

To Your Health Newsletter

“Promoting Good Health Through Information”

Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System

Veteran Health Education Newsletter • Winter 2012

Fire Your Internal Furnace Up This Winter – With Exercise!

By E. Hank Winkenwerder, PT

Ah, winter in the Bay area – colder, rainier – it makes it seem really hard to get out and exercise. The holiday season has just ended with all those extra potlucks and family celebrations. No wonder so many people gain weight in the winter and feel the need to resolve to take it off again come January.

But wait! You can eat more from the relish tray and less from the gravy boat. And since it doesn't rain all day here, there's usually a good time window to grab your windbreaker and get outside for a walk or bike ride. In fact, being more active with exercise can help lift you out of those winter blahs.

There are several things to keep in mind with winter exercise. For outdoor activities, wear layers to keep you from getting chilled. Then, as you warm up, you can take off that light jacket. You may need to do a longer warm up for your muscles first or take a hot shower before going outside.

Dr. James Levin from the Mayo Clinic describes NEAT activities we can do for weight control. NEAT stands for Non-Exercise Activity (what you normally do) Thermogenesis (the scientific term for calories burning). In the winter, for example, raking leaves for 30 minutes burns 100 calories and caulking for one hour burns 250 calories (not to mention the benefits of lowering your utility bill). If you are careful, even cleaning gutters can burn 300 calories per hour.

If you walk for exercise (which can easily burn 400 calories per hour when done briskly), and it is raining you may want to go to a mall to walk or take the stairs. Early in the morning when it first opens is best and remember – the teenagers are in school now! You can make the walk more interesting by listening to your favorite music with headphones.

On the other hand, if you stay warm and dry in your home, you can work out with exercise videos or an “exercise game” like the Wii Fit or X Box Kinect. Even simple inexpensive equipment like an exercise ball, light 2-5 pound hand weights, rubberband resistance or a 4-6 inch step can produce enough variety, resistance and fun to encourage anyone to workout. A judo teacher once told me “watch all the TV you want – just every commercial do situps, pushups or squats non-stop.” That's 14 minutes per hour and has the added benefit of limiting your television viewing naturally!

To sum up, winter is the time many people eat more fatty foods and move around less leading to poorer health and outlook. If you choose instead to eat smart and exercise more, you'll head into next year feeling and looking better.

Recipe for Health

TURKEY MEAT LOAF

Here's a healthier version of an old diner favorite.

Ingredients:

1 lb lean turkey, ground
1/2 C regular oats, dry
1 large egg
1 Tbsp onion, dehydrated
1/4 C catsup

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients and mix well.
2. Bake in loaf pan at 350 °F or to internal temperature of 165 °F for 25 minutes.
3. Cut into five slices and serve.

Yield: 5 servings

Serving size: 1 slice (3 oz)

Each serving provides:

Calories: 192
Total fat: 7 g
Saturated fat: less than 2 g
Cholesterol: 103 mg
Sodium: 214 mg
Total fiber: 1 g
Protein: 21 g
Carbohydrates: 23 g
Potassium: 292 mg

www.nhlbi.nih.gov

E-Cigarettes vs. Smoking

Rosemary M. Gill, RN, MS, CDE, Veterans Health Education Coordinator

Got a light?

Have you considered trying electronic cigarettes to quit smoking or to get around no-smoking rules? If so, there are some things to think about first. E-cigarettes are being heavily marketed as a solution to smoking bans as well as a “safer alternative” to regular cigarettes.

How do e-cigarettes work?

E-cigarettes are battery-operated devices that the smoker can load with liquid nicotine. Clicking a button starts a heating element that releases a vapor that looks like cigarette smoke. This is why smoking an e-cigarette is sometimes referred to as “vaping.” The manufacturers claim that with e-cigarettes you can control the amount of nicotine. But studies have shown that e-cigarettes can deliver varying and unreliable amounts of nicotine.

Are e-cigarettes actually safer?

E-cigarettes are mostly made in China and not regulated by the FDA so we do not know the true health risks. The manufacturers have not provided complete information on the chemicals used in the e-cigarettes and in the vapor. When two common brands of e-cigarettes were analyzed here in the United States, they were found to contain many of the same cancer-causing chemicals found in regular cigarettes.

But there's no tobacco!

