



*Life Is
Beautiful*



Veterans' **WELLNESS** 2011

BROUGHT TO YOU BY VA HEALTH CARE UPSTATE NEW YORK

www.visn2.va.gov



Life Is Beautiful!

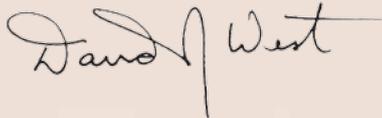
As Veterans, our military experience has shaped and affected our lives. We were taught the value of discipline, commitment, strong friendships, and teamwork. We also learned the importance of staying mentally alert and physically fit, and of using our unique skills in our everyday lives.

In our 2011 *Veterans' Wellness* calendar, we want to help you use these experiences to live a beautiful life with your family, loved ones, and fellow citizens. Each month, we suggest steps you can take to be healthier and happier. They will help you eat better, be active, take time for yourself, keep your mind sharp, and just have fun.

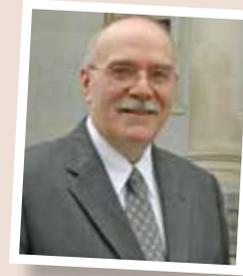
As a bonus, you can use the stickers as a reminder to take care of your health. Use them to remind you to schedule doctors' appointments, time with friends, physical activity, and much more.

VA health care is always here to help you on your journey toward good health.

From one Veteran to another, let's live our lives to the fullest.



DAVID J. WEST, FACHE
Interim Network Director



David J. West, FACHE
Interim Network Director



A NEW YEAR, A NEW LOOK

It is my pleasure to share with you our new branding and name: VA Health Care Upstate New York. We want to thank all the Veterans who participated in our focus groups. Your efforts helped us create a bold, clean, and modern look to go with our new name. Your newly designed *Veterans' Wellness* calendar reflects our new brand. We added a warm and inviting tagline, *Team Up With Us*, which incorporates our goal to increase the number of Veterans we serve. The tagline also reinforces our new primary care initiative called Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT).



www.myhealth.va.gov

My HealthVet is the gateway to Veteran health benefits and services.

It provides access to:

- Trusted health information
- Links to Federal and VA benefits and resources
- A personal health journal
- Online VA prescription refill

www.myhealth.va.gov

A coupon for your health!

Redeem this coupon for a **free yogurt cup** at the Veterans Canteen Service food court at the Albany, Batavia, Bath, Buffalo, Canandaigua, and Syracuse VA Medical Centers. **One coupon per Veteran patient.** Compliments of Veterans Canteen Service.

Expires 1/31/2011

November 2010

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December 2010

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“A man’s health can be judged by which he takes two at a time—pills or stairs.”

—Joan Welsh

Routine Health Care Monitoring

WHAT IT IS	WHY YOU NEED IT	VA RECOMMENDATIONS	MY VITAL STATISTICS
Blood pressure reading	High blood pressure has no symptoms.	Every year after age 18 and at every primary care visit	___/___ mm Hg
Cholesterol profile	Low HDL (good cholesterol), high triglycerides and LDL (bad cholesterol), and high total cholesterol can increase heart disease risk.	Every 3 years if results are acceptable	___ mg/dL (total) ___ mg/dL (HDL) ___ mg/dL (LDL) ___ mg/dL (triglycerides)
Influenza immunization	To prevent the flu	Every year for all adults	I got my flu shot: ___/___/___
Pneumonia vaccine	To prevent serious respiratory illness	Once at age 65; sooner for certain medical conditions; single 5-year booster dose recommended if initial vaccine prior to age 65	I got my pneumonia vaccine: ___/___/___
Tetanus and pertussis immunization	To protect against tetanus and whooping cough	CDC recommends Tdap immunization in place of tetanus booster once between ages 19 and 65.	My Tdap was administered: ___/___/___
Breast and cervical cancer screenings	For early detection of precancerous tissue growth and cancer	Annual women’s health visit with your provider to determine appropriate mammography and Pap test screenings	I got my mammogram: ___/___/___ I got my Pap test: ___/___/___
Bone density screening	For early detection of osteoporosis	Bone density test routinely after age 65; test at age 60 if increased risk for osteoporotic fracture.	I got my bone density test: ___/___/___
Prostate cancer education and screening	For early detection of cancer	Prostate cancer education every year; prostate cancer screening for men older than age 50, if appropriate, until age 75	I received information on prostate cancer: ___/___/___ I got my prostate cancer screening: ___/___/___
Colorectal cancer screening	For early detection of precancerous tissue growth and cancer	Begin screening at age 50 until age 75; may need earlier screening if positive family history.	I got my colorectal cancer screening: ___/___/___
Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening	To detect weakened blood vessels	Test once for men ages 65-75 who have ever smoked.	I got my AAA screening: ___/___/___
Hepatitis C screening	Exposure to the hepatitis C virus can harm your liver.	For those with military service during the Vietnam era and those exposed to the virus via sexual contact, tattoos or piercings, blood transfusions prior to 1992, and the sharing of personal items	I got my hepatitis C screening: ___/___/___
Tobacco, alcohol, and depression screenings	Smoking may lead to serious illness; alcohol abuse and depression can spiral out of control.	Every year; your VA primary care staff will identify and treat any psychological issues and help with controlling substance abuse and quitting smoking.	I quit smoking: ___/___/___
Routine eye examinations	To check for glaucoma, cataracts, and other eye diseases	As recommended by your primary care provider based on your medical conditions, family history, or new visual symptoms	I got my eye examination: ___/___/___



Be a Healthier, Happier You in 2011

You have only one life ... make it a healthier, happier, and more fulfilling one. Think about which changes you can make this year to help you achieve that goal. Should you strive to eat more fruits and vegetables, pick up an enjoyable hobby, or make more time for yourself? If you want to have a beautiful life, New Year's is a great time to start making small, positive changes.

