

to your

Health!

"Promoting Good Health Through Information"

Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System • Patient Education Newsletter • Winter 2006

Healthy Holiday Habits

by Eileen Stein, MS, RD, CDE

"Well, it was the holidays." Stepping on the scale after the holidays can sometimes be a shock. Studies show we gain anywhere from 1 to 7 pounds over the holidays, and, most often, we don't ever lose those pounds. It's easy to understand why people gain weight over the holidays, with eating out more often, more parties (which usually include more food and more alcohol) and more special treats. Add to that, everyone is busier and exercise usually gets shuffled down to the bottom of the to-do list.

Often, people just simply give up over the holidays and think, "I'll just start my diet and/or exercise routine after the first of the year." A better strategy is to try to make a few small changes that will help prevent any weight gain, and make the New Year's resolutions less drastic.

These suggestions may help you to make small changes and keep healthy eating in perspective:

Pick your favorite indulgence. Whether it's pumpkin pie, tamales, potato pancakes or whatever your family specialty is, go ahead and enjoy. Skip over all the other desserts, treats or dishes that you don't truly love. Just keep in mind, everything adds up, so make it a small indulgence (a small slice of pie, 2 tamales rather than 8).

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Visit our new patient education website at
<http://www.palo-alto.med.va.gov/patienteducation/patienteducation.htm>

Recipe for Health

BAKED SALMON DIJON

This salmon entrée is easy to make and will be enjoyed by the whole family!

Ingredients:

- 1 C fat free sour cream
- 2 tsp dried dill
- 3 Tbsp scallions, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 1/2 lb salmon fillet with skin, cut in center
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- as needed fat free cooking spray

Directions:

1. Whisk sour cream, dill, onion, mustard, and lemon juice in small bowl to blend.
2. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Lightly oil baking sheet cooking spray.
3. Place salmon, skin side down, on prepared sheet. Sprinkle with garlic powder and pepper, then spread with the sauce.
4. Bake salmon until just opaque in center, about 20 minutes.

Yields: 6 servings – Serving Size: 1 piece (4 oz)

Each serving provides:

Calories: 196	Total fiber: > 1 g
Total fat: 7 g	Protein: 27 g
Saturated fat: 2 g	Carbohydrates: 5 g
Cholesterol: 76 mg	Potassium: 703 mg
Sodium: 229 mg	

www.smallstep.gov

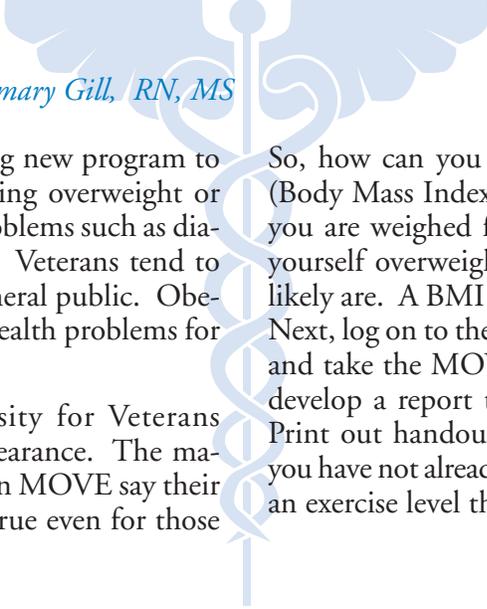
MOVE!

by Rosemary Gill, RN, MS

Nationally, the VA has started an exciting new program to help veterans improve their health. Being overweight or obese can lead to many serious health problems such as diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers. Veterans tend to have more weight problems than the general public. Obesity is coming close to causing as many health problems for veterans as smoking!

MOVE (Managing Overweight/Obesity for Veterans Everywhere) focuses on health, not appearance. The majority of veterans who have participated in MOVE say their quality of life has improved. This was true even for those that lost only a small amount of weight.

So, how can you MOVE ahead? First, know your BMI (Body Mass Index). Your BMI should be measured when you are weighed for a clinic visit. You may not consider yourself overweight, but if your BMI is 25 or more, you likely are. A BMI of 30 or greater usually indicates obesity. Next, log on to the MOVE website, www.move.med.va.gov and take the MOVE 23 questionnaire. The program will develop a report to guide you to make healthier choices. Print out handouts about exercise and healthy eating. If you have not already done so, check with your provider about an exercise level that is safe for you.



Healthy Holiday Habits *(continued from page 1)*



Plan ahead. It's never going to be easy to try to stick to eating healthy when everyone around you isn't. Try to find a supportive family member who can help you stick to

your goals. Have a plan in mind before you get to the party or family dinner. You never know, you might inspire someone else to be healthier next year!

Practice refusing food politely. Aunt Susie may try to push a second (or third!) serving on you, making you feel like you have to eat it, or you'll hurt her feelings. Practice saying things like: "Everything was so delicious, I couldn't eat another bite", "I'm too full to enjoy it now, maybe later", or simply "It looks great, but I just can't." Or, ask her to wrap some up so you can take it home with you and enjoy it when you aren't so full. (Aunt Susie never needs to know if you take it home and don't eat it!)

Take your time eating, savor everything and try to be the slowest eater at the table. That way, you can stop eating as soon as you start to feel full and avoid feeling overstuffed after dinner. Enjoy the company as much as the food. Keep up a conversation while you're eating and you'll find that you may eat less.

