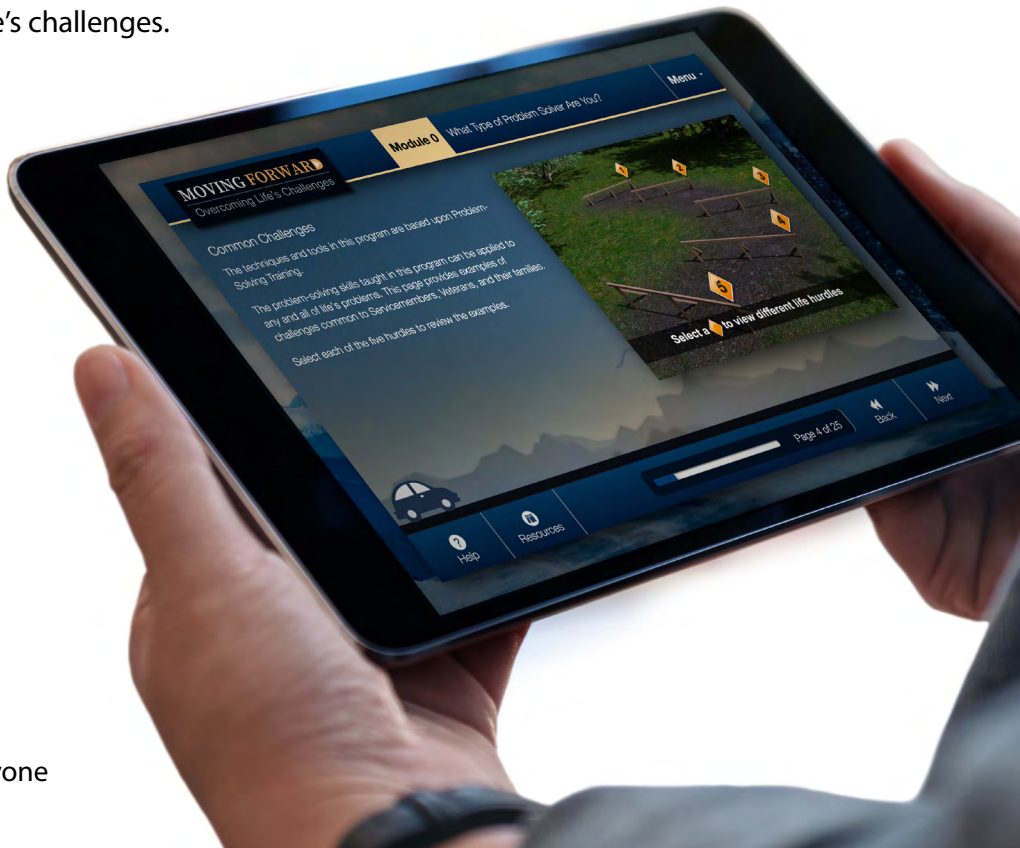
- ▶ Defeat brain overload
- ▶ Overcome negative emotions
- ▶ Reduce stress
- ▶ Solve problems, step-by-step

Engaging, Self-Guided Web Program

- ▶ Videos & interactive activities
- ▶ 3-minute stress assessment
- ▶ Relaxation exercises
- ▶ Problem-solving worksheets

Plus It's...

- ▶ Free, confidential & anonymous
- ▶ No login or registration required
- ▶ Works on any kind of device
- ▶ Developed for Veterans, available to anyone



VISIT TODAY!

www.VeteranTraining.va.gov/MovingForward



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



Be Safe: Prevent Falls

Healthy Living Message



What's Important to Know?

