Colorectal cancer (cancer in the colon or rectum) is a leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S. But it doesn’t have to be. When this cancer is found and removed early, the chances of a full recovery are very good. Colorectal cancer rarely causes symptoms in its early stages, so screening for the disease is important. It’s even more important if you have risk factors for the disease. Learn more about colorectal cancer and its risk factors. Then talk with your healthcare provider about being screened.

Risk Factors for Colorectal Cancer:
- Are age 50 or older
- Have a family history or personal history of colorectal cancer or adenomatous polyps
- Have a personal history of certain kinds of colorectal polyps, Crohn’s disease, or ulcerative colitis
- Have a family history of colorectal cancers

After Hours Care
The Manchester VA nurse triage line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They provide the patient with education and suggestions regarding symptoms reported by the patient.

If you call during normal business hours, 0800-1600 your call will be answered by our local nurses, after hours calls are handled by our nurses at the Dayton, Ohio call center.

The Dayton Call Center nurses will provide the same services, and all notes are placed in your chart for your provider to review.

Urgent Care cannot provide the same services that you would receive at an ER, and you do not want to delay your care.

The Urgent Care clinic is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays! For anything life threatening, please go to your local Emergency Room.

Triage line: 624-4366 X3199
Urgent Care: Located at Manchester VA

Healthy Recipe
Quick Beef Casserole
Read more on P3

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
About 90% of people live 5 or more years when their colorectal cancer is found early through testing. (CDC)
Were you exposed to burn pits? VA's Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry allows eligible Veterans and service members to document their exposures and report health concerns through an online questionnaire. https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/registry.asp

Diabetic Retinopathy

Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness in adults. It occurs when diabetes damages blood vessels inside the eye. These weak vessels leak fluid into an area of the eye called the retina.

New, distorted vessels may grow, then bleed. These vessels can damage areas of the retina, including a retinal detachment, causing blurry, distorted vision.

What Causes Diabetic Retinopathy?

Diabetes mellitus is the cause of this eye disease. Over time, diabetes makes blood vessels weaken all over the body, including in the eyes.

Poor blood sugar control can make retinopathy worse. So, can smoking or poorly controlled high blood pressure. Pregnancy can also cause retinopathy to worsen.

What Are the Symptoms?

You can have diabetic retinopathy without knowing it. Usually, there is no pain and no outward sign. Over time, you may notice gradual blurring or some vision loss. Symptoms may come and go. Early treatment and good control of risk factors may help prevent vision loss or blindness.

What You Can Do

Have your eyes examined regularly by an eye specialist. Your healthcare provider will tell you when and how often you need these exams. You can also help control your diabetes through exercise, diet, and medicine, as instructed by your healthcare provider. These same steps may also help control diabetic retinopathy.

“Diabetes is the leading cause of new cases of blindness in adults” (CDC)

Managing Stress

Here are a few apps that are specifically for Veterans and their families to assist with stress management:

PTSD Coach Mobile App—free of charge and available on the App Store. The PTSD Coach App helps you learn about and cope with the symptoms related to Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that commonly occurs following trauma.

PTSD Family Coach is for family members of those living with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The app provides extensive information about PTSD, how to take care of yourself, how to take care of your relationship with your loved one or with children, and how to help your loved one get treatment.

Knowing Your Numbers: Strive for a Healthy Weight

Looking to lose some weight? Want to improve your health in 2019?

Check out these numbers...on your own it may not be easy, but together with your MOVE! program, you can set a SMART goal to eat well, move more, and lose weight. You can do it! We can help!

Eating Right for your lifestyle!

By. Kathleen Martin RDN, LDN

The Dietitians at the Manchester VA Medical Center along with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics are celebrating National Nutrition Month in March.

Every year the Academy chooses a theme to help promote the importance of a healthy diet. This year’s theme is perfect for the changing times in health care.

