

to your

# Health!



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System • Veterans Health Education Newsletter • Fall 2015 • Volume 18 • Issue 4

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## Bariatric Surgery in Review

*Dan Eisenberg, MD, MS*

### WHAT IS OBESITY?

Obesity is very common. In the United States, more than one-third of the adult population is obese. Globally, obesity has increased greatly over the past several decades, such that it is now considered a worldwide healthcare epidemic. The healthcare burden of obesity is likely related to its association with other chronic medical problems. They include high blood sugar (glucose intolerance and type 2 dia-



See Bariatric Surgery – page 3

## What to do if the Brain Starts to Change: Resources for Patients and Caregivers

*Joshua D. McKeever, Ph.D. Rehabilitation Psychology Postdoctoral Fellow,*

*Carey A. Pawlowski, Ph.D. Rehabilitation Psychologist*

If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with a brain disorder such as dementia (including Alzheimer's disease), neurocognitive disorder, or mild cognitive impairment, you may have many concerns. These diagnoses affect your thinking abilities. Therefore, feeling anxious, confused, or distressed about what this means for your future is normal. This article will give you some ideas to help you feel less overwhelmed and manage what you are going through in a way that makes sense to you.

### FOR PATIENTS

- **Learn:** Find out about your condition. Ask your provider questions, including the best ways to do your own research into your condition. Get involved with organizations such as the Alzheimer's Association or the Brain Injury Association. These folks have many great resources and helped many families through this journey. Once you have learned about what to expect with your condition, learn how to best manage your symptoms by talking to your provider.

See Brain Change– page 4

# Which Pneumococcal Vaccine Do You Need?

Rosemary Gill, RN, MS, Veterans Health Education Coordinator

Have you had a pneumococcal vaccine in the past but are hearing about another type of pneumococcal vaccine now? It is a confusing topic, but an important one.

*Streptococcus pneumoniae* is a bacterium that can cause a number of illnesses. These illnesses are known as “pneumococcal disease”. Among the most serious are pneumonia, meningitis, and blood infections. These can be deadly. If you are at risk, getting the right vaccines is very important.

Currently, there are two types of pneumococcal vaccines: Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (PPSV23 or Pneumovax) and Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV13 or Prevnar 13). PCV13 is a new vaccine and protects against

several additional strains of bacteria that PPSV23 does not. Some people should have both; some should have only one; and some people do not need either until age 65.

Adults 65 years and older are at higher risk for pneumococcal disease. They are also more likely to have serious complications if they develop pneumonia. Many people younger than 65 who are at risk should be vaccinated as well.

***It is important to check with your primary care provider to make sure you get the right pneumococcal vaccine at the right time! Below are some general recommendations.***

- If you are 65 or older, you should receive one dose of PCV13 and one dose of PPSV23.
- If you had a dose of PPSV23 before you turned 65, you should have another at least 5 years after the last dose of PPSV23.
- If you already had one dose of PCV13 before you turned 65, you do not need another dose of PCV13.
- Adults of any age with any of the following health issues should receive PPSV23:
  - Chronic heart, lung or liver disease
  - Alcohol use disorder
  - Diabetes
  - A weakened immune system
  - Cigarette smoking
  - Asthma
- Adults of any age living in a long-term care facility or nursing home should receive PPSV23.
- Adults of any age without a functioning spleen or who have a weakened immune system should receive one dose of PCV13.

\*People who have had severe allergic reactions to these vaccines or their components should talk with their provider before getting another vaccine.

Unfortunately, these vaccines cannot be given together and must be spaced out by at least 8 weeks to one year, depending on which vaccine is given first. Please talk with your primary care team about your vaccine schedule.

## Questions or Comments?

If you have any questions or topics you would like addressed in the [To Your Health](#) newsletter, feel free to contact

**Caroline Ha, 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  
Caroline Ha, PharmD  
Kris Morrow, MAMS



betes), high cholesterol (dyslipidemia), high blood pressure (hypertension), arthritis, obstructive sleep apnea, kidney failure, and heart failure. Psychological conditions can play a role as well.

### **WHAT IS BARIATRIC SURGERY?**

Bariatric surgery is also known as weight loss surgery. It has proven to be a reliable and safe way to produce significant and long-lasting weight loss. It is offered to people who are morbidly obese (BMI > 40 kg/m<sup>2</sup>\*) or severely obese (BMI > 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup>\*) who have the associated co-existing conditions (as described above). Treatment of severe obesity using non-surgical methods produces modest long-term results of up to 8% weight loss. This 8% weight loss is rarely maintained beyond 2 years. Surgical weight loss, on the other hand, can produce weight loss of up to 40% that is maintained for years after surgery.

