

to your

# Health!

VA PAHCS  
Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

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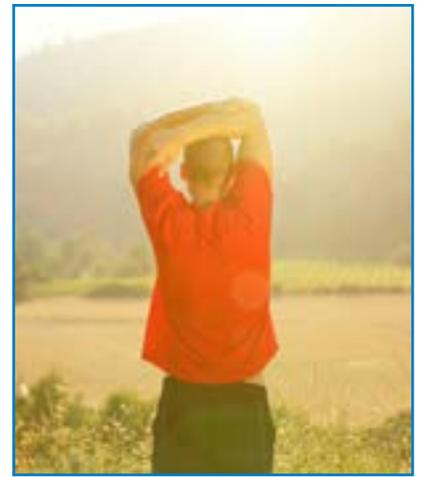
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## Stand Up for Your Health

*Hank Winkenwerder, PT, Physical Therapy Service*

Standing desks, also known as stand-up desks, are all the rage now for those who are working in the office setting, but can typing while standing really be that much better for you than sitting in a good chair? Originally, this article was going to be a follow-up to the Spring 2016 issue's topic on chair-based exercises. Like chair-based exercises, standing exercises can also help improve your health. However, in addition to standing exercises,



**See Stand-Up – page 2**

## Hepatitis C is Treatable, Have You Been Tested?

*Rosemary Gill, RN, MS, Veterans Health Education Coordinator*

The CDC\* estimates that there are 3.5 million people in the United States infected with chronic hepatitis C virus. As many as 85% of those people don't even know they are infected. With the new medications available, hepatitis C can now be treated effectively with minimal side effects. VA Palo Alto Health Care System (VAPAHCS) has this treatment. That's why it is so important to be tested.

### **What is hepatitis C?**

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by a virus. Most of the time there are no symptoms, so people don't know they have the disease. Sometimes the disease goes away, but most of

the time, infected people develop chronic hepatitis C. This means the virus stays in the body. Chronic hepatitis C can lead to cirrhosis, liver cancer, and even death.

### **Should I be tested?**

The CDC and the VA recommend that anyone born between 1945 and 1965 be tested for hepatitis C even if they do not fall into other risk categories. The recommendation is based on the large number of people born in those years who have tested positive for hepatitis C.

**See Hep C is Treatable – page 6**

we also wanted to give our readers some reasons to simply stand for more hours of the day. Currently, the majority of sedentary workers spend only 5 hours per day standing – if you count 7 hours sleeping and 4 hours leisure time per day at the computer or television as additional “down-time.”

### **How can standing help me?**

There are many advantages to standing more frequently throughout the day. By simply standing, your body burns 33% more calories than if you were sitting in a chair. A volunteer group of real estate agents who stood for three out of eight hours per working day burned 50 calories per hour and 3,000 calories per person. This is the same as running ten marathons and uses the energy required to lose eight pounds of weight.

Research also shows that standing helps your body use blood sugar more effectively. This can lower the risk of diabetes, its associated diseases, and complications. In the same study involving the group of real estate agents, participants with arthritis experienced less pain over time. Small movements we make while standing; the increased blood flow to muscles from gravity; and the stomach, back and leg



muscles working to keep us straight all help in various ways.

Balancing standing and sitting is the key. Allan Hedge, a design and ergonomics engineer at Cornell University, recommended the following simple guidelines:

- Sit for no more than 20 minutes at a time
- Stand for eight minutes
- Take a short two minute break after an hour of most activities

On a personal note, my son’s judo instructor also recommended similar practices. The instructor told him he could watch all the TV he wanted as long as he did continuous sit-ups or push-ups every commercial break!

### **Are there good ways to stand?**

Posture is the position of your body while you are standing. Good standing posture helps you protect your muscles and joints. Ultimately, it can prevent problems like back pain.

Good standing posture is achieved by holding your head up and your shoulders back. Tuck in your stomach slightly and bend your knees. Your legs should be shoulder-width apart to soften your stance. This makes it easier to shift from foot to foot as needed for work tasks or to rest one side of your body.