Continues on P3
At the Manchester VA each person is a unique individual with their own unique health needs and goals. The Manchester VA Medical Center is proud to provide a Whole Health approach to meeting Veteran’s needs. As always, the VA Dietitians are here to offer support, motivation and guidance in helping you reach towards your best health.

It is important to customize your food choices to meet your unique needs which is exactly what the 2019 National Nutrition Month theme is all about. The basics of an overall healthy diet remain the same, choose lean meats, incorporated lots of colorful fruits and vegetables. Be sure to include whole grains for added fiber. Building from the basics we stand ready to customize a plan based on your health needs.

Whether you are and athlete, a weekend warrior or a coach potato our Nutrition Services are here to help you Eat Right for Your Lifestyle.

"The doctor of the future will no longer treat the human frame with drugs, but rather will cure and prevent disease with nutrition." ~ Thomas Edison

Manchester VA offers guidance in using your diet to treat diabetes, heart disease, obesity, cancer and other health conditions. We also offer education on meal plans to keep you and your family healthy.

Ask your health care provider for a referral or stop by to visit our nutrition office in N133 to learn about the services we can provide to help meet your needs.

If dinner is away from home, no need to worry. When ordering, ask for an extra side of vegetables or a side salad instead of the typical fried side dish. Ask for toppings and dressings on the side.

Diabetes: Check your feet!

Diabetes increases your chances of developing foot problems. So, inspect your feet every day. This helps you find small skin irritations before they become serious infections. If you have trouble seeing the bottoms of your feet, use a mirror or ask a family member or friend to help.

How to Check Your Feet
Below are tips to help you look for foot problems. Try to check your feet at the same time each day, such as when you get out of bed in the morning.

- Check the top of each foot. The tops of toes, back of the heel, and outer edge of the foot can get a lot of rubbing from poor-fitting shoes.
- Check the bottom of each foot. Daily wear and tear often leads to problems at pressure spots.
- Check the toes and nails. Fungal infections often occur between toes. Toenail problems can also be a sign of fungal infections or lead to breaks in the skin.
- Check your shoes, too. Loose objects inside a shoe can injure the foot. Use your hand to feel inside your shoes for things like pebbles, loose stitching, or rough areas that could irritate your skin.

Warning Signs
Look for any color changes in the foot. Redness with streaks can signal a severe infection, which needs immediate medical attention. Tell your doctor right away if you have any of these problems:
- Swelling, sometimes with color changes, may be a sign of poor blood flow or infection. Symptoms include tenderness and an increase in the size of your foot.
- Warm or hot areas on your feet may be signs of infection. A foot that is cold may not be getting enough blood.
- Sensations such as burning, tingling, or “pins and needles” can be signs of a problem. Also check for areas that may be numb.
- Hot spots are caused by friction or pressure. Look for hot spots in areas that get a lot of rubbing. Hot spots can turn into blisters, calluses, or sores.
- Cracks and sores are caused by dry or irritated skin. They are a sign that the skin is breaking down, which can lead to infection.
- Toenail problems to watch for include nails growing into the skin (ingrown toenail) and causing redness or pain. Thick, yellow, or discolored nails can signal a fungal infection.
- Drainage and odor can develop from untreated sores and ulcers. Call your doctor right away if you notice white or yellow drainage, bleeding, or unpleasant odor.

Quick Beef Casserole

1 ½ lb. lean ground beef
1 C onion, chopped
1 C celery, rinsed and chopped
1 C green bell pepper, rinsed, seeded, and cubed
3½ C tomatoes, rinsed and diced
1/4 tsp salt
1/2 tsp ground black pepper
1/4 tsp paprika
1 C frozen peas
2 small carrots, rinsed, peeled, and diced
1 C uncooked rice
1/2 C water

1. In a sauté pan, brown the ground beef.
2. Drain off the extra fat by tilting the sauté pan over a disposable cup in the sink to collect the fat. Use the lid to shield the meat from falling out. After the fat has turned solid, discard the cup in the trash.
3. Add the rest of the ingredients to the sauté pan, and mix well.
4. Cover sauté pan with lid, and cook over medium heat until boiling.
5. Reduce to low heat and simmer for 35 minutes. Serve hot.

