

VETERANS'

Spring 2008

Wellness

**Stay young:
Exercise!**

**You can
beat the
smoking
habit!**

**Reaching
out to our
newest
veterans**

**Understand
your medicines
with a
brown-bag
checkup**



A guide to healthy living for the veterans of upstate New York

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Live healthier—VA is here to help



Stephen L. Lemons,
Network Director

With spring finally here and nature renewing itself, it's time to act—shed bad health habits and start living healthier. Exercise can help you stay young both physically and mentally. See page 4 to learn how exercise can positively affect your weight, blood pressure and energy level. On page 5, we have information about eating organic, and on page 7, the importance of kicking the habit if you still smoke. VA offers health and wellness classes to help you start living healthier and happier. Don't forget to sign up—see page 11.

We've included another veteran success story. Read Robert Banas' story on page 3 and find out how the Buffalo VA helped him get back on his feet when he returned from Iraq. Robert is now outreaching to our newest veterans, urging them to take advantage of VA's great health care and counseling programs. Please help us help other veterans by spreading the word. If you're pleased with the care you receive from your VA Medical Center, tell another veteran.

Sincerely,

STEPHEN L. LEMONS,
Ed.D., FACHE
Network Director

VA expands eligibility for recent combat veterans!

Veterans who have served in combat in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom are now eligible for five years of free health care for illnesses or injuries related to their time in service. The new legislation expands the free health care from two years to five years.

This expansion gives these veterans more time to apply through the Veterans Benefits Administration for service-connected benefits that are a result of their time served in combat. If you have questions about how this expanded eligibility affects you, please call us at

1-888-823-9656.

About our mailing list

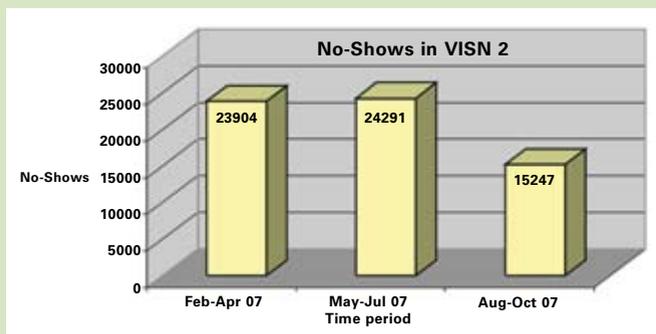
We make every effort to maintain an accurate mailing list. To be **removed** from our mailing list or to notify us of a patient's death, please call the Veterans Service Contact Center at **1-888-823-9656**.

If you would like to be **added** to our mailing list or have a suggestion for us, please write to Editor, *Veterans' Wellness*, Network 2 Communications, 465 Westfall Road, Rochester, NY 14620, or e-mail Kathleen.Hider@va.gov.

Please be sure to include your phone number with all correspondence. **Do not send your Social Security number or medical history.**

No-shows hurt fellow veterans

A patient who doesn't arrive for his or her appointment at a VA clinic or medical center is a "no-show" for that appointment. Please call to cancel your appointment so that your appointment time can be used by another veteran in need.



Correction

The winter edition of *Veterans' Wellness* had the wrong contact phone number for the new VA pre-registration program. If you haven't updated your basic information in the past six months, including address, phone numbers, insurance information and emergency contacts, please call the Veteran Service Contact Center at **1-888-823-9656**.

Reaching out to our newest veterans



Robert Banas

fulfilling his dream of having his own mortgage company. Banks didn't want to loan money to someone who'd been away for so long with no taxable income. He also dealt with his share of health problems.

Banas faced sleep deprivation—not uncommon for someone who had gotten used to sleeping in harm's way with one eye open. "It takes you a good three or four months to realize you're really home," he says. He also suffered back pain caused by vehicle rollovers on Iraq's uneven terrain.

Despite these obstacles, the soldier in him wouldn't surrender. "I lost some good friends in Iraq," he says, "and it would be an insult to them and the sacrifices they made to roll over and give up." So, he didn't.

Banas took his savings and went ahead with his business plans, opening a mortgage company that helps veterans secure funding for their own businesses. And to tackle his health problems, he connected with VA.

VA reaches out

Following his discharge, VA called to remind him to sign up for medical and dental care and informed him of the job assistance and other services

it offered. He credits VA for getting him the help he needed.

