

to your

Health!



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What's Inside

Portion Distortion Quiz.....page 2

Play it Safe with a Wallet Medication Cardpage 3

Healthy Recipes: Creamy Chicken Apple Saladpage 5

Move Your Body - Improve Your Mood!

*Hank Winkenwerder, PT, MPT, Physical Therapy and
Carey Pawlowski, Ph.D, Psychology*

It's hard to argue with the fact that regular exercise can improve your physical health. Both the Centers for Disease Control and the American College of Sports Medicine recommend "30 minutes or more of moderately intense physical activity on most, if not all, days of the week" for the best health.

But is there any proof that exercise can improve our mood? This is an important question as we head into the cold (and hopefully rainy!) Winter in California.



[See Move Your Body - page 3](#)

Nutrition and Pain: Can Nutrition Help Reduce or Manage My Pain?

Roshan P. Luke, RD, Nutrition and Food Service

Many people suffer from short and long term pain. To help relieve this pain some people take prescription or over the counter medication to get some relief. Others look to natural remedies or avoiding certain foods.

Can what we eat help relieve some types of pain? The short answer is yes, nutrition can help reduce some types of pain. Nutrition can help with pain that is caused by inflammation. Inflammation is a process in which the immune system helps protect the body against things like bacteria or viruses. Inflammation is a normal and important way the body

protects itself. Some foods can cause inflammation and that can lead to pain.

Some of these foods are:

- Saturated fats: Sources of saturated fats are animal fat, lard, butter and chicken fat.
- Trans fat: These types of fats are found in packaged cookies, cakes, pastries and other baked goods.
- Foods that cause your blood sugar to increase very quickly. Many of these foods have more regular or simple sugars.

[See Nutrition and Pain - page 2](#)

Nutrition and Pain – continued from page 1

The Mediterranean or Modified Mediterranean style diets have been shown to be most helpful with managing pain. The Mediterranean style diet includes the basics of a healthy diet (lots of fruits, vegetables and whole grains) plus some of the following:

- Heart-healthy oils such as olive oil, peanut, sunflower oils to name a few.
- Small amounts of lean meat a few times per month and poultry or fish a few times per week.
- Small amounts of low fat or non-fat dairy and yogurt.
- Daily exercise
- Water

A Modified Mediterranean diet is similar to a Mediterranean diet except it does not include gluten or wheat. This diet still has lots of fruits, vegetables and lean meats. A Vegan diet (a diet that does not include any animal product) can also be used.

Other things that can help with inflammation:

- Daily Activity –try to move around at least 5 minutes for every hour you are seated.
- Eating foods with Omega 3 Fatty Acid or taking Omega 3 Fatty Acid supplements
- Weight loss if overweight, and gain weight if very underweight.
- Take Vitamin D if your levels are low. If you have normal levels, make sure to get plenty of sunshine to help your body continue making this vitamin.
- Getting enough sleep.
- Quitting smoking if you smoke.

You are what you eat so good nutrition should be part of your pain management plan.



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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Portion Distortion Quiz

You've probably noticed that food portions in restaurants and other places have grown in size and provide enough food for at least two people. Larger portion sizes can lead to bigger waistlines and weight gain.

Take the Portion Distortion Quiz below to see if you know how today's portions compare to the portions available 20 years ago, and about the amount of physical activity required to burn off the extra calories provided by today's portions.

The answers are provided on page 6.

1. A bagel 20 years ago was 3 inches in diameter and had 140 calories. How many calories do you think are in today's bagel?

- a. 150 calories
- b. 250 calories
- c. 350 calories

2. A cheeseburger 20 years ago had 333 calories. How many calories do you think are in today's cheeseburger?

- a. 590 calories
- b. 620 calories
- c. 700 calories

[See Quiz – page 6](#)

Play it Safe with a Wallet Medication Card

Rosemary Gill, RN, MS, Veterans Health Education Coordinator

Do you carry a list of your medicines? When the Veterans Health Education committee did a survey last year, only 38% of patients answered yes to that question. There were many reasons why patients did not carry a list of their medicines:

- Hadn't realized it was important
- Memorized the medicines
- Only takes a couple of pills
- Takes too many pills
- List was at home or in the car
- VA knows the medicines