- Take a brisk walk each morning, even if it's just for 20 minutes. Or go to the mall early to walk, and then shop.
- Go to Google and search for new recipes with your favorite fruits and vegetables and make them twice a week.
- If you need to sleep more each night, it's OK to get extra shut-eye.
- Once a week, eat with a friend either at a restaurant or for takeout at your place.
- Every day, take some time to reflect. Either write down your thoughts in a journal or discuss them with a loved one.

* “My future starts when I wake up every morning ...
Every day I find something creative to do with my life.”
—Miles Davis

GET A FRESH START

Kick off the new year by taking these steps to a new and better you:

- Schedule annual medical, dental, and eye care appointments for you and your family. Talk with your doctor about important health screenings.
- Buy new toothbrushes for the whole family.
- Learn how to meditate to help you manage stress.
- Start or begin exercising again.
- Get your kitchen back in order after the holidays; restock your pantry and fridge with healthy foods.
- Enjoy life more. Take up a hobby, learn to ski, check out a comedy club, go back to school, or spend more time with family and friends.
- Add your goals here:

For tips on changing your habits for better health, check out the website at www.win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/index.htm

JANUARY 2011

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
December S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	February S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28			<i>Make sure you're getting enough vitamin D in your diet during the dark, winter months.</i>		1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	10 <i>Every day, jot down all the things that make you happy, and do them often.</i>	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26 <i>If you're having a food craving, keep busy for 15 minutes and the craving should pass.</i>	27	28	29
30	31					





What's the Secret to a Longer Life? Friends

Empathy is a common trait in many friendships. This explains why many soldiers forge very close bonds with each other while deployed.

But when Veterans return home, sadly most of these ties are broken as they try to get back to their lives. When close relationships are suddenly cut off, it can result in feelings of isolation and depression.

Connecting with others is a good place to start to lift your spirits. Experts recommend that you take steps to work on the relationships you currently have, renew friendships you had before you deployed, and even increase your social circle. Find ways to meet new people. Join a club related to your interests, attend free neighborhood events, get involved with a religious group, or take a class at a local college.

Studies show that having pals and other strong relationships helps you live a healthier life by cutting down on your stress. Other research finds that friendships help people live longer and remain mentally alert.

But not all friendships are good for you. You'll know you've got a healthy one when you can be yourselves with each other and get together regularly. A good friendship encourages you to talk about things that are bothering each of you, seek advice from each other, and listen to each other, without being judgmental.

* “They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.”

—Carl W. Buechner

**GOT GREAT FRIENDS?
KEEP THEM!**

Nurturing friendships takes a little effort and some time.

- Stay in touch by checking in with your friends often.
- Make time for lunch or coffee. See a movie or play cards.
- Be pleasant and fun to spend time with.
- Show interest in your friend’s life apart from your friendship.
- Be there for your friend in time of need.
- Listen to your friend, without being judgmental.
- Share your feelings.
- Be attentive and responsive to your friend.
- Help your friend with tasks—such as pet-sitting or a ride to the store—and ask for help in return.
- Tell your friend often how much you appreciate him or her.

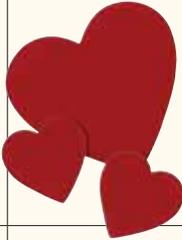
**WHICH FRIEND(S)
DID YOU CALL OR VISIT
THIS MONTH?**

If you’re a returning service-member, learn about the services available to you at www.visn2.va.gov



American Heart Month

FEBRUARY 2011

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
January S M T W T F S 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	March S M T W T F S 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1	2	3	4 <i>Have a sore throat? Add garlic (in any form) to your meals. It's a natural antibiotic and can bring you quick relief.</i>	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17 <i>Practice an act of kindness, such as feeding a stranger's meter. It will boost your self-esteem.</i>	18 	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 			<i>If you want to burn more calories, work more than one muscle group at a time.</i>		



6 Super Foods You May Be Missing

Limiting foods that are high in fat, calories, salt, and sugar will help you maintain a healthy weight and improve your health.

But if you want to take your diet to an even healthier level, you'll also need to choose everyday foods that are packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and essential fatty acids. These "superfoods" can help improve your health and lower your risk for several serious health conditions.

Fill your shopping cart with these nutrition standouts:

- **Oatmeal** may help decrease your cholesterol and your heart disease risk. Select sandwich bread that contains oat fiber.
- **Broccoli** may help lower your risk for cancer and cataracts. Add broccoli to soup or pasta.
- **Spinach** may help lower your blood pressure and your risk for certain eye diseases. Replace lettuce with raw spinach on sandwiches.
- **Salmon** may help reduce your risk for heart disease, prostate cancer, and Alzheimer's disease. Add canned salmon to rice dishes.
- **Blueberries** may help decrease your risk for chronic diseases and improve memory. Add to low-fat cottage cheese for a snack.
- **Tomato products** may help protect against certain types of cancer. Drink tomato juice.



“There is no certainty; there is only adventure.”

—Roberto Assagioli

ALSO ADD THESE ITEMS TO YOUR SHOPPING LIST:

- Walnuts
- Green tea
- Soy foods (soy milk, tofu)
- Beans (fresh, frozen, or dried)
- Sweet potatoes
- Dark chocolate

GET OUT OF A FOOD RUT

Finding and trying new types of food doesn't have to be difficult or expensive.