"The care was exceptional," Banas says. He talked with a doctor to make sure he wasn't suffering any post-traumatic stress issues. He resolved his back injury by receiving physical therapy three times a week for six weeks. In the 30 or so medical appointments he's had with VA in Buffalo, Banas says he's never had to sit around in the waiting room—a far cry from what most people experience in doctors' offices. VA also helped connect him with the local Veterans of Foreign Wars, where he's met other veterans who share his experiences.

Banas says signing up for VA services obviously isn't the first thing soldiers think about when they get home, but he encourages them to do so. "You almost want to forget about the military stuff and what may have happened to you," he says, "but it's pointless to go through all that and not take advantage of these benefits."

“It would be an insult to [those we lost] and the sacrifices they made [for me] to roll over and give up.”

—Robert Banas

Robert Banas spent nine years in the Army National Guard—about a year and a half of that time was in Iraq. In 2005, he helped secure Iraqi polling stations so citizens could vote in their first free election in 50 years. "So many people showed up, even with bombs going off, and they brought their kids," Banas says. He knew then just how much removing roadblocks and hurdles could mean to people with a mission.

Tackling problems on his return

But when he got home, Banas, a Buffalo mortgage broker, faced a few hurdles of his own. He had trouble



Keep yourself young with exercise

If you're looking for the fountain of youth, you won't find it in a pill or a potion. But you will find yourself with more energy, a better outlook and better health by making physical activity part of your daily schedule. Check out this list of benefits, then lace up your sneakers and get moving.

- [1] Keeps your mind and memory sharp.** Exercise improves short-term memory and reasoning skills in people older than 55.
- [2] Helps control your weight.** By building muscle, you'll burn more calories even at rest, which will help you minimize the weight gain that's common in middle age and beyond.
- [3] Protects your cardiovascular system.** The physically fit are eight times less likely to die from heart attacks or strokes. Exercising

lowers cholesterol and triglyceride levels and also decreases your risk of hypertension by as much as half.

- [4] Helps you beat stress-related disorders.** Tension seems to evaporate along with your sweat. That's good, because stress is linked to insomnia, heart disease, headaches, back pain and colitis.
- [5] Gives you greater freedom of movement.** Regular exercise strengthens muscles and keeps joints, tendons and ligaments flexible.

You'll feel less stiff and have better balance and agility.

- [6] Builds bone strength and density.** If you walk, run or do other weight-bearing exercise, you'll be less likely to suffer from brittle bones, or osteoporosis.
- [7] Keeps diabetes in check.** Exercise reduces the body's need for insulin and your chances of developing adult-onset diabetes. For those who already have the disease, regular exercise may help reduce or eliminate the need for medication.
- [8] Helps you get a good night's sleep.** Exercise helps people fall asleep faster, sleep more soundly and awake feeling more refreshed.
- [9] Makes you feel happy.** Exercise activates the release of central endorphins, chemical messengers in the brain that produce a sense of well-being.
- [10] Provides an energy boost.** Strength gained through exercise not only makes you look younger and stand straighter but also helps you avoid back pain. Exercise boosts aerobic capacity: Exercisers don't tire as easily as inactive people.

For more information about exercise, log on to My Health@Vet at www.myhealth.va.gov.



Turn chores into a workout

Exercise is easier said than done for many busy people. But you can add fitness into your daily routines by:

- picking up the pace when cleaning the house
- doing outside chores—washing the car, mowing the lawn or gardening
- taking the dog for a brisk walk or making calls on your cell phone while doing laps
- working out while watching TV
- taking on a home improvement project yourself
- walking or riding a bike to do your daily errands

For more ideas on ways to be active, log onto www.move.va.gov, press the "Patient Handouts" tab and see the long list of activity handouts to find the right ones for you. Also, use your VA calendar to keep track of your exercise goals.



Should you eat organic?



Food labeled “organic” certainly costs more than traditional offerings, but what does organic mean and what are you getting for your money?

The term organic means fruits and vegetables are grown without artificial fertilizers or pesticides. Organic animal products, such as meat and eggs, come from animals that are fed 100-percent organic food, aren't given antibiotics or growth hormones and have access to the outdoors. Foods that bear the voluntary “USDA Organic” sticker are grown, handled and processed in accordance with U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines.

Right now, no research proves that organic foods are better for you nutritionally or that they're safer than their non-organic equivalents. So when it comes to the organic versus conventional debate, it's a personal choice. When deciding whether to go organic, consider these points:

- Pesticides can leave a residue on produce. Buying organic limits exposure to these chemicals, although experts say the amount of pesticides on produce doesn't constitute a health risk.