That's right, e-cigarettes are tobacco free. But the concerning thing is that they can deliver a high concentration of nicotine directly to the lungs. This is one reason that e-cigarettes shouldn't be confused with nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) such as nicotine patches or gum. NRT doesn't deliver nicotine directly to the lungs. NRT slowly decreases the amount of nicotine a smoker gets to help with nicotine cravings and assist in quitting. However, a recent survey showed that 65% of e-cigarette users were using them not for safety reasons, but to try to quit smoking. So far though, there's no evidence that e-cigarettes help people quit. Dangerously, they may even influence some people to start smoking by getting them hooked on nicotine.

What about smoke-free zones?

While e-cigarettes are marketed as OK to use in areas where smoking is not allowed, that's not true at VA Palo Alto Health Care System. Anyone using e-cigarettes will need to do their “vaping” in an approved smoking area. Typically this means in the parking lots, 35 feet from the walkways. The bottom line? If you're thinking about e-cigarettes why not save your money and talk to your provider about our TeleQuit line? You can also go online to <http://www.paloalto.va.gov/telequit.asp> or call TeleQuit at **1-650-493-5000, ext. 60557**. **Or, you can make an appointment to be seen in one of our Smoking Cessation Outpatient Clinics. Just call the clinic:**

**Palo Alto Division: Dr. Holly Cacciapaglia at
(650) 493-5000 x67915**

San Jose Division: Dr. Gary Miles at (408) 363-3000 x73037

Stockton Division: Dr. Hilary Keegan at (209) 946-3407

Quitting smoking is probably the best thing you can do for your health. We're here to help!

Sugar, Sugar Everywhere!

Eileen Stein, MS, RD, CDE, Clinical Dietitian

When asked about how to eat healthier, the average person will likely say something about cutting out sugars in their diet. But does anyone really know how much sugar they actually eat in a day? And is all that sugar really bad?

According to the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, in 2004 the average person ate 22 teaspoons of added sugars every day. This total did not include “naturally occurring” sugar, such as those in fruit, fruit juice or milk. Still, that is almost half a cup of sugar every day – and that adds up! The American Heart Association recommends that men consume no more than 9 teaspoons of added sugars per day, and women no more than 6 teaspoons per day.

Is Sugar Really Bad for You?

While dietitians tend not to label foods as “good” or “bad,” too much sugar is not good. Sugar is a type of carbohydrate. Your body, especially your muscles and your brain, use carbohydrates for energy. However, if you eat more carbohydrates than your body needs, the excess will be stored as fat. Eating too much sugar will not cause diabetes. However, eating too much sugar can lead to weight gain and excess fat storage, which increase your risk for developing diabetes.

Where are all those sugars found? Everyone knows that foods like cookies, cake, pies, doughnuts, candy and so on contain a lot of sugar. Drinks can also contain a lot of sugars, especially drinks like sodas, bottled tea, energy drinks and sports drinks. The best way to determine how much sugar a food contains is to check the Nutrition Facts food label. Be sure you check the serving size, particularly on drinks, as one container may have more than one serving. The line showing Sugars, under the Total Carbohydrates, will tell you how many grams of sugar the item has. To convert that to teaspoons, one gram of sugar is equal to 1/4 teaspoon of sugar (and therefore, 4 grams of sugar equals one teaspoon).

A Special Note for Diabetics

This article is referring to added sugars. To control your blood sugar, you need to look at the Total Carbohydrates, not just the sugars. All carbohydrates, even the “natural” sugars will increase blood sugars.

The Bottom Line

A little bit of sugar is not a problem for most people. An occasional cookie or scoop of ice cream won't hurt. However, keep in mind that everything you eat or drink adds up, and it can be very easy to overdo the sugar. And when it comes to your drinks, remember the recommendation from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (2010): Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

To convert that to teaspoons, one gram of sugar is equal to 1/4 teaspoon of sugar (and therefore, 4 grams of sugar equals one teaspoon).

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

- Drink water or club soda – zest it up with a wedge of lemon or lime.
- Stretch before bed to give you more energy when you wake.

www.smallstep.gov

Questions or Comments?

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

Ariane R. Wilson, PharmD

Pharmacy Practice Resident

VA Palo Alto Health Care System

3801 Miranda Avenue #119 (Pharmacy)

Palo Alto, CA 94304

(650) 493-5000, ext. 66573

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

Editorial Board:

Randell K. Miyahara, PharmD

Rosemary Gill, RN, MS

Ariane R. Wilson, PharmD

Kris Morrow

If you would like to subscribe to the electronic version of this newsletter, send a request to toyourhealthsubscription@va.gov