



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Just for fun!



Get involved in VA's first-ever Buddy Check Week

VA News – In support of The Strong Veterans Act of 2022, the VA has dedicated the week of October 16-20 to organize and facilitate Veteran connections, outreach and education around peer wellness, crisis prevention and community, appropriately titled “Buddy Check Week.”

VA's goal is to ensure that no one is left to navigate the inevitable challenges of life alone, and “Buddy Check Week” is a call to action for all Veterans to reaffirm their bonds and the connections that unite them across the nation. The tools and resources provided are there to help Veterans connect to the benefits they have earned, to foster community, and to help take the first steps in getting support when it is needed.

We are strongest together. Checking-in and being equipped with how to connect to resources can save a life, save a family, and change the future of a community for generations to come.

Prevent Serious Illness, Get Updated Vaccines

Health.mil – The fall and winter of 2023 virus season will be the first time that vaccines for the three viruses responsible for most hospitalizations – COVID-19, Respiratory Syncytial Virus, and the flu – will be available at the same time.

Experts agree that COVID-19 vaccines, along with the flu vaccines, continue to be the most effective tool to prevent serious illness and hospitalizations.

Eligible Military Health System beneficiaries can make a vaccination appointment at their military hospital, clinic, or at a TRICARE retail network pharmacy at no cost.



Vaccinations are the first tool to protect yourself, and eligible Veterans can get a no-cost flu shot from a nearby VA clinic or within your community from one of nearly 70,000 in-network pharmacies or an urgent care location:

- To get a no-cost vaccine, the provider must be part of VA’s community care network.
- Retail pharmacies include most supermarket and local pharmacies.
- Many urgent care locations offer walk-in care.
- Call ahead to see if a pharmacy or urgent care site participates in the VA flu shot program and offers the specific flu vaccine that you want.

Holiday Calendar



OCTOBER

- 5th Yom Kippur (TX)
- 10th Columbus Day & Indigenous People’s Day – **OFFICE CLOSED**
- 13th Navy Birthday
- 15th White Cane Safety Day
- 17th Bosses’ Day
- 31st Halloween

2nd Monday runs 10-16-23
3rd Monday runs 10-23-23

4th Monday runs 10-30-23

**Mercedes only*

1st Monday runs 10-02-23
1st Tuesday runs 10-03-23

**Redlands only*

3rd Wednesday runs 10-18-23
3rd Thursday runs 10-19-23
4th Thursday runs 10-26-23
4th Friday runs 10-27-23



NOVEMBER

- 1st Native American Heritage Month
- 5th Daylight Saving Time – “Fall Back” One Hour
- 5th Election Day (TX)
- 10th Marine Birthday
- 11th Veterans’ Day – **OFFICE CLOSED**
- 23rd & 24th Thanksgiving – **OFFICE CLOSED**

1st Friday runs 10-31-23

2nd Friday runs 11-03-23

3rd Friday runs 11-17-23

4th Thursday runs 11-29-23

4th Friday runs 11-30-23

**Mercedes only*

1st Monday runs 11-06-23
1st Tuesday runs 11-07-23

**Redlands only*

3rd Wednesday runs 11-15-23
3rd Thursday runs 11-16-23
4th Thursday runs 11-29-23
4th Friday runs 11-30-23

Emergency Preparedness

Being prepared for an emergency does not stop when you walk out your door, and should an accident or other emergency event occur, it is important to have a plan. As an Oxygen and/or Ventilator patient, you must think about other potential emergency events than the standard person, especially when planning to leave your home:

- Do I have back-up tubing should something happen to the one I am using?
- Do I have enough battery life on my ventilator if I get stuck in traffic for three or more hours?
- Do I have my respirator bag in case my vent battery dies completely?
- Do I have enough oxygen tanks should my car breakdown, there is a wreck, or some other emergency event occurs?
- Do I know where my local hospitals are located?
- Do I have emergency assistance numbers like 9-1-1 and others programmed into my phone in case they are needed?

Emergency preparedness is planning for something to happen, creating a plan to help mitigate risks, then following the plan. Your emergency plan should include both short- and long-term contingencies, as well as any hazards that might harm you or your equipment. By taking a moment to plan, you can be prepared should an emergency event occur.

What You Need To Know

TEXAS:

Smoking Patients: The VA Medical Centers across Texas continue to focus on smoking patients as smoking on oxygen injuries persists. As some patients continue to disregard safety training about not smoking on oxygen, keeping oxygen away from heat sources, and cessation programs to stop smoking, the VA Medical Centers are stepping up enforcement. This is a serious safety infraction not only for you, as an oxygen patient that smokes, but for your home, your family, and your community. Smoking patients can be injured from minor burns to the extreme (death) from inhaling an oxygen fire, and patients with lung damage due to oxygen fire burns suffer badly and are at-risk for multiple infections.