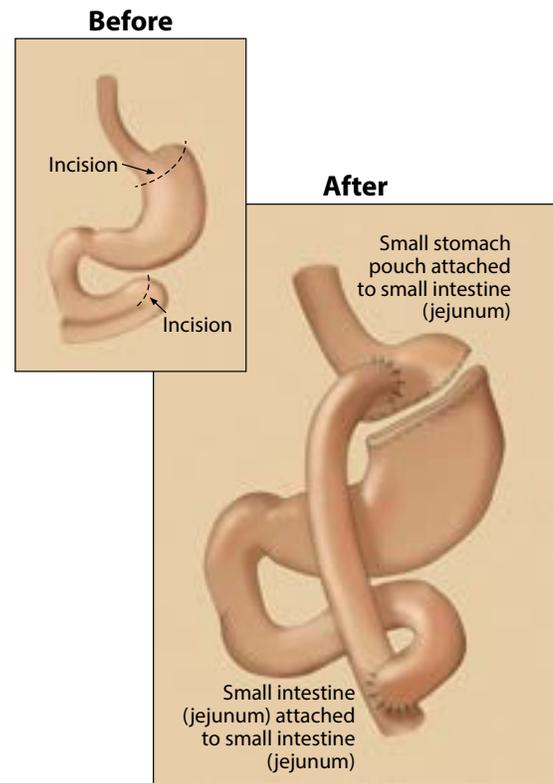
Along with significant and long-lasting weight loss, bariatric surgery has also been shown to help better control blood sugar, blood pressure, cholesterol, and obstructive sleep apnea. Not surprisingly, the medication costs for treating these disorders are significantly reduced after surgery as well. According to multiple studies, patients who had bariatric surgery may also have improved long-term survival, compared to morbidly obese people of similar weight who did not have surgery.

### **WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF BARIATRIC SURGERIES?**

Bariatric surgical procedures have evolved over the past 50 years. They have become much safer. The postoperative risk is now similar to that of surgery to remove the gallbladder. In fact, the use of laparoscopic technology is associated with a shorter hospital stay and quicker return to normal activities. Laparoscopic procedures are performed using small skin incisions and a camera that is inserted into your abdomen.

There are three types of bariatric procedures: restrictive, malabsorptive, and mixed. Restrictive bariatric surgery decreases the size of the stomach. This means that you will feel full with much smaller amounts of food. Malabsorptive procedures decrease the amount of nutrients you absorb. Mixed procedures have components of both. The Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass and the Sleeve Gastrectomy are the most commonly performed operations in the United States. Less commonly performed are the Duodenal Switch and Adjustable Gastric Band.

### **Gastric Bypass**



Gastric bypass and sleeve gastrectomy both produce significant weight loss. They also have beneficial effects on blood pressure, diabetes, and sleep apnea. Patients typically experience noticeable weight loss within the first few weeks to months. Weight loss continues for up to 2 years after surgery. After the first 2 years, most patients focus their efforts to maintain their weight loss. The gastric bypass has a greater effect on type 2 diabetes, but is also associated with a greater risk of poor micronutrient absorption over the long run. Micronutrients include vitamins and iron. Patients are typically followed by their healthcare team for several years after surgery. This includes routine blood tests to check for low vitamins or minerals.

### **YOUR COMMITMENT**

Success after bariatric surgery requires a commitment by the patient to a lifestyle modification. The operation itself is only a tool that allows the morbidly obese patient to improve dietary and exercise habits as well as other health behaviors.

\*Body mass index (BMI) is an equation that relates a person's weight and height. A higher BMI usually implies more fat weight.



- **Seek Support:** You may feel the need to withdraw from those around you and be by yourself. While we all deserve some “me time,” resist the urge to cut yourself off from others. Even better, seek ways to connect with others who might be in a similar situation. Besides the organizations listed above, consider reaching out to your church, friends, family, and other trusted people in your community.
- **Stay Healthy:** Your physical health and fitness can either help or hurt your brain health. If you exercise and eat well, keep it up! If you want to make changes to your lifestyle, there is no better time than now to practice healthy habits.
- **Stay Active:** You do not have to give up activities that you enjoy. However, activities may need to be modified if you have physical or other limitations. Focus on enjoying the things you already do and love. Be open to discover new hobbies.
- **Plan Ahead:** Is your condition likely to get worse over time? Tools like the Alzheimer’s Navigator can help you plan for the future. It is impossible to know what challenges may be ahead. Tools like this can help you know what to expect.