- Organic foods cost more because the farming practices used are more labor-intensive and the government's organic regulations are strict. However, organic farming is generally kinder to the environment.

- Are organic fruits and vegetables—possibly shipped from thousands of miles away—better than locally grown produce that isn't certified organic? Local foods certainly may be fresher. If taste is the most important thing to you, going with the freshest vegetables—organic or not—is probably your best bet.

- Organic fruits and vegetables may spoil faster because they aren't treated with preservatives. Their appearance may not be as appealing.



Beef and bean enchiladas

Makes four enchiladas; serves two

INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup no-salt-added tomato sauce
- ¼ cup salsa
- 4 (6-inch) corn tortillas
- ¼ lb. lean ground beef
- ½ cup canned nonfat refried beans
- ½ tsp. chili powder
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- black pepper, to taste
- ¼ cup shredded low-fat cheddar cheese



1. In a small bowl, stir together tomato sauce and salsa. Using about half the mixture, brush both sides of each tortilla.
2. Stack tortillas on a plate and set aside. (This allows tortillas to soften.)
3. In a large skillet, cook beef over medium-high heat until brown, about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Place in a colander and rinse under hot water. Drain well.
5. Wipe skillet with a paper towel. Return beef to skillet.
6. Stir in refried beans, chili powder, cumin and pepper. Cook and stir for 2 minutes, or until heated through.
7. Preheat broiler.
8. Spoon about ¼ cup of the mixture down the center of each tortilla. Roll up tortillas and place, seam side down, in a glass baking dish. Top with remaining tomato sauce mixture.
9. Broil 4 inches from the heat for 5 minutes, or until browned.
10. Sprinkle with cheese. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

TIP: Make sure the baking dish you choose has tempered glass to withstand the heat of the broiler. Check the bottom of the dish for an indication or read the manufacturer's directions that came with the baking dish.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION: Calories, 324; protein, 25 g; carbohydrates, 41 g; total fat, 7 g; saturated fat, 3 g; polyunsaturated fat, 1 g; monounsaturated fat, 2 g; cholesterol, 40 mg; sodium, 643 mg.

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Understand your medications

Request a brown-bag checkup

Often it can be confusing to keep track of all the medicines you're taking. If you have one or more chronic health problems, you may routinely take multiple drugs. Your provider may change your medicines as your condition changes, you may visit a specialty clinic where new medicines are added or you may be admitted to the hospital and have your medicines changed as a result of your stay.

Medication review by pharmacists, using a method known as a "brown-bag" review, was developed during the early '80s and has become a common part of U.S. health care. Originally, a brown grocery bag was provided by pharmacists for patients to bring their medicines to the visit. In an effort to ensure that patients understand their medicines, health care institutions are now required to review patients' medication lists at every episode of care.

What you should bring

To facilitate this process, it's helpful for you to bring all of your medicines to your appointment in a "brown bag." Include any prescription medications you're taking in their original prescription bottles and all over-the-counter medications and supplements, including herbal products, you're currently using.

Your provider or pharmacist will check to see that what you bring is the same as the medications listed on your medical record, that the dosages are correct and that you're taking them at the right times and frequencies during the day. He or she will make sure you're no longer taking discontinued medications or drugs that don't work well together.

Reviewing your medicines

This process is also important if you're new to VA, or are co-managed by a VA health care provider and a community provider. In such instances, your VA provider needs to have all of your outside information to adequately participate in your care. A brown-bag review is helpful to you as the patient, but it's also important to your provider and pharmacist. It will help them know whether you understand how to take your medicines and what they're for. They can then review with you any special precautions you should follow and any laboratory testing that should go along with the use of some drug products.

Be prepared to ask any questions that you may have concerning your health care and your medication regimen. Write your questions down to make sure you remember to ask them. Medicine-related problems are much easier to uncover when this drug review process is used.



Kick the smoking habit: You can do it!

Ask people who've quit smoking and they'll tell you it's the best thing they've ever done but also one of the most difficult. But you can do it, just like 45 million others. Everyone benefits from quitting, including long-term smokers and those who are already ill.

What's in it for you

• You'll lower your cancer risk.

According to the American Cancer Society, "Quitting smoking is the most important thing you can do to reduce your risk of cancer. Smoking is known to not only cause lung cancer but 10 other forms of cancer as well."

• **You'll be able to breathe freely.** Smoking causes emphysema, a disease that slowly destroys your ability to breathe.

• **You'll help prevent heart disease.** Almost 180,000 Americans die each year from cardiovascular disease caused by smoking.