What if you need urgent medical care but you are not near a VA? What if you see private doctors as well as your VA providers? Or what about just being able to pull out your list to review at your appointments to make sure it matches what's

in the computer? That's called medication reconciliation and it is an important safety measure. Medication reconciliation helps to keep you safe by making sure your health care providers know all of your medicines, vitamins and supplements. An accurate and up-to-date medication list in your wallet can help with all of these issues. Many of the Veterans we surveyed were interested in having a wallet medication card, so these are now available in the primary care clinics and pharmacies (or cut out the sample here). There is space to list 20 medications. It's important to note how much you are taking and why you are taking each medicine as well. Here is an example: Aspirin 81mg 1x/day for heart.

If you would rather go paperless, you can have your medication list on your phone through My HealthVet or a number of other free phone apps. Whichever method you choose, play it safe and make sure you have your medication list with you.

Move Your Body – continued from page 1

As the days grow shorter, the family closer, and the joints creakier, we need all the emotional help we can get.

Research shows that exercise can increase our overall thinking ability, decrease fatigue, decrease stress, and improve mood. A recent study published in *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience* found that even simple exercise (such as walking 45 minutes a day three times a week) can improve memory, decision-making, and other mental functions. In another study, it was found that exercise by itself had an even more lasting effect than anti-depressants alone after six months of treatment, though the medications worked more quickly and the combination of both was best overall.

Exercise improves your ability to fight illnesses plus increases the level of “feel good” chemicals in the brain, which partly explains the idea of a “runner’s high.” Other research has shown that exercise increases serotonin (a brain chemical that balances our mood) as well as proteins which support the growth of brain cells. Still other researchers suggest that exercise helps our brains by normalizing sleep/wake cycles as well as encouraging good fatigue for more natural sleep, which is known to have protective effects on your brain.

See [Move Your Body](#) – page 4

Cut Out the Card Along the Dotted Lines then Fold into a Three-Panel Card



Allergies

Medication • Dose • Indication



Telephone Care Program (TCP)
number **1-800-455-0057**



PACT
PATIENT ALIGNED CARE TEAM

Provider/PACT

Patient Name



Cut Out the Card Along the Dotted Lines
then Fold into a Three-Panel Card



A card template for a three-panel card. It features a dashed border and a solid purple header and footer. The header contains the text "Medication • Dose • Indication" written in white. The main body of the card is white with horizontal lines for writing.

From a behavioral point of view, exercise or play can take us away from our worries. Additionally, an exercise routine can also help to increase one's outlook on life by including meaningful activity, as well as by creating a sense of success. We also know how our body and brain respond to stress is controlled by activity. "Exercise may be a way of biologically toughening up the brain so stress has less of a central impact," Michael Otto, Ph.D. says.

Here are some tips on how to be successful with adding some movement into your day:

- 1) Start with something you like. Walking, swimming, biking, yard work, lifting moderate weights, or group sports are all good activities. If it's fun, you'll stick with it more days of the week. Having a friend to exercise with also helps, both with motivation and positive distractions.
- 2) Progress slowly. If you are slightly sore, aware of muscles you didn't remember, or had slept well the night after you exercised –those are good signs. No pain is great gain!
- 3) Think outside the box. Moving your body is a treat. For some reason, men seem to respond better to yoga than some other exercises. This may be due to the relaxing nature, plus the fact it's not a win/lose activity. Instead of a possible sadness of defeat such as "I didn't catch the ball" or "I can't run like I could when I was in the military", the focus is on a task completed.
- 4) Moderation is the key. You may wonder how much movement is enough to get better? In a recent study in Health Psychology, researchers found that even 10 minutes of moderate exercise (with some effort/sweat) was enough to feel somewhat better, with people feeling even better after 20 minutes of movement. Further, 30 minutes of moving was best, though if exercise turns out to be very tiring, the good mood did not come on until after 30 minutes of rest. That's yet another reason to exercise moderately.

According to Michael Otto, Ph.D, "Failing to exercise when you feel bad is like not taking an aspirin when your head hurts. That's when you get the payoff." What is good for the body is good for the brain. So get out, get moving, and feel better!