Tip: To save time, use no-salt-added canned tomatoes and frozen chopped peppers and carrots.

Yield: 8 servings
Serving Size: 1 ½ casserole
Each serving provides: 201 Calories
Join the newest addition to the VA Whole Health Program – Aqua Yoga!

Water based exercise is known to benefit and help to develop strength, balance, and range of motion.

What to Expect

Our VA staff are here to help you! The class is focused on the veteran community and is a welcoming environment for all ages and abilities. (Please bring a towel with you for this class).

For more information please call the Whole Health Program at 603-624-4366 ext. 2680.

The schedule and class offerings can be found on MyHealtheVet or online at manchester.va.gov

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

What is traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)?

TBI may happen from a blow or jolt to the head, or an object penetrating the brain. Falls and vehicular accidents are the most common causes of TBI. When the brain is injured, the person may experience changes in consciousness ranging from being dazed and disoriented to slipping into a coma.

Most brain injuries are mild, also known as concussions. More severe TBI often occurs in the context of Polytrauma, defined as two or more severe injuries occurring as a result of the same traumatic event.

TBI Symptoms:

Mild TBI may result in symptoms such as headaches, dizziness and changes in behavior or thinking skills. Symptoms of mild TBI resolve within weeks to months in the vast majority of individuals.

In cases of more severe TBI/Polytrauma, initial symptoms may be life-threatening and may result in long-term functional disability.

Veterans with a positive TBI screen are referred for a comprehensive evaluation with specialty providers for a definitive diagnosis, and development of a Plan of Care and ongoing rehabilitation services, as necessary.

If you feel like you have symptoms of a TBI or if you ever received a head injury, please speak with your Primary Care Provider. https://www.polytrauma.va.gov/understanding-tbi/

Aqua Yoga Background

Water is a great environment for exercise due to low impact and possibilities of creating various levels of resistance to suit individuals’ abilities and needs. It offers the potential for safely extending stretches in ways that are not possible for many people on land.

Practicing yoga in the water provides many of the similar benefits to land yoga such as improving overall well-being, increasing flexibility, decreasing chronic pain, and improving breathing. Aqua yoga allows for a gentle and very low impact activity with additional resistance to the body from the water.

“TBI may happen from a blow or jolt to the head, or an object penetrating the brain.”

TBI Screening and Evaluation:

VA screens all Veterans of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan for mild TBI upon initial entry into VA health care. As of January 2016, VA has screened over 1 million Veterans for possible TBI.

Please see page 7 for March TBI events
March is Women’s History Month

Shaped by SERVICE

Lifetime of Success

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.

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 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.

Advanced Care Planning

Let your doctors and loved ones understand your wishes about medical and mental health care!

What: Advanced Care Planning Group
When: First Monday of Every Month from 9:30am-11:00am
Where: Room 147, please check in at Primary Care Waiting Room

To register, please contact Polly Bernard, LICSW at X2524

Prior to getting involved with the Whole Health Program, I (Suzanne) was in a “slump”, suffering from increased fatigue, depression, and lack of motivation. I began to try and work on my areas of concern on my own, but recognized I needed some additional help from the VA.

Starting with the Insomnia Clinic, I was given the resources and skills to improve my sleep hygiene and have a more consistent sleep pattern. The Anxiety clinic gave me the knowledge and comradery of other Veterans that are going through similar situations to understand how to control mood swings and decrease depression, anxiety, and anger. The Nutrition Clinic has allowed me to improve my dietary habits and be more in control of what I am consuming and how the food I consume makes me feel. The Functional Fitness class has allowed me to increase my overall strength and muscular endurance by exercising twice a week using resistance bands, in a fun and friendly atmosphere. Health Coaching has helped me to navigate my areas of self-care that were most important to me and complete my health goals. The Health Coach helps to lead Veterans in the right direction and provide assistance when you need it. With a Health Coach, you’re never alone.