• **You'll protect your unborn baby.**

Statistics show a direct relation between smoking during pregnancy and stillbirths, death among newborns, low birth weight and sudden infant death syndrome.

• **You'll look younger.** Smoking causes wrinkles.

• **You'll keep your senses sharp.** Smoking diminishes the ability to smell and taste.

In addition, when you quit smoking, your family and those around you also benefit. Breathing secondhand smoke exposes them to the same risks as a smoker.

Help is out there

Some quit smoking cold turkey while others find different and just as effective ways to stop. Whatever you choose, help is plentiful. You'll find group support at your local VA medical center. If you prefer, you can receive individual counseling or even telephone support through a toll-free network. It also pays to see what help is covered through your health insurer.

Some quit-smoking products to consider are:

Nicotine replacement products

• **The patch**, which delivers controlled amounts of nicotine through your skin each day.

• **Nicotine gum**, which contains a dose of nicotine. After chewing it briefly, it's placed against the cheek so the nicotine is absorbed through the mouth tissues.

• **Nasal spray**, which delivers nicotine into your nose, where it's absorbed.

• **Inhaler**, a plastic tube containing nicotine that you inhale like a cigarette.

When you quit smoking, your family and those around you also benefit.



Oral medications

• **Bupropion (Zyban, Wellbutrin)**, a prescription-only nicotine-free medication that mimics the effects of smoking on the brain.

Before you quit, talk to your VA doctor about a smoking cessation program that's right for you and that won't interfere with any medications you're taking. Both the nicotine patch and bupropion are available through VA so be sure to talk to your primary care provider about them. Don't forget to ask about VA's Quit Smart program.

And remember—it's never too late to quit. The benefits start 20 minutes after your last cigarette, and after 15 smoke-free years, your risk of coronary heart disease is that of a nonsmoker, and your risk of dying from lung cancer is only slightly higher than that of a nonsmoker.

Crisis prevention

When to seek help and how



If you find yourself feeling down and have thought about harming yourself or others, it's important that you know the following:

- 1 Feeling suicidal is a serious but treatable condition.
- 2 Certain signs and symptoms will tell you that you need to seek help.
- 3 Seeking help is not a sign of weakness or something to be ashamed of.
- 4 It is your right to seek help.
- 5 VA takes your health seriously and will help.

General factors that may increase risk

If any of the following factors apply to you, it's time to talk to somebody about them:

- thoughts about harming yourself and planning ways to do it
- a previous suicide attempt(s)
- alcohol or substance abuse
- a history of mental illness
- poor self-control
- hopelessness
- a recent loss (such as a loved one, job, relationship)
- a family history of suicide
- a history of abuse
- serious health problems
- sexual identity concerns (especially among men 16 to 24)
- a recent discharge from a hospital, group home, etc.
- demographic factors (white men over 70 years of age are at increased risk)

- hopelessness
- rage, anger
- seeking revenge
- acting reckless or engaging in risky activities
- feeling trapped
- increased drinking or drug use
- withdrawing from friends, family and society
- anxiety and agitation
- experiencing dramatic changes in mood
- feeling that there's no reason for living, no sense of purpose in life
- difficulty sleeping or sleeping all the time
- giving away possessions
- an increase or decrease in spirituality



Veteran-specific risk factors

- frequent deployments
- deployments to hostile environments
- exposure to extreme stress
- physical/sexual assault while in the service (not limited to women)
- length of deployments
- a service-related injury

Signs of suicidal thinking

If you or somebody you know has been experiencing or talking about the following, seek help as soon as possible:

- threatening to hurt or kill self
- looking for ways to kill self
- seeking access to pills, weapons or other harmful means
- talking or writing about death, dying or suicide

Getting help

VA has many resources for getting help, and it can be as easy as a simple phone call.

1 Veterans can call **1-800-273 TALK (8255)** for confidential support and referral. The Veteran Suicide Hotline is staffed by trained professionals available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

2 Most VA facilities have a suicide prevention coordinator, a trained professional who can guide a veteran through the process of getting help.

3 Any VA care provider can assist a veteran in getting help.

The important thing is that you ask for help.

For more information about depression and suicide, log on to My HealthVet at www.myhealth.va.gov.



Release of co-payment charges

In January, we discovered a computer system glitch that prevented co-payment charges from being generated for services rendered during a previous time period. Our staff worked on releasing co-payment charges that had not been billed. As a result, you may have received a new bill that now includes charges for services rendered from January 2007 through February 2008. If you feel these charges may cause a financial hardship, please contact the Health Revenue Center at 1-866-505-7263. You may be eligible for a repayment plan or waiver of these charges.