- Plant your own garden with a variety of vegetables.
- Attend a cooking class to learn how to make nutritious meals with different ingredients. To find one near you, go to Google and search for “cooking classes” in your ZIP code.
- Try a new recipe or type of food once a week, and put it in your recipe rotation if it's a hit. You can find delicious and healthy recipes online at www.cdc.gov



National Nutrition Month

MARCH 2011

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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	 <p>Stay hydrated when you exercise. Drink 8 ounces of water for every hour of activity you do.</p>	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	28	29	30	31		
	<p>Give yourself some “me” time a few times a day to clear your head.</p>					<p>Get out of a food rut by trying a new recipe today.</p>

WAY TO GO NEW YORK!

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, New Yorkers consumed, on average, the third highest nationwide percentage (tying with Vermont) of fruit in 2009. Only California and Washington, D.C., ranked higher.

Spot the differences solution is available after December

1



2



Do Something—It's Better Than Nothing

When it comes to exercise, say fitness experts, doing something is better than doing nothing. The problem is that people get overwhelmed by the idea of exercising for 30 minutes straight. So they never take that first step.

But you don't have to sweat or get out of breath to benefit from physical activity. Any movement is good for you. If you're watching TV, just standing up and sitting back down three times during each commercial break will strengthen your legs and help protect you against falls.

Here are other ways to increase your activity every day:

- **Clean your house.** You'll burn 420 calories an hour cleaning floors, vacuuming carpets, washing windows, and scrubbing tiles.
- **Climb stairs instead of taking the elevator or escalator.** Each flight of stairs you climb burns 10 calories.
- **Take a 20-minute walk around the block** with your neighbor and you'll burn 100 calories.
- **Do your own yard work and gardening.** Hoeing burns 360 calories an hour. Cutting the lawn with a push mower burns 420 calories an hour. Trimming trees burns 500 calories an hour.
- **Go outside and play with your children after dinner.** In an hour you'll burn 345 calories.

* “The glory of gardening; hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature.
To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul.”

–Alfred Austin

GET MOTIVATED

VA’s national MOVE! program is designed to help Veterans lose weight, keep it off, and improve their health. The website is filled with exercise tips and tools you can use to track your progress and motivate you to work harder.

At www.move.va.gov you’ll find:

- A chart that lists the amount of calories you burn doing specific activities.
- A walking log that lets you record the number of steps you take every day (In general, strive for at least 10,000 steps a day, whether you’re cleaning the house or just walking. An inexpensive pedometer can help you count your steps.)
- A physical activity log that allows you to track your daily progress as you move toward your fitness goals

WHAT DID YOU DO TO KEEP MOVING THIS MONTH ?

BE ACTIVE YOUR WAY

Take a quick quiz that will instantly give you physical activity tips and recommendations. Access the quiz at www.healthfinder.gov/widgets

APRIL 2011

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10	11	12	13	14	15	16 <i>Even if you don't feel like it, smile. The simple act of smiling makes you feel better.</i>																																																																																				
17	18	19	20	21	22	23																																																																																				
24	25 <i>Keep your energy up during the day by eating 5 or 6 mini-meals, instead of 3 large ones.</i>	26	27	28	29	30																																																																																				





Need Stress Relief? Get a Breath of Fresh Air

When you need to refresh your mind, body, and spirit, step outside for some fresh air. Research shows that it helps relieve stress, sharpen thinking, and promote exercise. Plus, it fosters a connection with nature that may motivate you to take better care of the planet.

As a bonus, sunlight gives your mood a lift. When you can't get outside, throw open the curtains and blinds for natural light. If you don't suffer from allergies, open your windows and air dry your bed sheets outside to get that fresh smell.

Here are more tips for a beautiful, healthful outdoor life:

- **Travel by person power.** Walking or cycling to work or the store is excellent exercise, and it also cuts pollution and saves gas money.
- **Grow your own food.** Plant a vegetable garden. If you're short on space, you can still grow herbs and many veggies in containers.
- **Invite wildlife to visit.** By providing the right food, water, and shelter, you can attract birds and butterflies. The National Wildlife Federation offers tips on turning your backyard or balcony into a wildlife habitat. Visit www.nwf.org/Get-Outside
- **Start a walking group** so that you can enjoy the great outdoors with company.

* “The truth of the matter is that you always know the right thing to do. The hard part is doing it.”

— Norman Schwarzkopf

MAY 2011

CHECK OUT WHAT NEW YORK HAS TO OFFER

As the weather gets better, spending time outdoors gets more and more appealing. Now is the perfect time of year to get back in touch with nature and recharge your batteries. Here are some ideas for outdoor adventures that can help get you out the door.

- **Plan a camping trip.** New York state has a lot to offer when it comes to the outdoors, so why not spend a night or two connecting with nature? Camping can also be relatively inexpensive.
- **Spend the day at the park.** If you don't want to commit to a full-on camping trip, why not try a relaxing day at one of New York's beautiful state or local parks?

WHICH STATE PARK DID YOU VISIT THIS MONTH?

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation has information about camping and state parks. Visit www.nysparks.state.ny.us/parks

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					Ask a friend to be your walking buddy; you'll be more likely to stick to your exercise program.		
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	23	24	25	26	27	28	
29	30	31	April S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30		June S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30		
							



Splurge on Low-Cost Summer Fun

You don't need to spend a lot of money to enjoy the warm weather months. In fact, many wonderful summer memories will cost you little or nothing at all.

Often, numerous free or low-cost summertime activities are waiting right around the corner—literally. Check your newspaper or the New York state government website at www.state.ny.us for free cultural events. Many neighborhoods sponsor street fairs or outdoor concerts, movies, and plays. Here are some other inexpensive ways to enjoy your community:

- Be a regular at your local farmers' market.
- Browse around neighborhood shops, such as art galleries and craft stores.
- Stroll around the zoo or any of the wonderful festivals in our area.
- Take a walking tour of city landmarks, or hike a scenic trail.
- Embrace the excitement and adventure of reading with a visit to the library. Grab a lawn chair, a beverage, and your favorite book. To make reading more engaging, join a book club and share your ideas with new friends. To find a group in your area, check notices at your library or favorite bookstore.