For my Veteran community, I recommend getting involved in the Whole Health Program. All of the tools are at the VA, you just have to find them and use them – this is where Whole Health coaching can help to direct you to where you need to be but the rest is up to you. When I first came here, I felt lost and alone and now I do not feel that way. Remember that there is something for everyone.

~ Suzanne
The staff at VA Manchester know how important service dogs are to the health and well-being of our Veterans with disabilities. Our goal is to partner with our Veterans to ensure that their healthcare visit meets and exceeds their expectations. Working together, we provide a safe and healing environment for all Veterans, visitors, and service animals.

Service Animals: are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. They are welcome on VA property.

Emotional support animals: are animals that provide therapeutic benefits through companionship and by being a calming presence. They are not specifically trained to perform tasks for a person who suffers from emotional disabilities. By law, these types of animals are not allowed in public places, including the VA.

Manchester VA asks that you please help us by only bringing trained service animals to your appointment.

The health and safety of our Veterans, their service dogs, and our staff is very important to us, following these rules will help ensure a positive experience for everyone.

Service Dogs/animals which:
- are fully trained (service dogs in-training are not allowed)
- are at least one year of age
- are on a short leash (3 ft. or less)
- are well groomed and in good health
- Not bark, growl, or bite
- Not urinate or defecate inside
- Stay off furniture and people

If your service dog does not follow all the rules above, staff will have to ask you to temporarily remove the dog.

Service dogs can be an essential part of your care, and they are allowed in most areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go. There are some areas at the VA that are prohibited to service dogs. A few of these are:
- Areas where food is stored or prepared
- Surgical areas
- Any other place where the presence of a service dog would pose a significant health risk to patients or staff, or would disrupt the treatment of patients.

While Veterans are at the VA, staff are not permitted to care for service dogs. In order to ensure the safety and comfort of the service dog, Veterans should have an alternate handler with them who can take over if needed.

Please “paws” before bringing pets to the VA! We don’t want to have to “bark” at you!

If you have questions about animals on VA property, contact Jacqui Dion, VIST Coordinator, at 603-624-4366 x6475.

Did you know the VA offers a Call Center that is dedicated to caring for our Women Veterans? All representatives are women and many are Veterans as well! 1-855-VA-Women

Meet the New Team Members in Women’s Health!

Rachel Richards, Medical Support Assistant & Mammography Coordinator
Rachel has worked at the Manchester VA for 3.5 years. She brings with her 11 years of healthcare experience and 4 years working in the breast health specialty. Rachel will assist the Veteran’s with scheduling breast imaging in the community or through the Boston VA healthcare system. If follow up testing is required after imaging has been completed, Rachel coordinates that care. Rachel also coordinates genetic testing for family history, and breast surgeries

Kelly Hunt, RN and Women’s Health Patient Navigator
Kelly has worked for the VA for over 6 years and recently joined the Manchester VA, transferring from Orlando. Kelly has been a registered nurse for 17 years and has worked many years specializing in women’s health. She will be assisting women health patients with navigating the VA system, and following up on preventive care that needs to be completed. She is a great source of knowledge regarding the community care program and can help patients navigate care outside the VA as well.

Rachel can be reached at: (603) 624-4366 ext. 1192
Kelly can be reached at: (603) 624-4366 ext. 1193
**Traumatic Brain Injury Information Events:**

- March 1: TBI Information Booth 10-12 ~lobby
- March 7: Make Sure it’s Me Play 13-1500 ~Training & Education room
- March 12: TBI Information Booth 13-1500 ~lobby
- March 15: TBI Escape Room 12-1300 ~Training & Education room
- March 21: Monthly TBI Group 15-1600 ~ Director Conference Room 6th floor
- March 27: NH Brain Injury Association Booth 12-1400 ~ lobby

For more information about our TBI program, please contact Nina Romano, RN 603-624-4366 ext. 1960, or Erica Rowe, LCSW 603-624-4366 ext. 6455.