Attention Greater Rochester veterans

More patients are needed for two chronic lower back pain studies. The first study is evaluating the effectiveness of spinal manipulative therapy and active exercise therapy. Conducted by the New York Chiropractic College partnering with the Canandaigua VA Medical Center, therapy will take place at the Rochester VA Outpatient Clinic and private chiropractic and physical therapy practices within the Rochester community.

The second study is specifically for veterans over 65 years of age who have never seen a chiropractor before. It is comparing

two types of treatment for chronic lower back pain. All treatments will take place at the Rochester VA Outpatient Clinic.

If you are suffering from lower back pain, live within the Rochester area and are interested in learning more about the studies, please call (585) 463-2673.

Phone discounts for low-income veterans

Low-income veterans may be eligible for a Lifeline discount from their telephone service carriers. Applications may be obtained from your phone company or a county social services office. For further information, call your phone company or visit www.lifelinesupport.org.



FREE! Redeem this coupon for a free medium cup of coffee, hot tea or hot chocolate at the Veterans Canteen Service food court at the Albany, Batavia, Bath, Buffalo, Canandaigua or Syracuse VA medical centers.



Offer limited to veteran patients. Compliments of Veterans Canteen Services. **Expires 5-23-08.**

Sharpen your memory!

Bonus clue—Swimming and walking are this kind of workout (rearrange the circled letters in the grid for the answer):

U

ACROSS

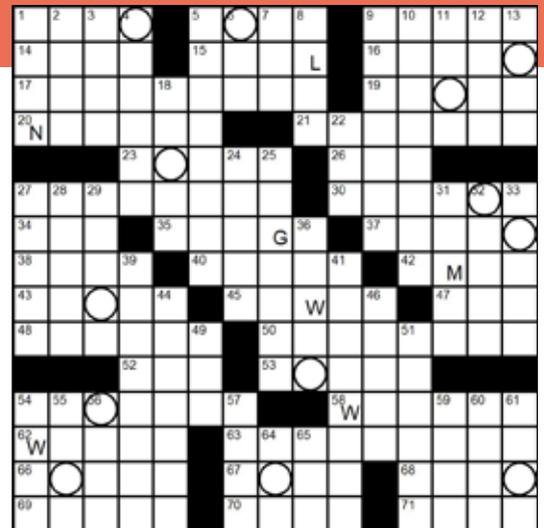
- 1 “___ Three Lives” (TV oldie) (2 words)
- 5 Pack down
- 9 “Don’t Cry for Me Argentina” musical
- 14 Prefix meaning “Chinese”
- 15 Airline to Israel
- 16 Do an impersonation of
- 17 High-fiber food
- 19 Make up (for)
- 20 Egypt’s Lake ___
- 21 They’re a good source of potassium
- 23 Dodge, as taxes
- 26 Beaver’s project
- 27 See your health care provider for a yearly ___
- 30 Do needlework
- 34 Tell a tall tale
- 35 Release (2 words)
- 37 ___ Gay (WWII bomber)
- 38 Slightly (2 words)
- 40 Feudal workers

DOWN

- 42 “Let’s get crackin!”
- 43 Polite turndown (2 words)
- 45 Clinched, with “up”
- 47 Bring to a halt
- 48 Call for
- 50 You must burn 3,500 ___ to lose a pound of fat
- 52 Ghost’s greeting
- 53 Get on the soapbox
- 54 Do this before exercise to avoid pulling a muscle
- 58 Drives dangerously
- 62 “The Waltons” star Ralph
- 63 Exercise device for running or walking
- 66 Change, as a hemline
- 67 Stadium level
- 68 Jazz singer Fitzgerald
- 69 “___ you!” (response to a sneeze)
- 70 Polliwog’s place
- 71 Thought-provoking