“We’re so busy watching out for what’s just ahead of us that we don’t take time to enjoy where we are.”

–Calvin & Hobbes

READY, SET, PLAY!

How did you spend your summer days as a child? Maybe you played baseball in the empty lot across the street, or you traveled everywhere on your bicycle.

As adults we feel it necessary to spend money to entertain ourselves, but having fun doesn’t have to cost a fortune. Reflect on the things in life that you once found enjoyable and didn’t break the bank. Here are some ideas:

- Visit your public swimming pool or lake, bike path, or basketball or tennis court a few days a week.
- Invite friends over once a week for game night.
- Plan a picnic at a local park or even in your own backyard. For even more fun, organize activities, such as horseshoes, badminton, or volleyball.
- Plant a garden of healthy veggies or fragrant flowers in your backyard.
- When was the last time you went to a drive-in theater? You’ll find it more fun than watching movies at home.

JUNE 2011

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	May S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	July S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1	2	3	4 <i>Eat an apple or trail mix 30 minutes before a workout to boost your energy level and burn calories.</i>
5		7 <i>Wearing shoes indoors tracks in dirt and brings in a lot of bacteria; leave them at the door.</i>	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 <i>Remember to grab your sunglasses to protect your eyes from UVA and UVB rays.</i>	27	28	29	30		

Check your newspaper or the New York state government website at www.state.ny.us for free neighborhood events.





Celebrate Your Personal Independence

The spirit of independence is as all-American as apple pie and the Fourth of July. If you're getting older, you can maintain your independence with these home safety tips:

Kitchen

- Store foods and appliances you use most often within easy reach.
- Buy a reach stick at a medical supply store to grab items that are too high or too low.

Living Room

- Keep pathways clear of furniture.

Hallways and Staircase

- Attach carpets or rugs to floors with double-sided tape.
- Mount a handrail that extends beyond first and last steps.

Bedroom

- Keep your phone or cell phone next to your bed in case of emergency.
- Put a lamp next to your bed.

Bathroom

- Install grab bars next to toilets and in your bathtub and shower.
- Place nonskid mats or decals in your bathtub and shower.

Visit the Home Safety Council at www.homesafetycouncil.org for more tips on preventing injuries.

✧ “Action is the foundational key to all success.”
 - Pablo Picasso

JULY 2011

SAFETY FIRST

These tips can help keep you safe at home and maintain your independence:

- **Reduce your risk for falls.** Don't get up too quickly after eating or lying down. Wear low-heeled shoes with rubber soles. Exercise daily for strength and balance. Outside, install motion-activated lights, and replace broken or loose walkways.
- **Prevent fires and burns.** Always stay in the kitchen while cooking. Use oven mitts to remove hot food. Always turn off the stove and oven when you are finished cooking. Keep space heaters at least three feet away from things that can burn. Install smoke alarms on every level of your home.
- **Get help at home.** If preparing meals, bathing, or taking medications on time has become difficult, you may want to consider getting in-home assistance. Several levels of help are available, including: personal care, home care, and health care.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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3 	4	5	6	7	8 	
10	11	12	13 <i>Avoid bringing home extra weight from your vacation by taking 20-minute walks after meals.</i>	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24		26 <i>Pack your breakfast with fiber and protein to make you less hungry throughout the day.</i>	27	28	29	30
31						

Visit the U.S. Administration on Aging's website at www.eldercare.gov for help finding in-home care.



Pay Attention to Your Spirit

As a member of the military, you always took care of your physical health to make sure you were fit for duty. And now that you're home, being physically fit should still be a priority. But your mental health is important, too.

Paying attention to your spirit is one way you can take care of your mental health. Spirituality involves the ways in which you find meaning, purpose, and direction in your life. It also includes the "connection" you feel to others and the things around you. Organized religion may or may not play a role in your spirituality.

Research shows that tending to your spirituality can help you cope with stress better, improve your social support, and create feelings of optimism and hope. It can also promote healthy behavior, reduce feelings of depression and anxiety, and help you relax.

Having good mental health can also improve your overall physical health. Spirituality reduces stressful feelings and boosts healing ones. It can also help immune, cardiovascular (heart and blood vessels), hormonal, and nervous systems.

If you have concerns about your mental health, your VA primary care team can help. Call today.



“Your vision will become clear only when you look into your heart ...
Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakens.”

—Carl Jung

REINVIGORATE!

Here are some ways you can connect to your spiritual side:

- **Appreciate the arts.** Check out your local symphony or neighborhood art gallery, or create your own work.
- **Participate in activities that develop self-awareness.** Ask your VA MOVE! coordinator where you can find a free class on meditation, tai chi, or yoga. Or borrow an instructional video from the library.
- **Connect with others.** You may find spiritual fulfillment in your relationships with friends and family. Volunteer in your community.
- **Get closer with nature.** Take a walk in the park or tend to your garden.
- **Take time to reflect on what’s important in your life.** Read a spiritual book, such as *Tuesdays with Morrie*, or write your thoughts in a journal. Use this space to get started.

Visit www.visn2.va.gov to find more ways to practice spirituality. Select *Diseases and Conditions* on the left, then choose *Healthy Living* and then *Spirituality*.

AUGUST 2011

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
July S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1	2	3	4	5	6
	8 <i>Fit a little exercise into your workday; walk to a coworker's desk instead of sending an e-mail.</i>	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16		18 <i>For a more nutritious snack, dip vegetables in hummus instead of ranch dressing.</i>	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	September S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30		





Use It or Lose It: Be a Lifelong Learner

Continuing to learn new skills and challenge your mind helps keep you mentally sharp at every age. As you get older, it can also help reduce your risk for Alzheimer's disease.

