

# Healthy Living

Healthy Living Matters. Prevention Works.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

## E-Newsletter

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## Be Involved in Your Health Care: Low Blood Sugar

It is important for Veterans who have diabetes to talk with their health care provider about selecting a safe blood glucose target range that is based on their own goals, priorities and lifestyles. Being an active member of the health care team can help Veterans manage their diabetes and prevent episodes of low blood sugar (hypoglycemia).

### What is low blood sugar?

Having too little sugar (glucose) in your blood is called low blood sugar. Low blood sugar often means anything lower than 70 mg/dL. Talk with your healthcare provider about your target range. Ask what level is too low for you. Diabetes itself doesn't cause low blood sugar. But some treatments for diabetes may raise

your risk for it. These include pills or insulin. Low blood sugar may make you pass out or have a seizure. So always treat low blood sugar right away. But don't overeat.

Sources: [prevention.va.gov](http://prevention.va.gov)  
[Veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov](http://Veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov)

- Get Recommended Screening Tests and Immunizations
- Be Involved In Your Health Care
- Manage Stress
- Be Tobacco Free
- Limit Alcohol
- Be Safe
- Strive for a Healthy Weight
- Be Physically Active
- Eat Wisely

[Healthy Teaching Kitchen](#) has new recipe videos! Click below

[Mediterranean Chickpea Salad](#)

[Apple Skillet Pork Chops](#)

[Lemon Parmesan Broccoli](#)

[Turkey Black Bean Burger with Avocado](#)



## Signs of Low Blood Sugar

If you have low blood sugar, you may have one or more of these symptoms:

- Shakiness or dizziness
- Cold, clammy skin or sweating
- Feeling hungry
- Headache
- Nervousness
- A hard, fast heartbeat
- Weakness
- Confusion or irritability
- Blurred eyesight
- Having nightmares or waking up confused or sweating
- Numbness or tingling in the lips or tongue



## What to do for Low Blood Sugar

◆ Check your blood sugar. If it's too low, eat or drink 15 to 20 grams of fast-acting sugar.

15-20 grams of sugar equals:

- ⇒ 3 to 4 glucose tablets
- ⇒ 4 ounces (half a cup) of fruit juice or regular (non-diet) soda
- ⇒ 1 tablespoon of honey. Don't take more than this or your blood sugar may go too high.

◆ Don't eat foods high in protein or fat, such as milk, nuts, or candy bars, to treat hypoglycemia. Protein and fat will slow the sugar absorption and good make things worse.

◆ Wait 15 minutes. Then recheck your blood sugar.

◆ If your blood sugar is still too low, repeat the steps above and check again. If your blood sugar is still below your target range, contact your healthcare provider or seek emergency care.

◆ Once your blood sugar is back at target range, eat a snack or meal.

## How to Prevent Low Blood Sugar

- If your condition needs a strict treatment plan, eat meals and snacks at the same times each day. Don't skip meals!
- If your treatment plan lets you change when and what you eat, learn how to change the time and dose of your rapid-acting insulin to match this.
- Ask your healthcare provider if it's safe to drink alcohol. Never drink on an empty stomach.
- Take your medicine at the prescribed times.
- **Always carry a source of fast-acting sugar and a snack when you're away from home.**
- If you have had several hypoglycemic episodes, talk with your healthcare provider. See if you may be able to take less medicine. You also may have a condition where you no longer recognize the symptoms of low blood sugar until the value falls to dangerous levels.

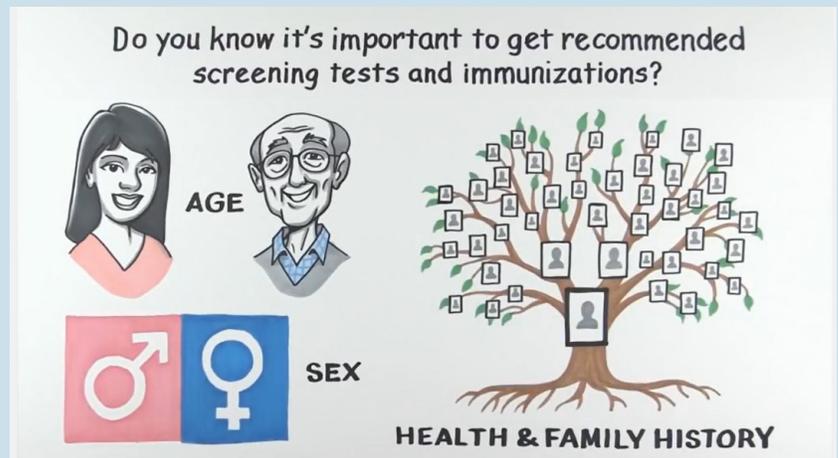
## Are You Up to Date on Screenings?