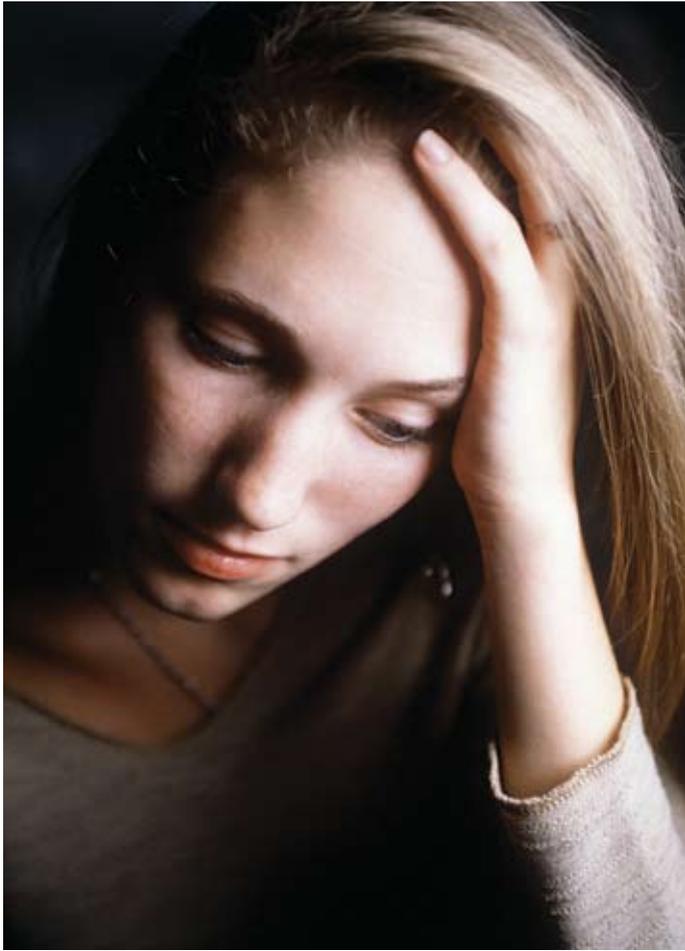
DOWN

- 1 ID in a library
- 2 Old Italian coin
- 3 “The Dukes of Hazzard” deputy
- 4 Uses a divining rod
- 5 Apartment balconies
- 6 “Rope-a-dope” boxer
- 7 Apple computer
- 8 Roman commoner
- 9 Flow out
- 10 Ascorbic acid (2 words)
- 11 “___ a roll!” (2 words)
- 12 Turner who sang “What’s Love Got to Do with It”
- 13 Top fighter pilots
- 18 “On the Beach” novelist Shute
- 22 Junk mail, often
- 24 Goes out with
- 25 Painter known for elongated figures
- 27 Air Force One, for one
- 28 Woo in an unwelcome



- 29 way (2 words)
- 29 It raises dough
- 31 Marisa of “What Women Want”
- 32 Genetic double
- 33 Hired workers
- 36 Words after tug or man (2 words)
- 39 Failure to produce enough insulin can result in this
- 41 “Once and Again” actress (2 words)
- 44 Mob members
- 46 Pampered, with “on”
- 49 ___ cit. (footnote abbr.)
- 51 Used a pipe cleaner
- 54 Sailor’s mop
- 55 One way to stand
- 56 Bar mitzvah or baptism
- 57 URL starter
- 59 Beneath contempt
- 60 Fashion magazine
- 61 High-five sound
- 64 Brazilian vacation spot
- 65 Suffix with Hallow

Answers on page 10.



Possible symptoms of MST include:

- depression, anxiety, guilt, anger
- memory gaps
- a history of behavioral problems (substance abuse, eating disorders)
- an unstable work history
- sexual dysfunction/relationship problems
- multiple medical issues
- a negative reaction to or refusal of certain medical procedures such as gynecological, rectal/colonoscopy or dental exams
- suicidal ideation or attempts at self-injury
- previous mental health treatment or hospitalizations

Each VA facility has an MST coordinator who can answer any questions you may have about the services provided. Below is a list of MST coordinators at each VA.

MST COORDINATORS

Buffalo/Batavia

Michelle McClellan, Ph.D.....(716) 862-7863

Canandaigua/Rochester

Jean Potter, R.N.....(585) 393-7461/7462

Syracuse

Shawne Steiger, L.C.S.W.....(315) 425-3486

Bath

Darlene Leonard, L.C.S.W.....(607) 664-4319

Albany

Doreen Harris, Ph.D.....(518) 626-5405

What is military sexual trauma?

Military sexual trauma (MST) is sexual harassment or sexual assault experienced by a veteran during his or her military service. Sexual harassment is any repeated, unwelcome sexual behavior, including things like offensive sexual remarks, unwanted sexual advances or pressure for sexual favors. Sexual assault is any sexual activity in which one person is involved against his or her will. Physical force may or may not be used.