### **FOR FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS**

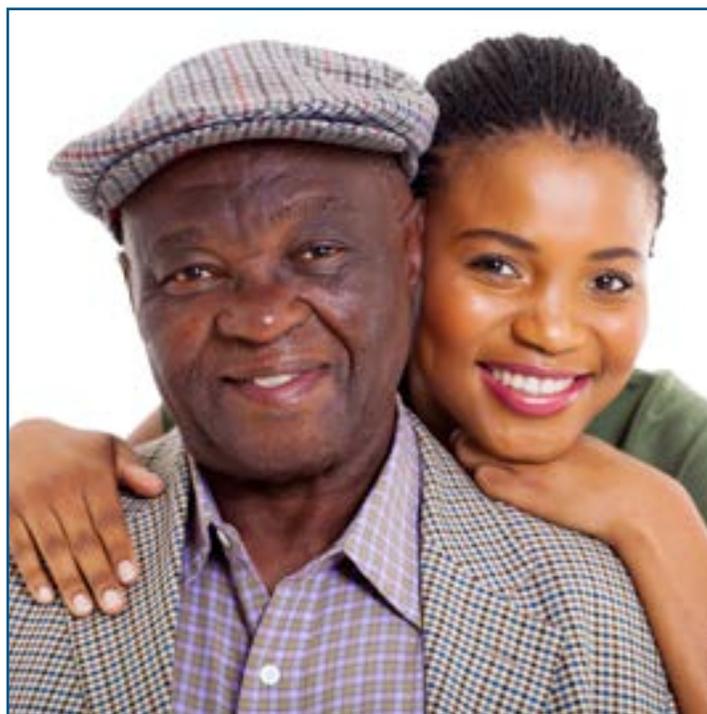
- **Actively Manage Stress:** It may sound like another thing to have to add to your plate, but active management of stress will make everything else easier. Take the Caregiver Stress Check to see if you are showing signs of “burnout.” Even though you may feel strong enough to do this on your own, caregiving may have costs that are better to prevent than to try to manage once they become problems.
- **Seek Support:** These days, the medical field and the general public have recognized how important it is to support those who do round-the-clock caregiving. Both the Alzheimer’s Association and the Brain Injury Association have entire sections of their websites devoted to caregivers. Each website includes ways to connect with support groups, which many find very helpful and comforting. The VA caregiver website and the VA Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274 are other useful resources. The Family Caregiver Alliance also has many resources. Remember, you are not alone.
- **Take Care of Yourself:** It is not easy to take breaks from providing care, and feelings of guilt are common when caregivers need to get away. However, doing some things just for you is **ESSENTIAL!** Ask for help with routines like

cooking and laundry; others are often happy to have specific ways they can help. Set aside some time doing something enjoyable that is just for you (ideally daily, but at least weekly). Eat well and get plenty of sleep. This seems easier said than done, but keeping up with healthy habits will make you much more prepared to deal with the challenges of caregiving.

- **Communicate:** It can become a big job to try to be the point of contact for many friends and family who may want to be kept informed about a medical condition. Use resources like social media or services such as CaringBridge to help you manage this big job efficiently.

### **RESOURCES**

Alzheimer’s Association	<a href="http://www.alz.org">www.alz.org</a>
Alzheimer’s Navigator	<a href="http://www.alzheimersnavigator.org">www.alzheimersnavigator.org</a>
Caregiver Stress Check	<a href="http://www.alz.org/care/alzheimers-dementia-stress-check.asp">www.alz.org/care/alzheimers-dementia-stress-check.asp</a>
CaringBridge	<a href="http://www.caringbridge.org">www.caringbridge.org</a>
Brain Injury Association	<a href="http://www.biausa.org">www.biausa.org</a>
Family Caregiver Alliance	<a href="http://www.caregiver.org">www.caregiver.org</a>
VA Caregiver Website	<a href="http://www.caregiver.va.gov">www.caregiver.va.gov</a>
VA Caregiver Support Line	1-855-260-3274



# Healthy Recipes

## Greek-Style Flank Steak with Tangy Yogurt Sauce

A bold and flavorful Mediterranean dish.