Getting recommended preventive services, such as screening tests and immunizations, is an important part of staying healthy. Which preventive services are recommended for you depends on your age, sex, health status, and family history. Here is a schedule to help you understand VA's preventive services recommendations for average-risk men and women:

- ◇ [Screenings for Men](#)
- ◇ [Screenings for Women](#)

Find more resources:

- [My HealthFinder](#)
- [National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention](#)



Source: <https://www.prevention.va.gov/>

## Be Safe: Prevent Sexually Transmitted Infections

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are infections you can get by having sex with someone who has an STI. STIs are the same thing as sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Many STIs do not have symptoms, and you

can have an STI and pass it on without knowing it.

Examples of STIs are chlamydia, gonorrhea, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and human papillomavirus (HPV).

You can get STIs from any sexual

activity, whether it involves the mouth, anus, vagina, or penis. Some STIs can be treated and cured. Others cannot be cured but can be managed by taking medicines.

The only sure way to know if you have an STI is to get checked by a healthcare provider. STIs don't always show symptoms. So if you're at risk for STIs, get checked regularly. If you have an STI, your partner should get treatment too. If left untreated, your partner could pass the STI back to you, or on to others.

Be alert to any changes in your body and your partner's body. Symptoms may appear in or near the

vagina, penis, rectum, mouth, or throat.

Common symptoms may include:

- Unusual discharge
- Lumps, bumps, or rashes
- Sores that may be painful, itchy, or painless
- Itchy skin
- Burning with urination
- Pain in the pelvis, belly (abdomen), or rectum



- Bleeding from the rectum

Sources & more information on STIs:

- [National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention](#)
- [Veterans Health Library](#)

# VA Response to COVID-19

VA has implemented an aggressive [public health response](#) to protect and care for Veterans, their families, health care providers, and staff in the face of this emerging health risk. We are working directly with the CDC and other federal partners to monitor the outbreak of the virus.

On March 27, VA shared its COVID-19 response plan. This best-practice guide is a valuable tool, which may be useful nationwide for the medical community.

Source: <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/n->

## Managing Your Stress & Anxiety During the COVID-19 Outbreak

Taking care of your well-being, including your mental health, is essential during this time. Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. Many people may experience stress, fear, anxiety, or feelings of depression. This is normal. Learn about things that you can do to manage your stress and anxiety at <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/coronavirus/>

Get more information from VA on the Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic at <https://www.va.gov/coronavirus-veteran-frequently-asked-questions/>

**Healthy Living During Stressful Times**

**Manage Stress**  
How can I manage my stress at home?  

- Stay connected with your family and friends
- Take a few deep breaths

 If you are in a crisis, call the Veterans Crisis Line at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**. Or text 838255 or chat online at: [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)

**Eat Wisely**  
How can I maintain a healthy diet when I am stressed or bored?  

- Stick to a consistent meal schedule
- Stock healthy snacks – Remove Temptation

**Be Involved in your Health Care**  
How can I stay connected with my health care team at home?  

- Send a Secure Message in MyHealtheVet
- Schedule a telehealth appointment

**Be Physically Active**  
How can I be physically active at a safe distance?  

- Be active indoors
- Take a walk or hike
- Garden or do yard work

**Be Safe**  
How can I be safe at home?  

- Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover your cough and sneezes
- Keep surfaces clean (countertops, doorknobs, etc.)

**Sleep Well**  
How can I sleep better?  

- Keep a regular sleep schedule every night
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and screen time before bed

**Limit Alcohol**  
How can I limit my drinking?  

- Commit to safe daily limits: 2 drinks/day (for men) or 1 drink/day (for women and those over age 64)
- Reach out for support if you are having trouble sticking to daily limits

To Learn More:  
[https://www.prevention.va.gov/healthy\\_living/Healthy\\_Living\\_During\\_Stressful\\_Times.asp](https://www.prevention.va.gov/healthy_living/Healthy_Living_During_Stressful_Times.asp)

VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration



# COVID-19 What You Can Do

## Follow Government & Public Health Guidance

- Leave your house only when allowed or needed (mask or cover your nose and mouth)
- If sick, call your provider but don't visit unless advised