Creamy Chicken Apple Salad

This salad is packed full of good nutrition with protein from chicken, fiber from the apple and healthy fat from the walnuts. Full of flavor and crunch - you won't believe how easy it is!

Ingredients

- 2 cups cooked chicken breast, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, diced
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 1 medium apple, finely diced
- 3 tablespoons walnuts, chopped
- ¼ cup light mayonnaise
- ¼ cup plain, fat-free yogurt
- ½ lemon, juiced
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper



Directions

1. In a medium bowl, combine the chicken, celery, green onions, apple, and walnuts.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, yogurt, lemon juice and pepper. Pour over the chicken mixture and gently stir to coat.
3. Serve salad over your choice of lettuce leaves, bread or crackers.

Prep time: 15 minutes

Each serving provides:

Calories	115
Total fat	5 g
Saturated fat	0.8 g
Carbohydrates	6 g
Protein	12 g
Dietary Fiber	1 g
Cholesterol	30 mg
Sodium	115 mg

Cook time: 0 minutes

Yield: 4 servings

Serving Size: ½ cups



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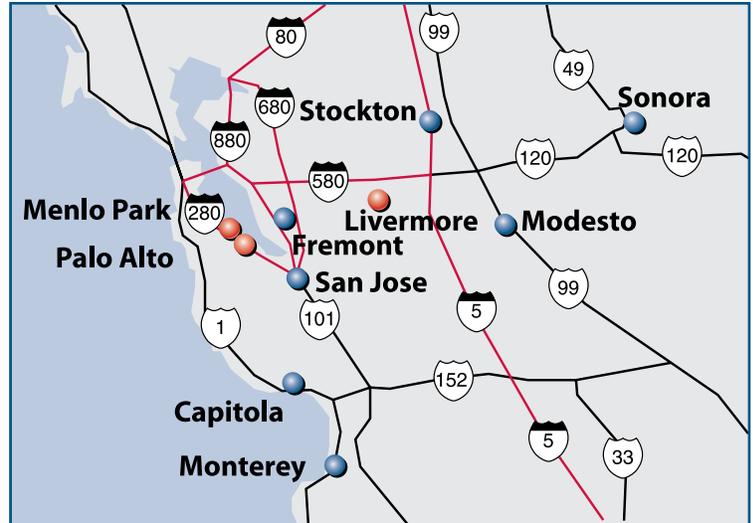
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To access past issues of the To Your Health newsletter, please visit www.paloalto.va.gov/To_Your_Health.asp. You can also access the Veterans Health Library (VHL) by going to www.veteranshealthlibrary.org or on My HealthVet at www.myhealth.va.gov.



 VA Palo Alto Health Care System Division

 VA Palo Alto Health Care System Community Based Outpatient Clinic

Quiz— continued from page 2

3. A 6.5-ounce portion of soda had 85 calories 20 years ago. How many calories do you think are in today's portion?

- a. 200 calories
- b. 250 calories
- c. 300 calories

4. 2.4 ounces of french fries of 20 years ago had 210 calories. How many calories do you think are in today's portion?

- a. 590 calories
- b. 610 calories
- c. 650 calories

5. A portion of spaghetti and meatballs 20 years ago had 500 calories. How many calories do you think are in today's portion of spaghetti and meatballs?

- a. 600 calories
- b. 800 calories
- c. 1,025 calories

Answers

1. c. 350 calories for a 6 inch bagel. If you rake leaves for 50 minutes you'll burn the extra 210 calories.*

2. a. 590 calories. You'll need to lift weights for 1 hour and 30 minutes, to burn the extra approximately 257 calories.*

3. b. 250 calories for a 20-ounce soda. If you work in the garden for 35 minutes you will burn the extra 165 calories.**

4. b. 610 calories for a 6.9-ounce portion of french fries. If you walk leisurely for 1 hour and 10 minutes, you will burn the extra 400 calories.**

5. c. 1,025 calories for a portion consisting of 2 cups of pasta with sauce and 3 large meatballs. If you houseclean for 2 hours and 35 minutes, you will burn approximately 525 calories.*

* Based on a 130-pound person

** Based on a 160-pound person

Reference

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/downloads/portion-quiz.pdf>