### **What are some exercises I can do while standing?**

While you are standing you might like to try a few exercises:

1. Early in the morning or just prior to aerobic exercise, you can “wake up” your ankles for walking by going up on your toes and rocking back on your heels.
2. Work on your side hip muscle (known as the gluteus medius) by lifting one leg straight out to the side. The gluteus medius has an important role in holding you upright. Remember to start off by holding on to a chair or counter as needed for balance. As you improve and feel that it is safe to do so, try this with your eyes closed.

All Americans could use a little more “up-time” for better health and fitness. Like a balanced plate of food, balanced activity to include more time standing and walking is very important.

### **Questions or Comments?**

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

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[To Your Health](#) is published quarterly for VAPAHCS Veterans and their families.

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# Safety with Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs

Alexandra Reynolds, PharmD, Pharmacy Service

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are some of the most commonly prescribed medications. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 98 million prescriptions for NSAIDs were filled in 2012.

NSAIDs are commonly used for pain. They can be effective options for mild-to-moderate pain, including conditions such as headaches, muscle pain, and arthritis. Some NSAIDs are available to purchase over-the-counter at local pharmacies, and prescriptions are not needed. While it is convenient for patients to buy over-the-counter NSAIDs, it often leads to patient overuse without provider supervision. Inappropriate use of NSAIDs, frequent use of NSAIDs, and/or high doses of NSAIDs can lead to serious side effects.

## What are common examples of NSAIDs?

Generic Name	Brand Name
Ibuprofen	Advil®, Motrin®
Naproxen	Aleve®, Naprosyn®
Meloxicam	Mobic®
Aspirin	Bayer®

Ibuprofen and naproxen are two NSAIDs that are available over-the-counter. Other over-the-counter products, such as Excedrin and Advil Cold and Sinus, contain NSAIDs. It is important to check the medication labels and let your provider know if you are taking an NSAID.

## What are some of the risks of taking NSAIDs?

- Irritation of the stomach, which can lead to a bleeding stomach ulcer
- Kidney injury
- Increased risk of heart attack and stroke

## Tips for Safely Taking an NSAID

1. Talk to your provider before purchasing an over-the-counter NSAID if you have a history of stomach bleeds/ulcers, kidney disease, heart disease, or high blood pressure.
2. Take NSAIDs with food and water.
3. Don't overdo it. Use the minimum effective dose for the minimum number of days as absolutely necessary for pain.

4. Do not take more than the dose prescribed by your provider or what is on the label. Higher doses of NSAIDs typically have more side effects, but may not be more effective.

5. Avoid taking several different medications containing NSAIDs at the same time. Check active ingredients on the medication labels. If you are taking aspirin, ask your provider to see if it is ok for you to take an NSAID.

6. Avoid drinking alcohol. This combination can increase the risk of bleeding.

If you are taking warfarin, do not take any NSAIDs. If you are taking other blood thinners, ask your provider before you take any NSAIDs.

## When should you contact your provider?

There are different signs and symptoms of a bleed. This depends on where the bleed is located. Sometimes, people do not know they have a bleed because they may not have symptoms at all.

- Tiredness
- Unexplained dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Bright red or maroon colored blood in the stool
- Passing black, tar-like stool
- Vomiting bright red blood or material that looks like coffee grounds

If you notice signs or symptoms of a gastrointestinal (stomach, small intestine, large intestine, colon) bleed, seek medical attention immediately.



# Chest Pain and Its Various Causes

Caroline Ha, PharmD, Pharmacy Service

Chest pain is pain or discomfort that is located anywhere between your neck and upper abdomen. According to the American Heart Association (AHA), more than 8 million people go to the Emergency Department (ED) every year with a complaint of “chest pain”. The first thing that many people think about when they have chest pain is the possibility of a heart attack. While heart attack is always a concern, there are also many other reasons that can cause chest pain and discomfort.