## Know Isolation & Quarantine

**Isolation:** how those who have COVID-19 or symptoms stay away from others

**Quarantine:** how those who may have been exposed to COVID-19 stay away from others



**Cover coughs and sneezes with an elbow/sleeve or tissue.**

## Know the Symptoms

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Diarrhea
- Cold or flu-like symptoms

**Have enough food & medicines to limit trips outside.**



**Keep hands & surfaces clean.**



## Stay Well & Manage Stress

- Stay in touch with others via phone or video chat
- Eat and drink wisely
- Take time for fun things
- Keep moving and stay active (inside and out)
- Use apps and tools to manage stress and mood

## Distance Yourself

- Avoid crowds (more than 10 people)
- Greet others without touching (no handshakes, kissing, or hugging)
- Shop only when needed (delivery and pickup are best)
- Keep at least six feet from others (when in public or sick at home)
- If not urgent, cancel or postpone medical and other appointments

**Avoid touching your face.**



**Keep informed from trusted resources**

VA: <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/n-coronavirus/index.asp>

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>



# Veterans Health Library

Your source for health information

The [Veterans Health Library](#) (VHL) offers Veterans, their families, and caregivers 24/7 Internet access to comprehensive, Veteran-focused health information that’s consistent with VA clinical practice. Its information, resources, and tools are engaging, “Veteran-friendly”, and written in plain language. The VHL helps Veterans understand and manage health problems, make informed health decisions, and actively partner with their health care teams.

[Mindfulness and Relaxation Resources for Veterans](#) in the VHL include videos and audio recordings which focus on breathing and muscle relaxation, mobile apps to help manage stress, and more.

The Veterans Health Library also offers [Go to Guides](#) — guides to living well with a number of different medical conditions like diabetes, heart disease, asthma, and more!



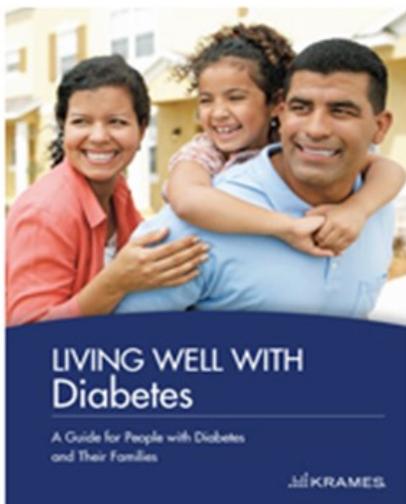
The screenshot shows the website header with the logo, navigation menu, and social media icons. The 'Additional Resources' menu item is circled in red, with arrows pointing to the 'Additional Resources' sidebar and the 'Go to Guides' section. The 'Go to Guides' section lists various health conditions with expandable options.

**Additional Resources**

- + DECISION AID TOOLS
- + GO TO GUIDES
- + VIDEO LIBRARY
- + YOUR ONLINE GUIDES

**Go to Guides**

- + LIVING WELL WITH ASTHMA
- + LIVING WELL WITH CHRONIC LUNG DISEASE
- + LIVING WELL WITH DIABETES
- + LIVING WELL WITH HEART DISEASE
- + LIVING WELL WITH HEART FAILURE
- + AFTER A STROKE



**LIVING WELL WITH Diabetes**  
A Guide for People with Diabetes and Their Families  
KRAMER

**Need help or know someone who does?**

If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others

- Call 911
- Call the Veterans Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255 press 1
- Visit the [Disaster Distress Helpline](#), call 1-800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUs to 66746
- Visit the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) or call 1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224

This newsletter is brought to you by your local MOVE! Program Coordinators and the [VISN20 Healthy Living Committee](#).



**ALASKA VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**

**MOVE!** (907) 257-4890

**WHOLE HEALTH** (907) 257-5453

**HEALTH PROMOTION** (907) 257-4726

**BOISE VA MEDICAL CENTER**

**MOVE!** (208) 422-1000 EXT. 7917

**VA PORTLAND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM**

**MOVE!** (503) 220-3482

**VA PUGET SOUND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM**

**MOVE!** (800) 329-8387 EXT. 76683

**VA ROSEBURG HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**

**MOVE!** (541) 440-1000 EXT. 45755

**MANN-GRANDSTAFF (SPOKANE) VA MEDICAL CENTER**

**MOVE!** (509) 434-7030

**VA SORCC (WHITE CITY)**

**MOVE!** (541) 826-2111 EXT. 7472

**JONATHAN M. WAINWRIGHT (WALLA WALLA) VA MEDICAL CENTER**

**MOVE!** (509) 946-1020