



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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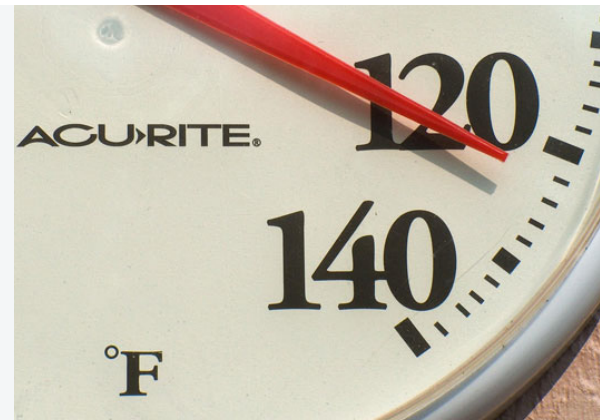
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Just For Fun



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Staying Safe and Healthy During Extreme Heat

VA News – As temperatures rise across the nation, extreme heat is becoming a significant health concern. Ranging from mild discomfort to life-threatening emergencies, you can protect yourself and your loved ones from heat-related illnesses with preparation & preventive measures.

Stay healthy and safe by following these heat safety recommendations:

- **Stay indoors** during the hottest part of the day (10AM – 4PM)
- **Dress for the heat** with lightweight, loose-fitting clothing and wear SPF 30+ sunscreen.
- **Limit outdoor activity** during cooler morning or evening hours.
- **Stay hydrated** by drinking plenty of water, avoiding alcohol & caffeine.
- **Cool down quickly** with wet cloths if you begin to feel overheated.
- **Seek air conditioning** if indoor temperatures become too high.
- **Plan for power outages**, especially if you depend on medical equipment or refrigerated medications.

Recognize the signs of heat-related illness. Muscle cramps may be an early warning sign of heat stress, while heavy sweating, dizziness, fatigue, headache, nausea, vomiting, or fainting can indicate more serious conditions such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke. If symptoms occur, stop activity, move to a cooler place, and drink water or a sports drink.

How to Stay Safe During a Wildfire

News in Health – Wildfires are occurring more often than ever, whether ignited by human activity or natural causes. While the flames can devastate communities and landscapes, the smoke they produce can spread far beyond the fire itself, affecting the health of people who may be nowhere near the blaze.

When wildfires spread into towns and cities, they can ignite roads, buildings, household furnishings, and other man-made materials, creating additional hazards for surrounding communities. The resulting smoke contains fine particulate matter that can irritate the eyes, nose, and throat, damage the lungs, and make breathing more difficult.

Although wildfire smoke can have serious health effects, you can take measures to protect yourself:

- **Stay indoors when air quality is poor.** Keep windows and doors closed, monitoring local air quality.
- **Reduce indoor pollution.** Avoid using fireplaces, candles, gas stoves, or other items that produce smoke.
- **Use air conditioning.** Keep the fresh-air intake closed if possible and replace filters regularly.
- **Wear an N95 mask outdoors.** These masks can help reduce exposure to harmful smoke particles.
- **Use portable air cleaners.** Indoor air purifiers can help remove smoke-related particles from the air.



Join VA's Million Veteran Program

Veteran Affairs – The Million Veteran Program (MVP) has made history as the world's largest health research program affiliated with a healthcare system and the first to engage 1 million participants. This remarkable achievement would not have been possible without the dedication and participation of Veterans in MVP.

You can enroll in the Million Veteran Program (MVP) either online through the MVP website or in person at a participating VA facility, and you do not need to receive your healthcare through VA to participate. To join MVP, you will be asked to:

- **Provide a blood sample** to support genetic research.
- **Complete questionnaires** about your health, lifestyle, and life experiences.
- **Authorize secure access to your health records** so researchers can use relevant information in approved studies. Your name and any personally identifying information will not be shared with researchers.
- **Agree to future contact** regarding MVP and related research opportunities.