<b>Heart</b>	<b>Angina Heart Attack</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chest tightness</li> <li>• Pain may come and go with activity and rest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Squeezing” or “crushing” pain that may spread to the arms, shoulder, jaw, or back</li> <li>• Heavy pressure (“elephant sitting on my chest”)</li> </ul>
	<b>Tear in the major vessel in the heart</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden and severe pain in the chest and upper back</li> </ul>	
<b>Esophagus Stomach Intestines</b>	<b>Heartburn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burning pain in the chest</li> <li>• Nausea after eating</li> <li>• Symptoms usually get worse after you eat, bend over, or lie down</li> </ul>	
	<b>Stomach ulcer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burning pain when your stomach is empty</li> <li>• Pain may improve after eating</li> <li>• Other: dark, tarry stools or bright red stools</li> </ul>	

There are many other causes of chest pain. In addition to the problems listed above in the table, chest pain can also occur when muscles are strained or nerves are damaged.

As you may have noticed, the symptoms to many of the conditions above are also very similar. How do you know when to seek medical attention? If you decide to seek medical attention, should you call 911 for emergency help or call your provider directly?

## **You should call 911 if you have:**

- Sudden crushing, squeezing, tightening, or pressure in your chest
- Chest pain that spreads to your jaw, arms, or between your shoulder blades
- Nausea, dizziness, sweating, or “racing heart”

- History of angina or previous heart attack with chest pain that is brought on by light activity (or even at rest) and unrelieved by a medication called nitroglycerin
- Sudden sharp chest pain with shortness of breath (especially with one leg more swollen than the other), especially after a long plane ride or bedrest

## **You should call your Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) if you have:**

- Fever with a cough that produces yellow-green phlegm
- Problems swallowing
- Chest pain lasting longer than 3-5 days

Primary Source: <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003079.htm>



# Honey Gingered Fruit Salad

Dress up your fruit salad with a sprinkling of chopped almonds for a sweet and crunchy treat!

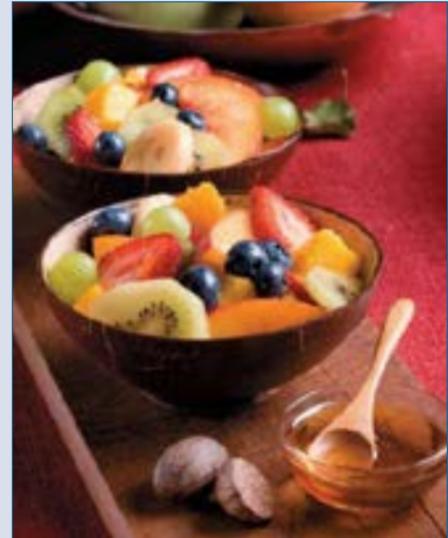
## Ingredients

### Fruit Salad

- Large mango, peeled and cut into chunks 1
- Fresh blueberries 1 cup
- Small banana, peeled and sliced 1
- Strawberries 1 cup
- Seedless green grapes 1 cup
- Nectarines, sliced 1 cup
- Kiwifruit, peeled and sliced 1 cup

### Honey Ginger Sauce

- 100% orange juice 1/3 cup
- Lemon juice 2 tablespoons
- Honey 1 tablespoon
- Ground nutmeg 1/8 teaspoon
- Ground ginger 1/8 teaspoon



## Directions

- 1.) In a large bowl, combine fruit.
- 2.) In a small bowl, mix all honey ginger sauce ingredients until well blended.
- 3.) Pour honey ginger sauce over fruit and toss together.
- 4.) Refrigerate for at least 20 minutes and serve chilled.