### Ingredients

- 1 beef flank steak (12 oz)

### Marinade Ingredients

- ¼ C lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp fresh oregano (rinsed, dried, and chopped)
- 1 Tbsp minced garlic (about 2-3 cloves)

### Yogurt Sauce Ingredients

- 1 C cucumber (peeled, seeded, and chopped)
- 1 C nonfat plain yogurt
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp fresh dill (rinsed, dried, and chopped)
- 1 Tbsp minced garlic (about 2-3 cloves)
- ½ tsp salt



### Directions

1. For the marinade, combine lemon juice, olive oil, oregano, and garlic in a large bowl
2. Lay steak in a flat container with sides and pour marinade over the steak. Let the steak marinate for at least 20 minutes or up to 24 hours, turning over several times.
3. Combine all the ingredients for the yogurt sauce. Set yogurt sauce aside for at least 15 minutes to blend the flavors. Sauce can be prepared up to 1 hour in advance and refrigerated.
4. Preheat oven broiler on high temperature, with the rack 3 inches from heat source.
5. Broil steak for about 10 minutes on each side (to a minimum internal temperature of 145 °F). Let cool for 5 minutes before carving.
6. Slice thinly across the grain into 12 slices (1 ounce each).
7. Serve three slices of the steak with ½ cup yogurt sauce on the side.

### Each Serving Provides:

Calories	181
Total Fat	7g
Protein	21g
Carbohydrates	9g
Dietary Fiber	less than 1 g
Saturated Fat	2 g
Sodium	364 mg

**Prep Time: 25 minutes**

**Cook Time: 25 minutes**

**Yields: 4 Servings**

**Serving Size: 3 oz steak, 1/2 C yogurt sauce**

Deliciously Healthy Dinners (<http://hin.nhlbi.nih.gov/healthyeating>) 

## 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 FREMONT OPC

39199 Liberty Street  
Fremont, CA 94538  
(510) 791-4000

### VA MODESTO OPC

1225 Oakdale Road  
Modesto, CA 95355  
(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

13663 Mono Way  
Sonora, CA 95370  
(209) 588-2600

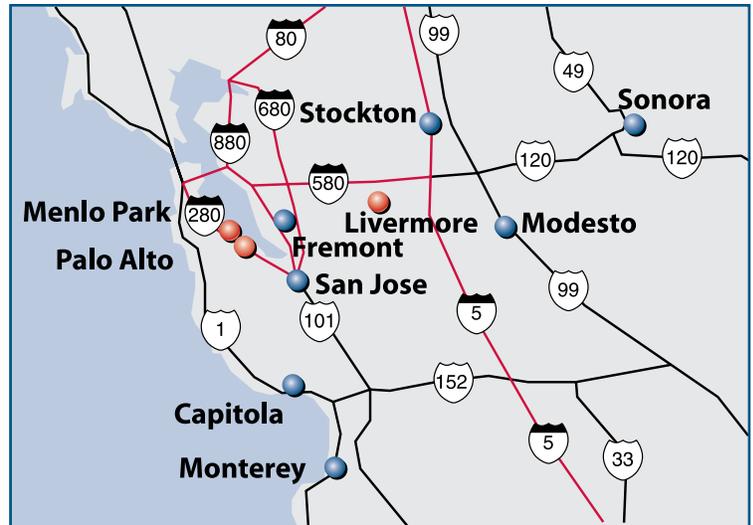
### VA STOCKTON OPC

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

### World Wide Web Address:

[www.paloalto.va.gov](http://www.paloalto.va.gov)

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 VA Palo Alto Health Care System Division

 VA Palo Alto Health Care System Community Based Outpatient Clinic

# Tips for Healthy Living

## Questions to Ask Your Doctor or Pharmacist about a New Medicine



- What is the name of the medicine, and why am I taking it?
- How many times a day should I take it? At what times? If the bottle says “4 times a day,” does that mean 4 times in 24 hours or 4 times during the daytime?
- Should I take the medicine with food or without? Is there anything I should not eat or drink when taking this medicine?
- What does “as needed” mean?
- When should I stop taking the medicine?
- If I forget to take my medicine, what should I do?
- What side effects can I expect? What should I do if I have a problem?

Source: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/medicines>