Emphasize the healthy foods at special meals. If the only vegetable at your usual holiday meal is a fat-filled green bean casserole, offer to bring a green salad or some steamed carrots (add some ginger and orange juice for extra zip). If the mashed potatoes are loaded with butter and cream, try making some mashed sweet potatoes with lime juice and a touch of honey. Skip the high fat cornbread and sausage stuffing for your turkey, and use whole grain bread, fiber- and antioxidant rich cranberries and broth instead of butter and you've got a stuffing that's better for everyone.

Stay off the alcohol. Alcohol contains a lot of calories (about 100-150 for one drink or one beer, even for non-alcoholic beer) and it won't help you resist the temptation of the unhealthy stuff. Stick with water (try sparkling water with a lime or lemon wedge) or a little fruit juice diluted with club soda or sparkling water.

Don't skip meals! The temptation is to skip breakfast and lunch if you know you're going to have a big dinner. You are better off eating your regular meals, so you don't get too hungry and eat everything, down to the china, when you finally do eat.

Don't skip your exercise! Yes, it's hard; yes, you're busy; yes, the weather may be bad. Do it anyway. You'll feel better about yourself, you'll have more energy, and you'll be better able to deal with the stresses of the holidays. Make time, wear a jacket, get past your excuses; it will be worth it!

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My HealthVet Now Makes Prescription Refills Easier!

We have some exciting news! You can now order your VA refills on the internet. Just go to www.myhealth.va.gov and register. Once you are registered you will be able to:

- Check the status of your active refill order anytime
- View and track your entire prescription history online
- Order a refill on any active prescriptions

Since VA Palo Alto Health Care System requires all veterans to receive all of their medication refills conveniently through the mail, there are now 3 options available for requesting a refill:

By Telephone:

1. Call 1-800-311-2511
2. Enter your full social security number followed by the pound key (#)
3. Listen for the message and press 2 for pharmacy
4. Press 1 to order refills and follow the recorded instructions

Over the internet:

1. Go to www.myhealth.va.gov
2. Once you are registered you can log into your account
3. Click on My Care

4. Click on refill prescriptions
5. Check the box next to the prescription number(s) you would like refilled
6. Click on the submit button

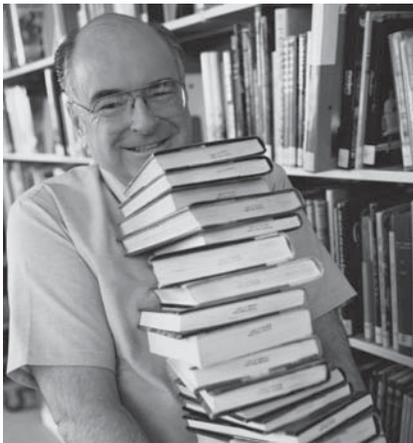
By mail:

If you do not have a touch tone phone, internet access, or cannot order your refills over the phone you may mail in your refill request forms to:

VA Palo Alto Pharmacy Service
3801 Miranda Ave. (119)
Palo Alto, CA 94304

Please remember, most refills are mailed from our VA Mail Order facility in Tennessee. Therefore, please order your refill(s) at least 2 weeks before you will run out of medication. In fact, you can order your next fill as soon as you receive your medication and the computer will hold it until the next refill is due to be mailed.

The VA continues to strive to offer our veterans fast and convenient ways to order and receive their medications through the mail. Thank you for allowing us to serve your health care needs



Read All About It!

by Karen Jemison

Looking for a book on that rare medical condition? The Living Well series published by Collins includes Living Well with Epilepsy and Other Seizure Disorders by Carl W. Bazil, and by Mary J. Shomon: Living Well with Autoimmune Disease, Living Well with Hypothyroidism (revised ed), and their newest: Living Well with Graves' Disease and Hyperthyroidism. Check out your local public library or bookstore!

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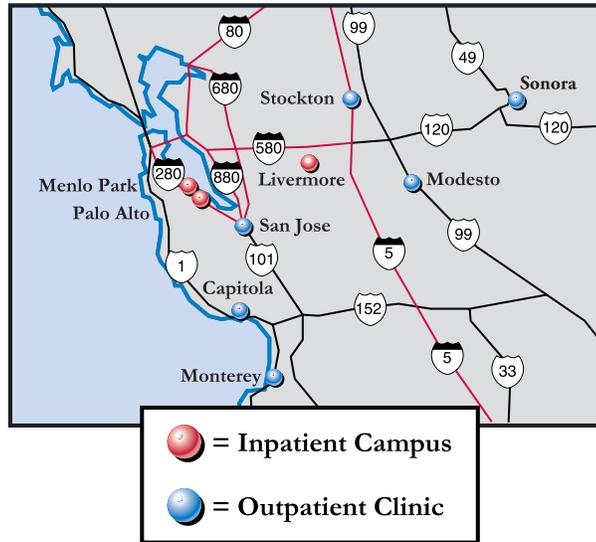
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VA STOCKTON OPC

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World Wide Web Address:

www.palo-alto.med.va.gov



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The bottom line for dealing with holiday eating: moderation! Eating one cookie won't kill your healthy eating plan, but eating a half dozen will. One meal that is larger than usual isn't the problem; it's the week of larger

than usual meals that is the problem. And, if you do slip up a little bit, don't beat yourself up. Just start again the next day.

Don't put your healthy eating and exercise goals on hold until the first of the year, and you are much less likely to end up dealing with the extra weight. Even if you don't lose weight over the holidays, you won't gain any - and that's half the battle. Happy Holidays!!



Questions or Comments?

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

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Tips for Healthy Living

Refrigerate prepared soups before you eat them. As the soup cools, the fat will rise to the top. Skim it off the surface for reduced fat content.

Choose activities you enjoy & you'll be more likely to stick with them.