Lifting weights can build your biceps. In the same way, mental exercise can pump up your brainpower. Many people associate mental exercise with solving crosswords or math puzzles or playing chess. But other activities can help, too. Play cards, visit museums, make music, or discuss the evening news with friends. Or keep your library card handy and be an avid reader.

Are you ready for a bigger challenge? It's never too late to go back to school or start a new career. The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) can answer your questions about educational benefits, vocational training, and employment services. Visit the VBA at www.vba.va.gov

In one recent study, older women and men who did crossword puzzles four days a week had a 47 percent lower risk of developing dementia than those who worked on these puzzles only once a week.

BOOST YOUR BRAIN

Here are some ideas to keep your mind stimulated:

- **Enroll in a class.** Sign up for a continuing education course for adults at your local community college or senior center.
- **Learn new job skills.** Enroll in vocational classes, sign up for a workshop, or do research online or at the library. If you're a Veteran with a service-connected disability, the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment VetSuccess Program can help you prepare for, find, and keep a suitable job. Visit www.VetSuccess.gov
- **Take up a new hobby.** Learn to speak another language, play an instrument, or cook international cuisine.
- **Surf the Internet.** You can find health information, read about breaking news, or get help finding a hobby. If you don't own a computer, use one at the local library. Many libraries also offer computer courses free of charge.

Create a Facebook page. It's a great way to keep in touch with friends, while honing your online skills. Or check out VA's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/VeteransHealth

* "It is every man's obligation to put back into the world at least the equivalent of what he takes out of it."

—Albert Einstein

National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month



SEPTEMBER 2011

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		August S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	October S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1	2	3
4 <i>Take a brisk walk before you eat and you'll be less likely to choose an unhealthy food.</i>	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 	20	21 <i>Use smaller plates at dinner; your family will eat smaller portions without realizing it.</i>	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	





Add More Fun to Your Life

When you're feeling tense, it's time to get serious about having fun. Doing something that makes you laugh helps relieve your stress and recharge your spirit. It balances out more somber moments and reminds you that life also has a lighter side. In short, there's nothing frivolous about fun. So pencil playtime into your schedule, and then follow through just as you would for any other important commitment.

For pure, carefree fun, you can't beat these activities:

- **Spend time with friends who make you smile.** You don't need to make a big deal about it. Take a walk with a buddy or invite a friend over for coffee. A quick visit can brighten your whole day.
- **Watch a comedy or classic feel-good movie.** Rent a DVD of your favorite TV sitcom. Or watch the animated movie *Up* (2009) for a hilarious, uplifting tale that teaches us that sometimes life's biggest adventures aren't always planned.
- **Renew your library card, and check out some light reading.** Look for a funny novel, an entertaining book about your favorite hobby, or a collection of jokes. Then kick back and read for the fun of it.

* “I’ve often thought that the process of aging could be slowed down if it had to go through Congress.”

—George Bush

ACT LIKE A KID

Go outside and play catch with your child or grandchild, or join the neighborhood kids for a game of soccer. The sheer joy of play helps keep you young at heart. Try these ideas to coax out your fun-loving inner child:

- **Visit your local park.** Invite a friend along once a week to play cards or a board game, share a picnic, or simply hang out and chat.
- **Take up a hobby.** Learn about stamp collecting, kite flying, or model building. Or sign you and a partner up for dance lessons.
- **Get into the game.** Join an adult basketball, soccer, softball, or bowling league.
- **Go for the gold.** If you’re age 55 or older and receive health care at any VA medical facility, you’re eligible to participate in the National Veterans Golden Age Games. Events include golf, swimming, table tennis, shuffleboard, and more. There are also divisions for those who use wheelchairs or have visual impairments.

For more information about the National Veterans Golden Age Games, go to www.veteransgoldenagegames.va.gov

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month



OCTOBER 2011

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				September S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	November S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	1
2	3	4 <i>Eat celery to get rid of bad breath; it produces saliva and washes away plaque buildup—a cause of bad breath.</i>	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13		15 <i>If you're feeling blue, get lots of sleep, exercise, and sunlight, and be social.</i>
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24		26	27	28	29
30	31		<i>Add 2 cups of Epsom salts to bath water to soothe sore muscles.</i>			



Be Happy and Count Your Blessings

Thanksgiving is more than just a holiday where we fill ourselves with turkey, cranberries, and pumpkin pie. It's also one of the few times of the year specifically designated for us to show our gratitude. It could be toward a religious God or people in your life, or just counting your blessings.

Not only is saying thanks a polite thing to do, but it's good for your health, too. Studies show that practicing gratitude throughout your life—not only on Thanksgiving—can lower your blood pressure; help you feel less depressed, hostile, and stressed; reduce your risk for alcoholism; and even make it more likely that you'll quit smoking and lose weight. Being grateful also lifts your mood and increases your happiness.

Grateful people think about the positive things in their lives, instead of focusing on any problems they have. They also realize they have friends, families, and communities to help them in times of need, and recognize that they can help others in distress.

During this holiday season, and throughout the year, take time to look at what you have vs. what you don't have. Don't forget to appreciate all the positive things in your life.



“Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies.”

- Mother Teresa

SHOW YOUR GRATITUDE

As a Veteran, you have many things to be thankful for: You're able to be home with your family, you're surrounded by good friends and, thanks to your sacrifice and that of your fellow servicemembers, you live in freedom.

Counting your many blessings keeps you from feeling overwhelmed. Here are some ways to think about what you're thankful for:

- Watch the holiday movie *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946). What do you take for granted? Think about what your life would be like without them.
- List five things that you are grateful for each day in a journal. Start here:

- Set aside a few minutes every evening to reflect on the positive things in your life.
- Write a thank-you letter to someone, and hand deliver it.