**Concussion Coach App Available!**

Concussion Coach is a mobile phone application for Veterans, Servicemembers, and others who have experienced a mild to moderate concussion. It provides portable tools to assess symptoms and to facilitate use of coping strategies.

The features of Concussion Coach include:

- A self-assessment tool for measuring symptoms, with feedback and a graph for tracking symptoms over time
- Symptom relief tools and relaxation exercises for managing problems associated with concussion
- Planning tools to build resilience
- Educational materials about concussion and options for treatment by brain injury professionals
- Immediate access to crisis resources, personal support contacts, or professional healthcare resources

Concussion Coach is intended to support treatment with a healthcare professional by providing portable, convenient tools for the user to assess symptoms and cope with concussion-related problems. The app can also be used on its own, but is not intended to replace professional diagnosis, medical treatment, or rehabilitation therapies for those who need them.

Find the app here:

Hepatitis A - Know your risk

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver. It has many causes. One of the causes is infection with a virus called the hepatitis A virus (HAV). This virus most often spreads through infected food or water. It can also spread directly from person to person. This could happen if someone does not wash his or her hands after coming in contact with infected stool—for example, after using the bathroom or changing a dirty diaper. HAV spreads more easily in group settings such as daycare centers or nursing homes. Unlike Hepatitis B and C, HAV cannot become a chronic illness. It rarely causes long-term problems.

Symptoms of Hepatitis A Infection:
Symptoms usually appear about 2 to 6 weeks after exposure to the virus. Possible symptoms include:
- Fever
- Tiredness and weakness
- Pain in the stomach area
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes, dark urine, light-colored stools)
- Itchy skin

Diagnosing Hepatitis A:
A sample of blood is taken to test for HAV. Other tests may be done to check the health of the liver.

Treating Hepatitis A:
There is no cure for hepatitis A. The virus will run its course. Treat symptoms as you would flu symptoms, including drinking fluids and getting plenty of rest. During recovery, avoid fatty foods. DO NOT drink alcohol, which can damage the liver. Also DO NOT take any over-the-counter medications without checking with your healthcare provider. The liver processes all medications, and certain medications can be harmful to the infected liver.

Once you’ve had hepatitis A, you cannot get it again, so you don’t need the hepatitis A vaccine. But you should consider vaccination against hepatitis B, a more serious form of hepatitis.

Members of the household should be vaccinated against hepatitis A and B if they haven’t been already.

“Hepatitis A is a vaccine-preventable, communicable disease of the liver caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV)” ~ CDC

Preventing Hepatitis A from Spreading:
A person with hepatitis A can spread the virus to others, even before symptoms appear. He or she can continue to spread the virus for a few days after symptoms start. Take these precautions to prevent HAV from spreading:
- Wash hands often, and always after using the bathroom or changing diapers and before preparing food or eating. Work up a good lather with soap and warm water. Scrub for at least 10–15 seconds, then rinse.

When to Call the Healthcare Provider:
- Symptoms get worse instead of better
- You have signs of dehydration: decreased urination; very dark urine; dry, sticky mouth
- You have swelling in the hands, arms, feet, ankles, abdomen, or face
- You bleed from the nose, mouth, or rectum or have bloody stools

DON'T SPREAD GERMS
WASH YOUR HANDS

VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Created by: Annie J. Duquette, RN
Health Promotion Disease prevention Program Manager/
Veteran Health Education Coordinator

If you would like to contribute or have any questions/comments, please contact:
anne.duquette@va.gov (603) 624-4366 Ext. 6439