By participating, you help advance research aimed at improving the health and well-being of Veterans and future generations.



Give Yourself a Lift with Guided Imagery

VA News – Life can bring physical, mental, and emotional challenges, but support is available. VA provides programs and services designed to help you manage difficult times and improve your well-being. There may not be a quick fix for emotional or physical pain, but small steps can sometimes help make the burden feel more manageable.

One approach is **Guided Imagery**, a relaxation technique that uses positive mental images to promote a sense of calm, comfort, and healing. By focusing on soothing thoughts and peaceful scenes, guided imagery can help reduce stress and anxiety, improve relaxation, ease pain, enhance mood, and support overall well-being. Many people find that it helps them feel more in control, sleep better, and cope more effectively with life's challenges.

Guided imagery sessions can be offered in a clinic or through a virtual visit, either individually or in a group setting. Most sessions last about 20 to 30 minutes and the experience is personalized to your needs and goals, allowing you to play an active role in the process. Working with your provider, you will use guided relaxation and positive mental imagery to create a calming experience that supports your overall well-being.



Holiday Calendar



AUGUST

- 7th Purple Heart Day
- 14th National Navajo Code Talkers Day
- 19th National Aviation Day
- 21st National Senior Citizens Day
- 26th Women's Equality Day
- 27th Lyndon B. Johnson Day (TX)

**Mercedes only*

1st Monday runs 08-03-26

1st Tuesday runs 08-04-26

**Redlands only*

3rd Wednesday runs 08-19-26

3rd Thursday runs 08-20-26

Photo Credit: U.S. Army



SEPTEMBER

- 7th Labor Day – **OFFICE CLOSED**
- 9th California Admission Day (CA)
- 11th Patriot Day
- 18th Air Force Birthday
- 19th National POW/MIA Recognition Day
- 25th American Indian Heritage Day (TX)
- 27th Gold Star Mother's Day

**Mercedes only*

1st Monday runs 08-31-26

1st Tuesday runs 09-01-26

**Redlands only*

3rd Wednesday runs 09-16-26

3rd Thursday runs 09-17-26

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

**HOW TO STAY SAFE WHILE
USING OXYGEN IN THE HOME**



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

Email: ConfidentialChat@VeteransCrisisLine.net

VA CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

Phone: **(855) 260-3274**

Website: www.caregiver.va.gov

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**

Website: <https://tinyurl.com/52uvkwu9>

REPORT ABUSE. BREAK THE SILENCE.

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

SPEAK-UP CAMPAIGN

Website: <https://tinyurl.com/5n68nt29>

Rights patients have if they feel they are being discriminated

Cowboy Caviar

This dip comes together in minutes and is perfect for picnics, parties, or potlucks.

Prep Time: 15 mins

Additional Time: 20mins

Total Time: 35 mins

Servings: 8

Ingredients

- 1 (15.5 oz) can black beans, drained
- 1 (15.5 oz) can black-eyed peas, drained
- 1 (14.5 oz) can diced tomatoes, drained
- 2 cups frozen corn kernels, thawed
- ½ medium onion, diced
- ¼ medium green bell pepper, finely chopped
- ½ cup chopped pickled jalapeño peppers
- ½ teaspoon garlic salt
- 1 cup Italian salad dressing
- ¾ cup chopped cilantro



Photo Credit: Allrecipes/Qi Ai

Directions

Step 1 – Gather all ingredients.

Step 1 – Mix black beans, black-eyed peas, diced tomatoes, corn, onion, bell pepper, and jalapeño peppers together in a large bowl.

Step 1 – Season with garlic salt, then pour in Italian salad dressing and add cilantro. Mix until well coated.

Step 1 – Refrigerate for a minimum of 20 minutes and up to 3 days before serving, allowing the flavors to fully meld.

Word Search

beautiful
capable
friends
funny
girls

happy
heroes
important
kind
loved

powerful
strong
success
valued
women