For tips on keeping a gratitude journal, go to www.oprah.com/spirit/The-Power-of-Gratitude

NOVEMBER 2011

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
October S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	December S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1	2		4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Season your food with oregano—it is packed with antioxidants and can help clear a stuffy nose.

To lose those last 10 pounds, exercise just 15-20 more minutes a day.

After 2 hours on the table, put your food in the refrigerator.



Live a Beautiful Life— All Year Long

As 2011 winds down, you're probably reflecting on all the wonderful things you have done this past year to live a beautiful life. Maybe you're taking a half-hour walk after dinner, or you're planning monthly potluck dinners with friends. You may have returned to school to learn a new language or added one or two "superfoods" to your diet.

Good for you! You should be very proud that you were able to make these healthy changes to your activity level, diet, mental health, and overall well-being. Taking these steps can help you live life to the fullest.

The end of the year is also a good time to start thinking about doing even more to be a healthier, happier you. You can take an extra lap around the block, or add another "superfood" to your shopping list. Renew your library card and start reading for fun. Join a social club to meet more friends. Learn meditation to manage stress. Discover a new hobby.

Start 2012 off right by adopting this saying: ***"I want to live every day as the healthiest person I can."***

Then bring that image of yourself as a healthy person into everything you do.



* “There is no such thing in anyone’s life as an unimportant day.”

- Alexander Woollcott

DECEMBER 2011

GET READY FOR THE NEW YEAR

Before you start making your New Year’s resolutions for 2012, write down all the healthy changes you made this year.

What goals did you reach in 2011?

While it’s important to celebrate your successes, it’s also important to identify those things that were difficult for you to change.

What goals do you still want to reach?

Before making these goals a part of your new resolutions, you first have to figure out what caused you to fall back into your old habits and what you need to do next time to be successful.

And remember, if you do slip up, don’t dwell on it. Just get back to your healthy habits the next day.

With a little care and planning, you can be even healthier and happier in 2012!

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		November S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	January 2012 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1	2	3
	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

To cut the fat when baking, replace oil or butter with applesauce; a ½ cup of applesauce equals 1 cup of oil or butter.

If you’re feeling stressed, listen to 30 minutes of relaxing music.

Veterans' WELLNESS

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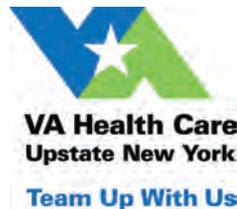
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Spot the differences solution from April calendar



1. Trowel in girl's hand is clean.
2. Yarn flower is missing from girl's sweater.
3. Branch on woman's knee is gone.
4. Tree trunk in background is gone.
5. End of watering can spout is shorter.
6. Girl's hair is shorter.
7. Hand rake below watering can is gone.
8. Woman is not wearing necklace.
9. Woman's left collar is shorter.
10. There are more yellow flowers in the pot.
11. Front pot now has dirt.
12. Woman's right gardening glove is blue.

➤ Hotline for Suicide Prevention



Suicidal ideas and attempts to harm oneself are sometimes the result of problems that may seem like they can't be fixed. Together, Vet Centers and VA Medical Centers stand ready to reach out and help Veterans at risk for suicide.

If you feel you are in crisis, call the VA National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** and indicate you are a Veteran. You'll be immediately connected to VA suicide prevention and mental health professionals.

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Comments about this calendar? E-mail your
feedback to Kathleen.Hider@va.gov



Resources for Veterans

Each of these entries offers free, reliable, and professional information.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

www.va.gov

VA HEALTH CARE UPSTATE NEW YORK

Bookmark us at www.visn2.va.gov

VA ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

If you need help enrolling, call the VA Enrollment Service Center, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (Eastern time) at **1-877-222-VETS (8387)**. To enroll in VA:

- Visit in person at any VA Medical Center or Clinic
- Call the Veterans Service Center at **1-888-823-9656**
- Mail or fax the completed Form 10-10EZ to the VA Medical Center or Clinic of your choice. Find it at www.1010ez.med.va.gov

MY HEALTHeVET

www.myhealth.va.gov

MOVE!

Weight-management program for Veterans

www.move.va.gov

VA NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

NATIONAL CALL CENTER FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838)

www1.va.gov/homeless

DISEASES AND CONDITIONS

www.visn2.va.gov/vet/diseases/index.asp

GI BILL EXPRESS

Request a free guide listing schools that cater to the military community

www.gibillexpress.com

eBENEFITS

Your one-stop shop for online benefits-related tools and information

www.ebenefits.va.gov

TRICARE

TRICARE is the health care program serving uniformed servicemembers, retirees, and their families worldwide.

www.tricare.mil

ANGEL FLIGHT FOR VETERANS

Provides low- or no-cost travel for Veteran patients and their families

www.angelflightveterans.org

STARS AND STRIPES

Stars and Stripes exists to provide independent news and information to the U.S. military community. It is comprised of active-duty, DoD civilians, contractors, and their families.