Falls are a leading cause of fractures, injuries, loss of function, and deaths among older adults. About half of all falls happen at home, and there are practical things you can do to reduce your risk of falling there. Engaging in regular physical activity, monitoring or avoiding certain medications, and getting your eyes checked may reduce your risk of falling. Other things you can do to prevent falls:

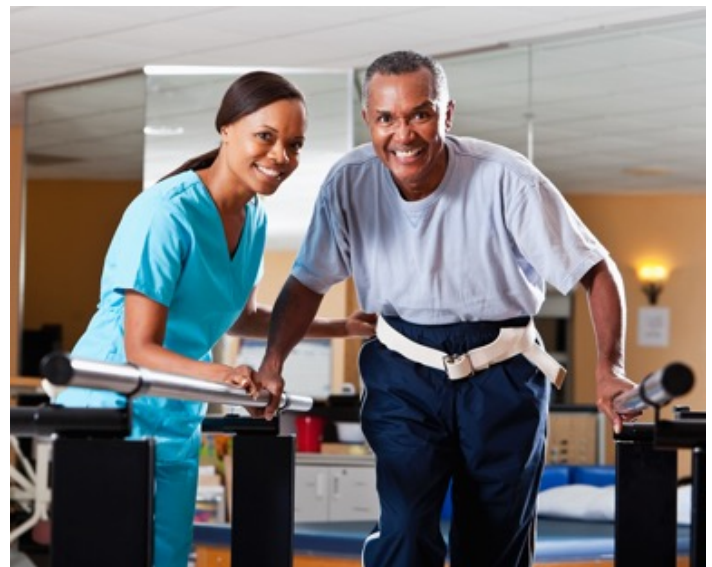
- Remove small throw rugs to prevent tripping and falling. If you choose to use them, anchor them with double-sided tape or anti-slip mats underneath.
- Install grab bars next to your toilet and in your tub or shower. Make sure you use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors.
- Use a walker or a cane for extra support.
- Improve the lighting in your home. As you get older, you need brighter lights to help you see well. Hang lightweight curtains or shades to reduce glare. Include night lights in areas you may walk at night.
- Wear shoes inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers.
- Remove clutter (papers, books, clothes, shoes, etc.) from stairs and places where you walk so you will be less likely to trip. Install handrails and lights in all staircases.
- Keep items you often use in cabinets that you can reach without needing a step stool.
- Engage in physical activity such as balance training exercises or Tai Chi, to help reduce your risk of falling by increasing your strength and balance. Lack of physical activity leads to weakness and increases your chances of falling.

Want to Know More?

If you want to learn more about how to prevent falls, talk with your VA health care team. They can also help if you have questions about making a healthy living change.

You can find additional information and resources at VA's Prevention website using the QR code above or the link below:

https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Be_Safe_Prevent_Falls.asp





Be Safe: Prevent Self-Harm Healthy Living Message



What's Important to Know?

People can experience emotional or mental health distress in response to a range of situations. Distress may be triggered by troubles such as problems in relationships or loss of a job. This distress can get worse and lead some people to consider hurting or even killing themselves (suicide). In general, Veterans are at a higher risk of suicide than civilians.

These warning signs **may** indicate that someone is in crisis and/or possibly having thoughts of suicide:

- Hopelessness, feeling like there's no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Talking about death, dying, or suicide
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking about possible harm
- Increasing or excessive tobacco, alcohol, or drug misuse
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Feeling like a burden to others
- Feeling overwhelming guilt or shame

These signs require **immediate** attention:

- Thinking about killing yourself
- Looking for ways to kill yourself
- Self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse, reckless weapon use, etc.

If you or someone else is in crisis and having thoughts of suicide:

- Seek immediate help from your health care team or the nearest hospital emergency room

- Call 911
- Call the Veterans Crisis Line. Dial 988, then Press 1



- Text 838255
- Contact the Veterans Chat Service at <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>
- During times of crisis or hopelessness, consider removing firearms from the home or using a gunlock or gun safe to make them less accessible

Want to Know More?

If you want to learn more about how to prevent self-harm or suicide, talk with your VA health care team. Visit VA's Suicide Prevention Website: www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention. There is help for stressors that are making life difficult. Don't wait. Reach out: https://www.va.gov/REACH/

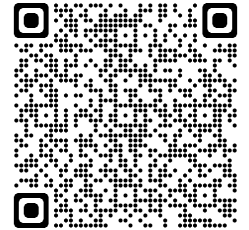
You can find additional information and resources at VA's Prevention website using the QR code above or the link below:

https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Be_Safe_Prevent_Self_Harm.asp



Be Safe: Prevent STIs

Healthy Living Message



What are Sexually Transmitted Infections?

- Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are infections that you can get through sexual contact with someone who has an STI.
- STIs are the same thing as sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

What's Important to Know?

- Many STIs do not have symptoms, and you can have an STI and pass it on without knowing it.
- Some STIs can cause organ damage and infertility.
- Having one STI may raise your risk for getting other STIs.
- Some examples of STIs are chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, trichomonas, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and human papillomavirus (HPV).
- You can get STIs from any sexual activity, whether it involves the mouth, anus, vagina, or penis.
- STIs can also be passed through body fluids on sex toys.
- If you are pregnant, you can pass some STIs to your baby before or during the baby's birth.
- Most STIs can be treated and cured. Some cannot be cured but can be managed by taking medicines.
- If you are treated for an STI, your sex partner(s) should also be treated to prevent you from being re-infected.

How Can STIs Be Prevented?

- The spread of some STIs can be reduced by using latex condoms every time you have sex.
 - » Lambskin condoms, birth control pills, and some other types of birth control such as IUDs can help prevent pregnancy, but they **will not protect you** from STIs.

- Having only one sex partner helps reduce your risk of getting an STI. If that sex partner has unprotected sex with other sex partners, that raises your risk of getting an STI.
- A vaccine is available to protect against HPV, the virus that causes cervical cancer and other types of cancer including that of the penis, anus, and throat.
- Medications, known as PrEP, can lower your risk of getting HIV from sex by about 99% when taken correctly.

Want to Know More?

If you want to learn more about STIs or think you may have one, talk with your VA health care team. They can help if you have questions about testing, treatment, or ways to improve your sexual health.

You can find additional information and resources at VA's Prevention website using the QR code above or the link below:

www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Be_Safe_Prevent_Sexually_Transmitted_Infections.asp





Choose one healthy living goal you want to work on.

Manage Stress

**Be Involved in
your Health Care**

Limit Alcohol

**Strive for a
Healthy Weight**

Eat Wisely

Sleep Well

**Get Recommended
Screening Tests &
Immunizations**

Be Tobacco Free

Be Safe

**Be Physically
Active**

Or write in your own healthy living goal:

Set a goal to work on and share with your health care team.

Remember to make it SMART - Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic, Time-based.

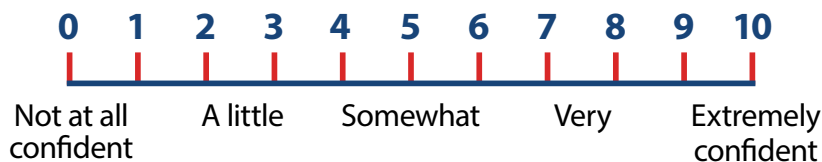
My goal for next week is:

Things that might get in my way:

I can overcome these things by:

Confidence in reaching my goal:

Circle the number that matches how confident you feel.



Follow-up Date: _____

Follow-up Method: ☐ Phone ☐ In-person ☐ Other



Progress Check-In

Complete and update your plan every week. Use the charts below to track your progress toward meeting your weekly goal.

Goal:

for week beginning:

Days of Week	Action Taken	Comments (how I felt, challenges, successes)
Sample Day	I walked for 15 minutes.	I was tired after the walk and slept better that night.
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Goal:

for week beginning:

Days of Week	Action Taken	Comments (how I felt, challenges, successes)
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		



Thank you for choosing the Columbia VA Health Care System for your care.

Follow Us!



<https://www.instagram.com/vacolumbiasc/>
<https://www.facebook.com/VAColumbiaSC/>
<https://www.twitter.com/VAMCColumbiaSC/>

Additional information can be found at the Columbia VA Health Care System website:
<https://www.va.gov/columbia-south-carolina-health-care/>

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Columbia VA Health Care System

Your Safe Care is Our Mission.