VA provides MST counseling and treatment. Military sexual trauma counseling is available even if a veteran did not report the incident when it occurred or has not filed a claim for benefits. If you have had these experiences and would like to speak to someone, tell your VA health care provider, who will refer you to one of our MST coordinators. These counselors are knowledgeable about treatments that can help survivors of sexual trauma overcome the psychological aftereffects.

Sharpen your memory! answers from page 9



**Answer to bonus clue:
CARDIOVASCULAR**



VA Wellness Programs

VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York is dedicated to improving the health of our veterans. To help you stay healthy and informed, we are pleased to offer the following wellness programs designed especially for veterans.

Stress Management

Individual counseling is available to help you manage your stress. *For more information, call:*

Albany (518) 626-5339
Bath (607) 664-4331
Buffalo (716) 862-8595
Canandaigua (585) 393-7252
Syracuse (315) 425-3485

Diabetes Management

Develop self-management tools, learn tips on nutrition and exercise to reduce your risk of diabetic complications. *For more information, call:*

Albany, contact your primary care provider
Bath (607) 664-4614 or (607) 664-4626
Batavia (585) 297-1000, ext. 72555
Buffalo (716) 862-8844
Canandaigua (585) 393-7109 or (585) 393-7126
Syracuse (315) 425-2432

Understanding Your Medications

Individual counseling is offered for veterans who need help managing medications. *For more information, call:*

Albany (518) 626-5780
Bath (607) 664-4413, then press 2
Buffalo (716) 862-8881 or (716) 862-3223
Canandaigua (585) 393-7122, then press 2
Rochester Outpatient Clinic (585) 463-2697, then press 2
Syracuse (315) 425-4400, ext. 52026, then press 2

Depression and the Elderly

Individual and group counseling is available to help veterans deal with late-life depression. *For more information, call:*

Albany (518) 626-5339
Bath (607) 664-4301
Buffalo (716) 862-8595
Canandaigua (585) 393-7250
Syracuse (315) 425-3485

Dementia Care Services

Held quarterly in Albany and monthly in Buffalo, the workshop covers a variety of dementia-related topics of interest to patients and caregivers. *For more information, call:*

Albany (518) 626-6051
Buffalo/Batavia (716) 862-3158
Canandaigua (585) 393-7901

MOVE! Program

This national weight-management program is designed to help veterans lose weight, keep it off and improve their health. *For more information, visit www.move.va.gov or call:*

Albany (518) 626-6871
Buffalo (716) 862-8593
Batavia (585) 297-1030
Bath (607) 664-4912
Syracuse (315) 425-4400, ext. 52045
Canandaigua and Rochester Outpatient Clinic (585) 463-2600, ext. 32531

Ask the expert: Vet Centers and you



THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:

Patricia L. Chase, L.C.S.W.-R.
Readjustment Counseling Services
Syracuse Vet Center

Q: Why was the Vet Center Program started?

A: The Vet Center Program was established by Congress in 1979 because many Vietnam-era veterans were still experiencing lingering readjustment problems associated with their military service. Studies indicated that Vietnam veterans had many socio-psychological difficulties and weren't comfortable seeking help through traditional veterans' services.

Congress initially intended this program to operate for two years. Due to its overwhelming success, the program was extended and expanded to reach veterans of WWII and all other conflicts, including the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and veterans who suffer from military sexual trauma.

Q: What health care providers will I find at a Vet Center?

A: Vet Centers are staffed by psychologists, social workers, clinical nurse specialists and other mental health professionals who have expertise in readjustment issues and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Many staff members are veterans themselves. The Centers guide veterans' re-entry into civilian life by providing assistance and readjustment counseling to facilitate a more positive adjustment.

Q: What other services are offered at Vet Centers?

A: The Centers provide psychological assessments and counseling for veterans who have served in a combat zone or experienced military sexual trauma. Services offered are individual and group counseling, family/relationship counseling, sexual trauma counseling, bereavement counseling and substance abuse counseling. Vet Centers provide another option for PTSD services. Many veterans choose a Vet Center for its free and confidential services. The program works collaboratively with VAMC Behavioral Health/Psychiatry, the PTSD Clinical Team and Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom teams. Veterans may be referred to VA in-patient PTSD programs, as needed. The Centers also refer veterans for benefits assistance, education, employment and vocational rehabilitation services, as well as to community agencies.



Reaching us is easy

www.va.gov/visns/visn02/

- For enrollment information, call 1-888-823-9656.
- For medical care and clinic appointments, call your local primary care doctor or your local VA medical center.
- For reliable health information on the Web, visit www.myhealth.va.gov.