www.stripes.com

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Request copies of military service records and historical documents of interest to veterans

www.archives.gov/veterans

Shop at the VA Canteen

For your convenience, you can shop at the VA Canteen anytime you want by going to

www.vacanteen.va.gov 24 hours a day,

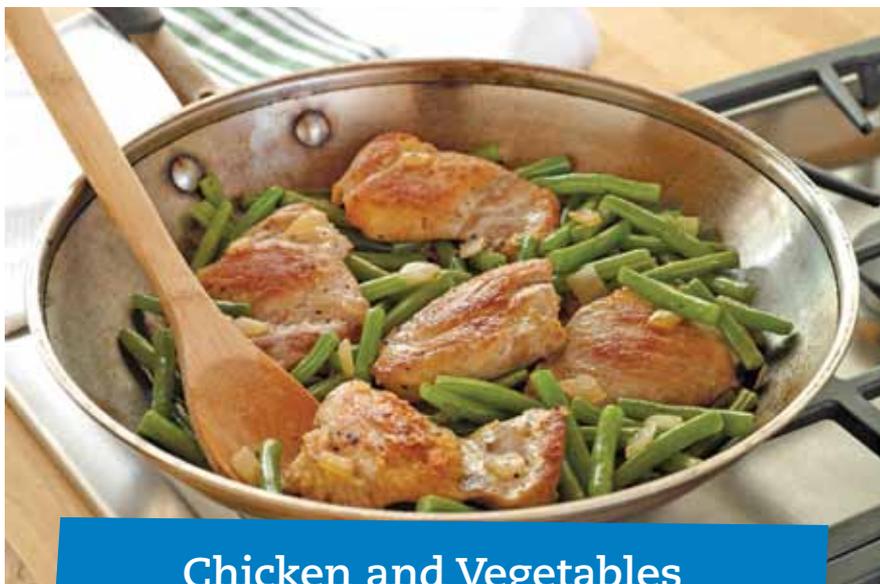
7 days a week. Not a Veteran or family

member? The online VA Veterans

Canteen Service Veteran's Mall is

open to everyone.





Chicken and Vegetables

Ingredients

1 tablespoon margarine
1 teaspoon garlic powder
½ cup chopped onions
1 lb. + 4 oz. boneless,
skinless chicken thighs
10-oz. package cut green
beans, frozen
¼ teaspoon pepper

Directions

Melt margarine in heavy skillet. Add garlic and onions. Stir until blended. Cook over medium heat, until tender, for about five minutes. Remove from skillet. Place chicken in skillet. Cook over medium heat until chicken is thoroughly done, about 12 minutes. Remove from skillet; keep warm. Place frozen

green beans, pepper, and cooked onions in same skillet. Cover and cook over medium-low heat until green beans are tender, about five minutes. Add chicken to vegetables. Continue cooking, stirring from time to time, until heated through—about three minutes.

Serving size

Serves four; serving size is 1 cup.

Nutrition facts

Each serving contains about 190 calories, 11 grams fat, and 109 milligrams sodium.



Strawberry Spinach Salad

Ingredients

Dressing:

⅓ cup balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon sugar
1 tablespoon extra-virgin
olive oil

Salad:

4 cups baby spinach
2 cups strawberries (whole
if they're small; halved or
quartered if large)
½ cup thinly sliced red onion

Directions

Dressing:

In a small saucepan, bring balsamic vinegar to a boil. Add sugar and cook until syrupy, about three minutes. Remove

from heat and stir in olive oil. It may appear to separate.

Salad:

Wash and dry spinach. Put into a large salad bowl with strawberries and onion. Pour warm (not hot) dressing over spinach salad. Toss and serve immediately.

Serving size

Serves four; serving size is ¼ of recipe.

Nutrition facts

Each serving contains about 99 calories, 4 grams fat, 30 milligrams sodium, and 15 grams carbohydrates.



Simple Fish Tacos

Ingredients

½ cup nonfat sour cream
¼ cup nonfat mayonnaise
½ cup chopped fresh cilantro
½ package low-sodium taco seasoning, divided
1 lb. (4 total) cod or whitefish fillets, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 cups shredded red and green cabbage
2 cups diced tomato
12 six-inch, warmed corn tortillas
Lime wedges and taco sauce

Directions

In a small bowl, combine sour cream, mayonnaise, cilantro, and 2 tablespoons seasoning mix. In a

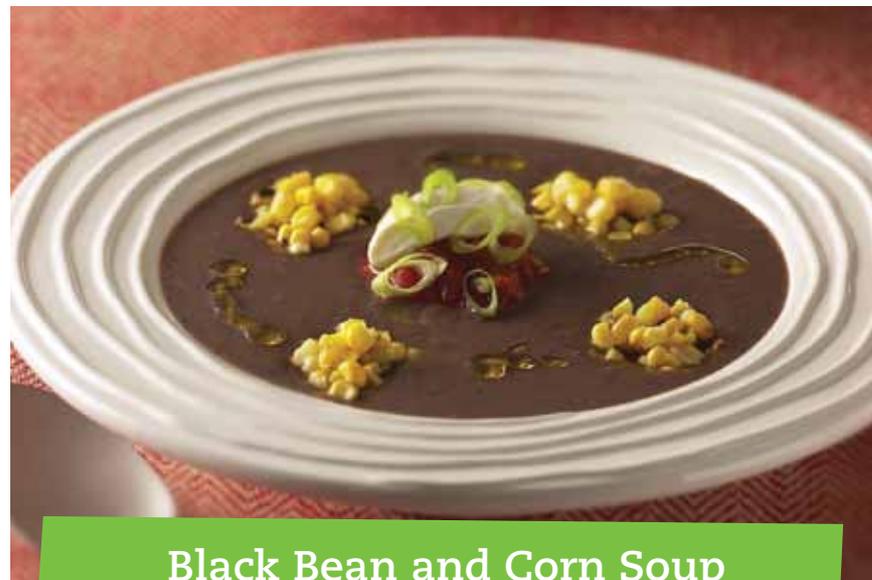
medium bowl, combine fish, olive oil, lemon juice, and remaining seasoning mix; pour into large skillet. Cook, stirring constantly, over medium-high heat for four to five minutes or until fish flakes easily with a fork. Fill taco shells with fish mixture. Top with cabbage, tomato, sour cream mixture, lime wedges, and sauce.