CALIFORNIA:

Home Visits: As previously mentioned, the Southern California VA Medical Centers and Clinical staff are actively visiting patients' homes and depending upon the VA facility, this could be as few as 5-8 or as many as 50 patients per quarter. Each facility has its own program requirements and monitoring schedule.



Self-Filling Systems: The Loma Linda and San Diego hospital are testing self-filling systems, allowing Veterans to fill oxygen cylinders in their home, which is beneficial as it gives patients control over their oxygen tank use, filling, and preparedness. While still in the testing stages, this program has proven effective in other regions throughout our nation, offering more flexibility and freedom to patients because they do not have to wait on tank deliveries to their home. We will keep you informed should this program move beyond the trial phase.

ARIZONA:

Home Visits: Six-month oxygen routes and semi-annual home visits are set to start this month. VA Tucson patients are required to have their oxygen equipment serviced every six months, and this check will take approximately five to ten minutes. The technician will attach an analyzer to get reading from the concentrator, testing the unit's oxygen purity, the pressure the unit is producing, and the hours of use on the unit. Should your home concentrator be due for its yearly preventative maintenance, the technician will also change-out the filter and replace the annual service green card. Oxygen route days should be set up so that patients will know what week and day we are in your area, providing patients with any/all information allowing planning for future doctors' appointment, time away from the house, and other important appointments without double-booking a route day visit.



Important Health Contact Numbers

EMERGENCY **DIAL 9-1-1**

EMERGENCY SITUATION **DIAL 7-1-1**

Use if you have a TTY and cannot obtain emergency services.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS **DIAL 2-1-1**

NON-EMERGENCY OR DOWN EQUIPMENT

Phone: **TEXAS (888) 450-6676**

Phone: **AZ & CA (833) 986-4267**

YOU CAN QUIT SMOKING

Phone: **(800) QUIT-NOW**

Website: **www.SmokeFree.gov**

www.BeTobaccoFree.gov

REPORT ABUSE. BREAK THE SILENCE.

Phone: **(800) 252-5400**

If you are being abused, suspect abuse or have witnessed someone being abused, call today.

VETERANS CRISIS LINE **DIAL 9-8-8**

Phone: **(800) 273-8255**

Text Message: **838255**

Email: **ConfidentialChat@VeteransCrisisLine.net**

Speak with someone that can help you or family member.

SPEAK-UP CAMPAIGN

Website: **https://tinyurl.com/5n68nt29**

The Joint Commission's Speak Up campaign focuses on what rights patients have & what they can do if they feel they are being discriminated against & receiving substandard care.

Southern Ground Beef and Bean Skillet

Ingredients:

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 cup diced onion
- 1 cup diced green bell pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ cup medium salsa
- ½ tablespoon Greek seasoning
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper, kosher salt to taste
- 1 (15 ounce) can Southwestern-style beans, undrained

Step 1 - Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook and stir beef in the hot skillet until browned and crumbly, 5 to 7 minutes. Add onion and bell pepper and cook until onion is softened and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute.

Step 2 - Add in salsa, Greek seasoning, pepper, and salt. Cook and stir until well combined, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in beans. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer to desired thickness, about 20 minutes. Add water if sauce becomes too thick.



Word Search

- Acorn
- Apple
- Brisk
- Chilly
- Cider
- Colors
- Corn
- Fall
- Frost
- Harvest
- Jacket
- Leaves
- November
- October
- Pumpkin
- Rake
- Spice
- Turkey

A	D	P	R	N	H	B	F	R	T	S	S	E	A	B	C	P	U	M	P	K	I	N
B	C	H	A	R	V	E	S	T	M	K	L	Y	U	J	G	P	H	G	A	E	S	T
T	F	C	K	M	D	Y	I	D	M	C	H	I	L	L	Y	M	F	V	W	F	Z	I
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F	P	P	A	V	C	G	C	D	E	K	W	I	R	E	D	T	T	L	X	X	Z	B
E	R	J	C	S	N	Q	E	A	A	M	Y	U	I	Q	N	U	K	I	D	C	B	L
N	J	K	O	I	M	P	E	V	B	D	G	G	S	Z	U	S	Q	J	L	G	H	E
P	K	Y	R	T	J	C	Q	Q	E	T	U	R	K	E	Y	F	G	F	A	H	U	F
A	T	L	N	S	R	I	G	G	H	T	G	R	E	A	S	F	P	H	P	C	D	D
C	A	E	N	F	L	F	C	O	L	O	R	S	A	D	C	P	L	N	P	M	I	M
C	P	R	S	T	A	K	I	W	B	F	D	V	C	T	R	D	I	N	L	O	G	J
O	J	D	Z	P	F	Y	D	N	V	T	C	E	O	O	C	T	O	B	E	R	R	T
R	K	I	M	V	J	C	E	Q	Q	U	N	B	Y	C	R	J	S	X	Z	O	P	H
N	O	V	E	M	B	E	R	R	N	V	E	A	C	O	U	F	R	O	S	T	X	Z