

To Your Health Newsletter

“Promoting Good Health Through Information”

Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System

Veteran Health Education Newsletter • Fall 2012

There's Something New in Prostate Cancer Screening

Rosemary M. Gill, RN, MS, CDE, Nurse Practitioner

For many years a lot of men have routinely been getting a PSA (prostate-specific antigen) blood test every year to screen for prostate cancer. There is new information out that having that blood test will likely do you more harm than good. The US Preventive Services Task Force now recommends against routine PSA testing.

What is screening?

Screening is looking for a disease before the person has any symptoms. This is different than looking for the cause of symptoms or disease you already have. But screening is really only useful if there are things that can be done to cure or treat the disease before symptoms appear. The US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) is a group of independent experts that reviews scientific studies and makes recommendations about clinical services to prevent disease and keep people healthy. Their recommendations are for people who have no signs or symptoms of the disease.

What has changed about PSA screening?

Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer in men in this country. Only skin cancer is more common. But for a lot of men, prostate cancer never causes health problems. The PSA test cannot tell us if a man's prostate cancer is the kind that will never cause problems or if it is very aggressive and can spread to other parts of the body. Additionally, there are many "false positives" in PSA screening. This means that something other than cancer is causing the test results to be abnormal. Even if there is prostate cancer present, the USPSTF found that PSA screening can cause a lot of harm because once prostate cancer is found, most men get some type of treatment. The treatments can cause:

- Erectile dysfunction (impotence) from surgery, radiation therapy, or hormone therapy
- Urinary incontinence from radiation therapy or surgery
- Problems with bowel control from radiation therapy
- A small risk of death and serious complications from surgery

Learn more about the risk and benefits of screening at

<http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/prostatecancerscreening/prostatecancerinfo.pdf>

What is the new recommendation and what should you do?

The USPSTF recommends against routine PSA testing saying, "The science shows that more men will be harmed by PSA screening than will benefit. The expected harms are greater than the small potential benefit." So, consider how you feel about this new information and what you are comfortable doing. If you decide to get a PSA test, talk with your provider about your risks for prostate cancer and what PSA testing might mean for you.

Learn more about prostate cancer screening and the

USPSTF recommendation at <http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/prostatecancerscreening.htm>

Recipe for Health

OVEN-CRUSTED CHICKEN BREAST

A healthier alternative to fried chicken

Ingredients:

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (3 oz each)
- 1 egg white (or substitute liquid egg white)
- 1 C fat-free evaporated milk
- 1 C breadcrumbs
- ¼ C rolled oats, crush between fingers to make smaller pieces
- 1 C whole-wheat flour
- 2 Tbsp olive oil or vegetable oil

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
2. Place chicken in a freezer bag with the air squeezed out, and pound each breast down to ½-inch thickness.
3. Combine the egg white and evaporated milk in a bowl, and mix well. In a separate bowl, combine the breadcrumbs and crushed oats, and mix well.
4. Coat the chicken breasts in flour, and shake off the excess. Dip the chicken breasts in the egg and milk mixture, and drain off the excess. Then dip the chicken breasts in the breadcrumb mixture to coat, and shake off the excess. After all chicken breasts have been coated, discard any leftover breading mixture.
5. Heat oil in a large sauté pan. Stir fry the chicken over medium-high heat on one side until golden brown, about 2–3 minutes. Turn carefully, and pan fry the second side for an additional 2–3 minutes or until golden brown.
6. Remove from the pan, and place on paper towels to soak up excess oil. Place on baking sheet
7. Finish cooking in a 350 °F oven for about 5–8 minutes (to a minimum internal temperature of 165 °F).

Yield: 4 servings

Serving size: 1 chicken breast

Each serving provides:

Calories: 264
Total fat: 11 g
Saturated fat: 2 g
Cholesterol: 49 mg
Sodium: 263 mg
Total fiber: 3 g
Protein: 24 g
Carbohydrates: 18 g
Potassium: 553 mg

<http://hin.nhlbi.nih.gov/healthyeating>

QUIZ! Finding Sodium in Your Diet

Too much salt in your diet can be harmful to your health. More specifically, too much sodium can be bad for patients who have high blood pressure, heart failure, liver or kidney disease. Some people have been told by their providers to have strict limits on their sodium. Others can benefit just from cutting back on the amount of salt they eat. Take this quiz to learn more about sodium in everyday foods!

Question 1:

If you're trying to watch your sodium intake, eating a can of soup at lunch is a good alternative to a hamburger and fries.

True or False

Question 2:

Frozen dinners are good choices when you're trying to eat less sodium.

True or False

Question 3:

Herbs, spices, and salt-free seasoning blends are better for cooking and putting on the table.

True or False

Adapted from: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/prevent/sodium/quiz.htm>

Answers to QUIZ!

Question 1: FALSE. One cup of soup can have up to 1300 milligrams of sodium. Look for low-, reduced-sodium, or "no-salt added" versions of foods.

Question 2: FALSE. Frozen entrees can have a lot of sodium in even a single portion – sometimes over 1,500 mg of sodium. Read the label carefully to find out the sodium content. Frozen dinners aren't the only convenience foods high in sodium. Mixed dishes like pizza, packaged mixes, canned soups or broths, and salad dressings also can have a lot of sodium.