VA medical centers

Albany

113 Holland Avenue
Albany, NY 12208
(518) 626-5000
(800) 223-4810

Batavia

222 Richmond Avenue
Batavia, NY 14020
(585) 297-1000

Bath

76 Veterans Avenue
Bath, NY 14810
(607) 664-4000
(877) 845-3247

Buffalo

3495 Bailey Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14215
(716) 834-9200
(800) 532-8387

Canandaigua

400 Fort Hill Avenue
Canandaigua, NY 14424
(585) 394-2000
(800) 204-9917

Syracuse

800 Irving Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13210
(315) 425-4400
(800) 221-2883

Community-based outpatient clinics

Auburn

17 Lansing Street
Auburn, NY 13021
(315) 255-7002

Bainbridge

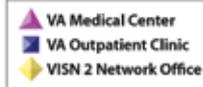
109 North Main Street
Bainbridge, NY 13733
(607) 967-8590

Binghamton

425 Robinson Street
Binghamton, NY 13901
(607) 772-9100

Carthage

3 Bridge Street
Carthage, NY 13619
(315) 493-4180



Catskill

Greene Medical Bldg.
159 Jefferson Heights
Catskill, NY 12414
(518) 943-7515

Clifton Park

1673 Route 9
Clifton Park, NY 12065
(518) 383-8506

Cortland

1129 Commons Avenue
Cortland, NY 13045
(607) 662-1517

Dunkirk

Valor Health Center
166 East Fourth Street
Dunkirk, NY 14048
(800) 310-5001

Elizabethtown

P.O. Box 277
Park Street
Elizabethtown, NY 12932
(518) 873-3295

Elmira

Health Services Bldg.
200 Madison Avenue Suite 2E
Elmira, NY 14901
(877) 845-3247 (Bath)

Fonda

Camp Mohawk Plaza
2623 State Highway 30A
Fonda, NY 12068
(518) 853-1247

Glens Falls

84 Broad Street
Glens Falls, NY 12801
(518) 798-6066

Ithaca

10 Arrowwood Drive
Ithaca, NY 14850
(607) 274-4680

Jamestown

The Resource Center
896 East Second Street
Jamestown, NY 14701
(716) 661-1447

Kingston

63 Hurley Avenue
Kingston, NY 12401
(845) 331-8322

Lackawanna

Our Lady of Victory
Family Care Center
227 Ridge Road
Lackawanna, NY 14218
(716) 822-5944

Lockport

Ambulatory Care Center
5875 S. Transit Road
Lockport, NY 14094
(716) 433-2025

Malone

3372 State Route 11
Main Street
Malone, NY 12953
(518) 483-1529

Massena

1 Hospital Drive
Massena, NY 13662
(315) 769-4253

Niagara Falls

VA Outpatient Clinic
2201 Pine Avenue
Niagara Falls, NY
14301-2300
(800) 223-4810

Olean

465 North Union Street
Olean, NY 14760-2658
(716) 373-7709

Oswego

Seneca Hills Health
Services Center
105 County Route 45A
Oswego, NY 13126
(315) 343-0925

Plattsburgh

80 Sharon Avenue
Plattsburgh, NY 12901
(518) 561-6247

Rochester

465 Westfall Road
Rochester, NY 14620
(585) 463-2600

Rome

125 Brookley Road
Bldg. 510
Rome, NY 13441
(315) 334-7100

Schenectady

1322 Gerling Street
Sheridan Plaza
Schenectady, NY 12308
(518) 346-3334

Troy

Troy Primary Care Practice
295 River Street
Troy, NY 12180
(518) 274-7707

Warsaw

Wyoming County
Community Hospital
400 N. Main Street
Warsaw, NY 14569
(585) 297-1050

Wellsville

3458 Riverside Drive
Route 19
Wellsville, NY 14895
(877) 845-3247 (Bath)

Vet Centers

Albany

17 Computer Drive West
Albany, NY 12205
(518) 626-5130

Buffalo

564 Franklin Street
Buffalo, NY 14202
(716) 882-0505

Rochester

1867 Mount Hope Avenue
Rochester, NY 14620
(585) 232-5040

Syracuse

716 E. Washington Street
Syracuse, NY 13210
(315) 478-7127

Watertown

210 Court Street
Watertown, NY 13601
(315) 782-0217

VETERANS' Wellness

Network 2 Communications
465 Westfall Road
Rochester, NY 14620

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