Serving size

Serves six; serving size is ⅓ of recipe.

Nutrition facts

Each serving contains about 270 calories, 7 grams fat, 400 milligrams sodium, and 38 grams carbohydrates.



Black Bean and Corn Soup

Ingredients

15-oz. can black beans, drained and rinsed
14 ½-oz. can low-sodium Mexican stewed tomatoes, undrained
14 ½-oz. can low-sodium diced tomatoes, undrained
11-oz. can whole kernel corn, drained
4 green onions, sliced
1 small green pepper, sliced
4 ribs celery, diced
3 tablespoons chili powder
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 garlic clove, minced

Directions

Combine all ingredients in slow cooker. Cover and cook on high for five to six hours.

Serving size

Serves eight; serving size is ⅓ of recipe.

Nutrition facts

Each serving contains about 120 calories, 2 grams fat, 480 milligrams sodium, and 23 grams carbohydrates.

10411M

Reaching us is easy



www.visn2.va.gov

VA Medical Centers

Albany
113 Holland Ave.
Albany, NY 12208
518-626-5000
1-800-223-4810

Batavia
222 Richmond Ave.
Batavia, NY 14020
585-297-1000

Bath
76 Veterans Ave.
Bath, NY 14810
607-664-4000
1-877-845-3247

Buffalo
3495 Bailey Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14215
716-834-9200
1-800-532-8387

Canandaigua
400 Fort Hill Ave.
Canandaigua, NY
14424
585-394-2000
1-800-204-9917

Syracuse
800 Irving Ave.
Syracuse, NY 13210
315-425-4400
1-800-221-2883

Community-Based Outpatient Clinics

Auburn
17 Lansing St.
Auburn, NY 13021
315-255-7002

Bainbridge
109 N. Main St.
Bainbridge, NY 13733
607-967-8590

Binghamton
425 Robinson St.
Binghamton, NY 13901
607-772-9100

Catskill
Columbia Greene
Medical Arts Bldg.
159 Jefferson Heights
Catskill, NY 12414
518-943-7515

Clifton Park
1673 Route 9
Clifton Park, NY 12065
518-383-8506

Cortland
1129 Commons Ave.
Cortland, NY 13045
607-662-1517

Dunkirk
Valor Health Center
166 E. Fourth St.
Dunkirk, NY 14048
1-800-310-5001

Elizabethtown
P.O. Box 277
Park Street
Elizabethtown, NY
12932
518-873-3295

Elmira
Health Services Bldg.
200 Madison Ave.,
Suite 2E
Elmira, NY 14901
1-877-845-3247,
ext. 44640

**Mansfield Satellite
Clinic of Elmira**
261 Saint James St.,
Suite 104A
Mansfield, PA 16933
570-662-0507

Fonda
Camp Mohawk Plaza
2623 State Hwy., 30A
Fonda, NY 12068
518-853-1247

Glens Falls
84 Broad St.
Glens Falls, NY 12801
518-798-6066

Jamestown
608 W. Third St.
Jamestown, NY 14701
716-338-1511

Kingston
63 Hurley Ave.
Kingston, NY 12401
845-331-8322

Lackawanna
Our Lady of Victory
Family Care Center
227 Ridge Road
Lackawanna, NY
14218
716-822-5944

**Springville Satellite
Clinic of Lackawanna**
Springville
Primary Care
27 Franklin St.
Springville, NY 14141
716-592-7400

Lockport
5883 Snyder Drive
Lockport, NY 14094
716-438-3890

Malone
3372 State Route 11
Main Street
Malone, NY 12953
518-483-1529

Massena
1 Hospital Drive
Massena, NY 13662
315-769-4253

Niagara Falls
2201 Pine Ave.
Niagara Falls, NY
14301-2300
1-800-223-4810

Olean
465 N. Union St.
Olean, NY
14760-2658
716-373-7709

Oswego
437 State Route 104E
Oswego, NY 13126
315-207-0120

Plattsburgh
80 Sharron Ave.
Plattsburgh, NY 12901
518-561-6247

Rochester
465 Westfall Road
Rochester, NY 14620
585-463-2600

Rome
Griffiss Business Park
125 Brookley Road,
Bldg. 510
Rome, NY 13441
315-334-7100

Schenectady
Sheridan Plaza
1322 Gerling St.
Schenectady, NY
12308
518-346-3334

Troy
Troy Primary Care
Practice
295 River St.
Troy, NY 12180
518-274-7707

Warsaw
Wyoming County
Community Hospital
400 N. Main St.
Warsaw, NY 14569
585-786-2233

Watertown
C.A.N.A.I. Bldg.
19472 U.S. Route 11
Watertown, NY 13601
315-221-7026

Wellsville
3458 Riverside Drive
Route 19
Wellsville, NY 14895
607-664-4660
1-877-845-3247 (Bath)

**Coudersport Satellite
Clinic of Wellsville**
24 Maple View Lane,
Suite 2
Coudersport, PA 16915
814-260-9342

Vet Centers

Albany
17 Computer Drive W.
Albany, NY 12205
518-626-5130

Binghamton
53 Chenango St.
Binghamton, NY
13901
1-866-716-8213

Buffalo
2372 Sweet Home
Road, Suite 1
Buffalo, NY 14228
716-862-7350

Rochester
2000 S. Winston Road
Bldg. 5, Suite 201
Rochester, NY 14620
585-232-5040

Syracuse
716 E. Washington St.
Syracuse, NY 13210
315-478-7127

Watertown
210 Court St., Suite 20
Watertown, NY 13601
315-782-5479



- For enrollment information, call **1-888-823-9656**.
- For medical care and clinic appointments, call your local primary doctor or your local VA Medical Center.
- For reliable health information on the Web, visit www.myhealth.va.gov