## Each Serving Provides:

Calories	124
Total Fat	1g
Saturated Fat	0 g
Trans Fat	0g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Sodium	4mg
Dietary Fiber	4 g
Protein	2 g
Carbohydrates	32g

**Prep Time: 10 minutes**

**Marinate Time: 20 minutes**

**Yields: 6 Servings**

**Serving Size: 1 cup**

# 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  
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(925) 373-4700

## VA MENLO PARK DIVISION

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Capitola, CA 95010  
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## 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

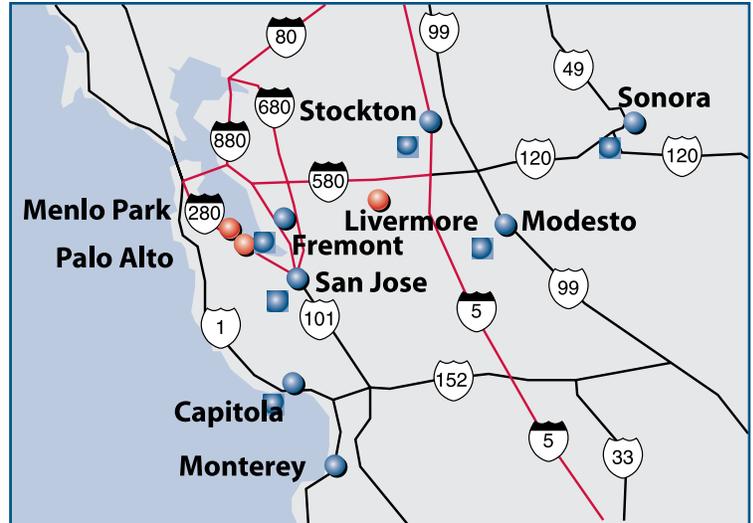
## VA STOCKTON OPC

7777 Freedom Drive  
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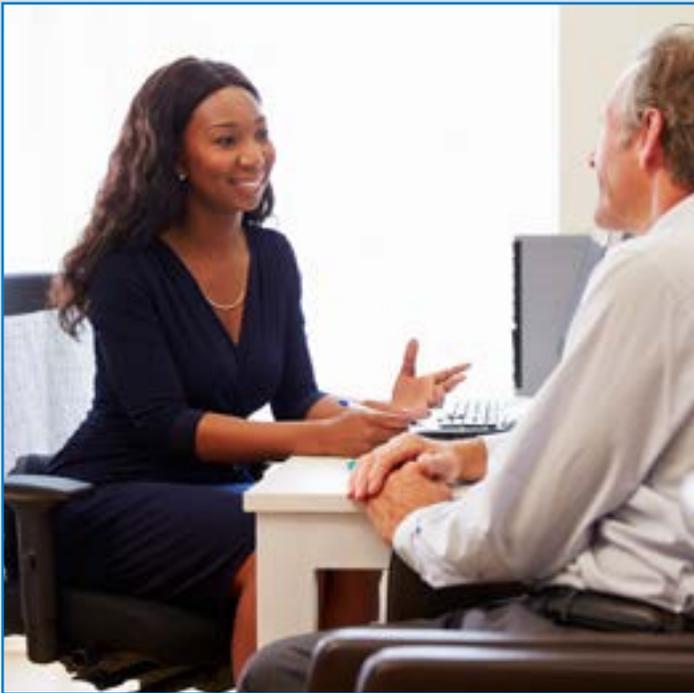
[www.paloalto.va.gov](http://www.paloalto.va.gov)

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-  **VA Palo Alto Health Care System Division**
-  **VA Palo Alto Health Care System Community Based Outpatient Clinic**

## Hep C is Treatable— continued from page 1



People not born in those years should be tested if they:

- have ever injected drugs
- had a blood transfusion or transplanted organ before 1992
- have HIV infection
- had tattoos or piercings done with tools that were not sterile
- have had blood exposure such as a needle stick

There are a few other risk groups, so check with your provider. However, if you were born between 1945 and 1965 and have not been tested, you should schedule your test now.

### What about treatment?

There are new treatments for chronic hepatitis C that cure more than 95% of the people treated. The treatment for most patients is just one pill a day for 12 weeks. The treatment can be very expensive, but this year VAPAHCS has funds to treat chronic hepatitis C. You must be tested to know if you have the disease. Talk with your health care provider today!

\*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hcv/cfaq.htm>