Question 3: TRUE. It's easy to make foods tasty without using salt. Be careful with salt substitutes, though. They contain potassium which can be harmful for many patients on medications for blood pressure, heart failure, diabetes, or kidney disease. Try using herbs and spices like garlic, curry powder, rosemary, mint, dill, paprika, pepper, and more instead.

Your Medicine Cabinet is Not for Medicine

Samuel Pitak, PharmD, Pharmacy Resident

For many people, it seems obvious that a medicine cabinet would be a good place to store medicine. After all, it is called a medicine cabinet. But actually, a medicine cabinet in your bathroom is one of the *worst* places to store your medications. The steam from showers and baths can damage medications and make them not work as well. Very hot or cold temperatures can also damage medications and sometimes can even make them more harmful. This means that your car is also a bad place to store medications.

Medication Storage Tips:

- Store your medications in a cool, dry place where the temperature and humidity are as stable as possible
- Be aware that some medications need special storage, such as refrigeration or a special container
- Follow instructions given with the medication or ask your pharmacist if you are unsure of the proper storage
- Never take or use medication that changed color, looks sticky, or smells different
- Your pharmacist is a medication expert, so don't be afraid to ask questions!

October is American Pharmacists Month, so take the time to say hello and to thank your pharmacist!

Living with Heart Failure

Rosemary M. Gill, RN, MS, CDE, Nurse Practitioner

What is Heart Failure?

Heart failure (HF), also called congestive heart failure (CHF), is a common medical condition. If you have HF, it means that your heart does not pump blood as well as it should. Maybe the poor pumping causes blood to back up into the lungs (causing shortness of breath) or your heart can't send blood quickly enough to the rest of the body (causing fatigue). So what can you do?

How to be healthy with heart failure

Here at VAPAHCS we want our patients with HF to be as healthy as they can be. All across the country, Heart Failure is the single most common reason for avoidable admissions to the hospital. What does this mean? Well, we know that if patients with HF do certain things at home to take care of their health, they are much less likely to need to be hospitalized. We've started several new programs to help patients with HF stay home and stay healthy.

If you are admitted to our hospital with Heart Failure, you will get a special folder with important messages about keeping your HF under control. Before you leave the hospital, you will get a personalized plan for managing your HF at home. When you are home, one of our RN Care Managers will work with you, either in person or by phone, to help you stay on track. You will get a booklet with detailed information about living with Heart Failure. This booklet will give you information on your medicines, what you need to know about salt and fluid, your weight and activity level.

So what can I do to take care of myself?

- Weigh yourself every day
- Limit your salt intake
- Know your activity plan
- Limit your fluid intake if your doctor has told you to
- Make sure to take your medicines everyday
- Don't miss your follow-up appointments and lab tests

When should I call?

Call the Telephone Care Program at 1-800-455-0057 if you have questions or:

- if you gain more than 2 or 3 pounds in a day or 5 pounds in a week
- if you have trouble breathing
- your feet or ankles swell more than usual
- you pass less water
- you begin to cough at night
- you get tired faster
- you have pain or tightness in your chest
- you faint or become dizzy
- you think you are having side effects from your medicines

We are committed to helping you be as healthy as you can be with your Heart Failure. Let us know what questions you have. Talk with your Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) or Cardiology team.

VA Palo Alto Health Care System Facilities

VA PALO ALTO DIVISION

3801 Miranda Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94304
(650) 493-5000

VA LIVERMORE DIVISION

4951 Arroyo Road
Livermore, CA 94550
(925) 373-4700

VA MENLO PARK DIVISION

795 Willow Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(650) 493-5000

VA CAPITOLA OPC

1350 N. 41st Street,
Suite 102
Capitola, CA 95010
(831) 464-5519

VA MODESTO OPC

1524 McHenry Avenue,
Suite 315
Modesto, CA 95350
(209) 557-6200

VA MONTEREY OPC

3401 Engineer Lane
Seaside, CA 93955
(831) 883-3800

VA SAN JOSE OPC

80 Great Oaks Boulevard
San Jose, CA 95119
(408) 363-3000

VA SONORA OPC

19747 Greenley Road
Sonora, CA 95370
(209) 588-2600

VA STOCKTON OPC

7777 Freedom Drive
French Camp, CA 95231
(209) 946-3400

World Wide Web Address:
www.paloalto.va.gov

Taking an active role in your care can help prevent medication errors!

Carry your medication list with you at all times!

Tips for Healthy Living

To get the health benefits of physical activity, do a combination of aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities.

- Aerobic activities make you breathe harder and cause your heart to beat faster. Walking fast is an example of aerobic activity.
- Muscle-strengthening activities make your muscles stronger. Muscle-strengthening activities include lifting weights and using exercise bands.

www.healthfinder.gov/prevention

Questions or Comments?

If you have any questions or topics you would like addressed in *To Your Health* feel free to contact:

Samuel Pitak, PharmD

PGY1 Pharmacy Resident

VA Palo Alto Health Care System

3801 Miranda Avenue #119 (Pharmacy)

Palo Alto, CA 94304

(650) 493-5000, ext.66595

To Your Health is published quarterly for VAPAHCS Veterans and their families.

Editorial Board:

Randell K. Miyahara, PharmD

Rosemary Gill, RN, MS

Samuel Pitak, PharmD

Kris Morrow

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