March is Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Month...

By: Nina Romano, MSN, RN, CNL TBI/Polytrauma Program Coordinator

What is a TBI?

TBI is a non-degenerative, non-congenital injury to the brain from an external mechanical force. This may lead to permanent or temporary impairment of cognitive, physical, and psychosocial functions, with an associated diminished or altered state of consciousness. A TBI can be mild, moderate, or severe. These terms tell you the nature of the injury itself. They do not tell you what symptoms you may have or how severe the symptoms will be.

Causes:

TBI can occur from motor vehicle accidents, blunt force traumas/gunshot wounds, fall, penetration of skull, or event blast/explosions (no direct contact to the head but internal injury).

Common Symptoms of Mild TBI:

- Headaches
- Balance problems
- Dizziness
- Memory problems
- Sleep disturbances
- Light/sound sensitivity
- Poor judgment
- Vision disturbances
- Irritability
- Feeling anxious or depressed

When Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and TBI co-exist, it can be difficult to sort out what is going on or what is causing which, so we treat the symptoms as opposed to the diagnosis. The good news is effective treatments for PTSD also work well for those who have suffered a TBI.

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All OEF/OIF/OND Veterans are screened for TBI:
If the screening is positive, the provider will refer the Veteran for further testing.

TBI: Get the Facts!

- The Department of Defense and the Defense and Veteran's Brain Injury Center estimate 22% of all OEF/OIF combat wounds are brain injuries. This is compared to TBI in 12% of combat wounds that occurred in Vietnam.
- Most people who have a mTBI are back to baseline by three months without any special treatment (although sometimes symptoms seem to “appear” under major stress or returning to school/work).
- Patients with moderate or severe TBIs can make remarkable recoveries.
- The length of time a person is unconscious is one way to measure how severe the TBI was:
  - if you were unconscious for less than 30 minutes, your TBI was most likely minor or mild.
  - if you were unconscious for more than 30 minutes but less than six hours, your TBI was most likely moderate.

New Service!

Veteran Fitness Center

After discussing any new exercise routine with your primary care doctor, Veterans enrolled Manchester VA are welcome to utilize the new gym equipment in suite 200 at the Brady Sullivan Tower. Check in at the desk, complete a quick orientation, and take advantage of this great space with large windows and new fitness equipment! (shower facilities are not available).

The facility can only be used during open gym hours at noted on the Whole Health monthly calendar or by calling (603) 624-4366 X2680

See page 6 for the whole health calendar
Nutrition seems to be gathering more attention. Every day we hear of a new diet, superfood, or a new study coming to light. Even though nutrition seems to change daily the idea behind promoting a healthy diet is not new. Nutrition has been nationally recognized every year since the early 1970s. Every year the nation celebrates National Nutrition Month in March. This year we celebrate the theme “Eat Right, Bite by Bite.” We are reminded this year that healthy eating does not have to be overwhelming. Each bite we take counts and every little change is a step in the right direction.

Everyone has different health goals and one or two small goals can spring anyone into action. This month make it a priority to try a new food, practice portion control, and take your time to enjoy your food. Having a plan is a great way to set yourself up for success. If you frequently eat at restaurants be menu-savvy to choose the healthiest options, a pro tip is to look the menu up online before entering the restaurant. Restaurants are a great social getaway, so split your meal with someone. You can ask for a to-go box to be delivered the same time your food is brought to the table, that way you can cut it in half and take some home. Plan your meals for the week and shop from a grocery list. Quick new recipes can make your weekday meals less of a task. Often it is hard to know where to start, and it is different for everyone. Wherever you choose to start write it down!

It’s also a good time to reflect on what dietary changes might be best for you. It is time to move away from going on a diet to making lifestyle changes that can benefit you long-term. Consulting a Registered Dietitian can help you to navigate the best, personalized nutrition recommendations. Here at the VA we have several dietitians ready to assist in 1:1 counseling, cooking classes, weight loss classes, diabetes workshops, and even new VA Video Connect appointments are available.

If you would like to meet with a dietician to discuss your goals, call (603) 624-4366 x 6407
Delicious Lentil Stew

8 servings

Lentils are a great variety of dried legume! They are full of protein, fiber, and nutrients like iron; have a great taste; and cook faster than dried beans because they do not require pre-soaking. Try them in this hearty stew for lunch or dinner.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoon butter (or margarine)
- 1 cup onion (chopped)
- 6 cup water
- 1 cup lentils (dry, washed, soaking not necessary)
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- ½ teaspoon oregano
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- 6 carrot (large, cut into 1/2-inch pieces)
- 4 small celery stalks
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 can whole tomatoes (16 ounces, cut into pieces or 3-4 fresh tomatoes cut in wedges)

Directions

1) Melt butter in a large skillet.
2) Sauté onion until tender.
3) Add water, lentils, Worcestershire sauce, oregano, and garlic powder.
4) Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer for 45 minutes.
5) Add carrots, celery, and salt.
6) Cover and simmer 30 minutes more or until the vegetables are tender.
7) Add tomatoes. Heat thoroughly and serve.

Nutrition Information

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Protein</td>
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Serving Size: 1/8 of recipe

Source: https://www.choosemyplate.gov/recipes-supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap-delicious-lentil-stew
March is Women Veterans History Month

For generations, women Veterans have honorably served in the military

Women have served in America’s wars and conflicts throughout our history. Although women were not formally under military command until the early 20th century, they have served in various capacities, beginning with the Revolutionary War. Thereafter, more than 400 women fought in the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War.

During World War I, about 35,000 women officially served as nurses and support staff. In World War II, 140,000 women served in the U.S. Army and the Women’s Army Corps performing critical jobs such as military intelligence, cryptography, and parachute rigging. Over 1,000 women flew aircraft for the Women’s Airforce Service Pilots.

In 1948, Congress passed the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act granting women permanent status in the military, entitling them to Veterans’ benefits.

During the Vietnam War, 7,000 American military women served in Southeast Asia. In 1976, the first women were admitted to America’s service academies, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, and the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs. During the Persian Gulf War in 1991, more than 41,000 women are deployed to the combat zone.

In 1990, some 40,000 American military women were deployed during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Today, over 700,000 women have served post-9/11, including Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

LGBT Awareness Week
March 23 – 29

Let’s Talk!

Sexual orientation and gender identity matter in health care.

LGBT Health Awareness Week
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health Program
Population Health Services
VALGBTProgram@va.gov
#LGBTHealth
<table>
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<td>10:00-11:15 Functional Fitness (Consult Required from Primary Care)</td>
<td>3:00-4:00 Mindfulness Group*</td>
<td>9:30-10:30 Functional Fitness (Consult Req. from Primary Care)-T&amp;E Room</td>
<td>11:30-12:30 Functional Fitness (Consult Req. from Primary Care)-T&amp;E Room</td>
<td>9-11 First Saturday Wellness Clinic</td>
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For more information please call the Whole Health Program at 603-624-4366 ext. 2680 Visit www.manchester.va.gov to find our schedule on-line

**Registration Required: Nutrition classes; Healthy Teaching Kitchen
*Mindfulness Group - check-in with Primary Care**

Brady Sullivan Tower, 1750 Elm St., Ste 200, Manchester
YMCA of Greater Nashua, 24 Stadium Drive, Nashua, 603-882-2011
Portsmouth YMCA, 550 Peverly Hill Rd, Portsmouth, 603-431-2334
Concord Goodlife, 254 N. State St., Concord, 603-228-6630