

Health Promotion Disease Prevention Program

Getting & Keeping a Healthy Weight

Weight and Health

B. Odermann, MS, RN, HPDP Program Mgr.

As we turn over the calendar page to a new year, many people are looking at ways to make 2017 a better year. One of the most common New Year's resolutions is to lose weight. Being overweight doesn't just affect physical appearance, it means a higher than average risk of many health problems. Those problems include heart disease, stroke, diabetes and certain cancers—diseases that are the leading causes of death in this country. High blood pressure, or hypertension, is about six times more common in people that are obese than those who are at ideal body weight. Obesity can also contribute to depression. The higher the excess weight, the greater the risk of disease.

No pun intended—this is a weighty problem. Estimates are that as many as 70% of Veterans are overweight.

Losing weight can make a big difference in how you feel and in your health. Even a modest weight loss can help. Losing 5% to 10% of excess weight can positively impact blood pressure, control of diabetes, pain and ability to move around comfortably.

This issue of Healthy Veterans focuses on how you can take control of your health by working

to reach a healthier weight. You don't have to do this alone. In fact, research shows that support from a weight management program increases the chances of making successful changes.

In this issue, you'll hear from the coordinator of Fargo VA's weight management program—MOVE!— about how you can use this service to improve your health. Our Health Behavior Coordinator writes about what you can do to make healthy changes. You'll also read the story of one Veteran's journey to lose weight.

We hope you find this information inspiring. There is help right here if you are willing to make changes.



Changing Behavior to Lose Weight

Gillian Freeborn, PsyD
Health Behavior Coordinator

Many people who want to lose weight often focus on diet and how to eliminate unhealthy foods. How you approach and manage the process of weight loss, however, is just as important for a successful weight loss attempt. Changing the way you think about weight loss is critical. That includes how to focus more on lifestyle changes and what strategies you can use to stick with new ways of eating and increasing physical activity.

Here are some strategies that may help with initial and long-term weight loss:

Goal Setting

It is important to set the right goals. Many people focus only on the goal to lower body weight. Instead, try setting a goal that focuses on a single behavior and make it as specific as possible. For example, instead of setting a goal to lose 5 pounds this week, how about “walk for 20 minutes, 5 days this week?” Setting a specific and measurable behavioral goal allows us to have more control over our weight loss.

Monitor Health Behaviors

Try keeping a daily record of your food intake, exercise, and weight. Observing and recording your behaviors has been shown to lead to increased weight loss and follow-through with goals. Self-monitoring also provides valuable information that allows you to be aware of barriers or common patterns that may be getting in the way of success. Then you’re able to look at how these might be improved.

Change the Way you Eat

Changing how you eat may make it easier to eat less, and still leave you feeling satisfied. Eating slower is one way to do this. It takes your brain up to 20 minutes (or more) to process that you are full. Slowing down is a great strategy to help you increase your awareness of how much food your body needs to feel full. Focusing only on your eating, and avoiding distractions such as watching TV or reading while you eat, will also help you listen to your body’s cues that you are full. Another tip is to try using a small plate to limit portion size and still make it appear that you are enjoying a full plate of food.

Reward Yourself...but not with Food

Using rewards for behavior change has been shown to improve success. Consider choosing a reward that is meaningful, timely, and dependent on achieving your goals. Some examples of rewards might include buying a new item, such as an outfit to wear to the gym or new music to listen to while exercising. You might also consider an act of self-kindness like an afternoon off work or an evening out with friends. Frequent, small rewards are more effective than larger rewards that require much more effort.



Adopting a healthier lifestyle is not an easy journey. Success with behavior changes and weight loss needs constant efforts over time. It is largely dependent on mindset and motivation. The strategies above will help to improve your commitment and belief in your ability to achieve success.



Making a Move to Lose Weight

Nancy Gustafson, MS, LRD, CDE, FADA
MOVE! Coordinator

Want or need to lose some weight? Consider joining the VA’s MOVE! Program through the Fargo VA. MOVE! is a lifestyle-based weight management program to help you lose weight, eat healthier, feel better, and improve your health.

MOVE! focuses on nutrition, physical activity, behavior change, and self-management skills. The program is tailored to each Veteran and is offered many ways. You can access the program with in-person and telehealth group classes, and by individual in-person, telephone, and telehealth appointments.

MOVE! staff provide support, guidance, and regular weigh-ins every 2 to 4 weeks throughout 16 MOVE sessions. The MOVE! program includes perks such as a MOVE! Handbook, a pedometer, cookbooks, exercise bands, a one-time one-month fitness center pass, and more.

Many people in MOVE! lose five to ten percent of their starting weight, lower their blood pressure, reduce their blood sugar, and improve their blood fat levels. Losing weight, eating healthy, and being more active can also help reduce chronic pain.

What are you “**weighting**” for? Talk to your provider about MOVE! or call us at (701) 239-3700 Ext 9-4428 or (800) 410-9723 ext. 9-4428 to sign up!



Lose Weight on the Go

MOVE! Coach is a free phone app that offers a new, portable way to participate in MOVE!, the VA’s lifestyle-based weight management program. You’ll have everything you need to set, track, and achieve your diet, physical activity, and weight goals.

MOVE! Coach is a 19-week self-guided program that gives you tools to help track your weight, diet, and physical activity. The app walks you through a series of self-management guides. You’ll complete one guide a week for the first 3 weeks, then one guide every other week over a period of 18 weeks. The app includes specialized guides, educational videos, personalized graphs, problem-solving tools, and calculators to help you track the calories you consume and burn.



MOVE! Coach Mobile is available for iPhones and iPads. For more information, visit www.move.va.gov/movecoach.asp



Weight Loss Group for Veterans with Chronic Pain

Do you suffer from chronic pain? Do you need to lose some weight? Consider joining our specialized MOVE! group for Veterans with chronic pain, led by Dr. Scott Turner and MOVE! program staff.

Losing weight when dealing with chronic pain is challenging. The food we eat can affect inflammation in our bodies, and inflammation affects pain. Learn which foods help reduce inflammation and which foods promote it. Hear tips on how you can be physically active even with chronic pain. Talk with other Veterans dealing with similar issues and get ideas on what works for them.

The MOVE Pain Group meets weekly for 8 weeks on Wednesday afternoon from 1:00-2:30. You can also join the group by telehealth. The next sessions run from March 8 through April 26, 2017.

To learn more or sign up for the MOVE Pain Group call us at (701) 239-3700 ext. 9-3628 or (800) 410-9723 ext. 9-3628



MOVE! Success Story

Amanda Hoffer, DPT
Physical Therapist

“It is possible!”

Doug Rosenbaum was enrolled in MOVE! classes in 2012 and then re-enrolled in 2013 where, over time, he has lost close to 50 pounds.



Before MOVE!

He has been participating in MOVE! through telemedicine classes. Between classes there are telephone visits with VA nutrition staff. He believes his success is mostly due to being held accountable by MOVE! staff and also being able to share and listen to the ideas from his fellow MOVE! peers.

One of the biggest things Doug has had to overcome was his agoraphobia, or fear of leaving his home. Losing weight has increased his self-confidence to get out more with his puppy, who is his protector. Along with taking walks, he also works on chair exercises and the stairs in his home.



After MOVE!

Doug has changed his eating habits and sticks to a 2000 calorie per day diet. This has helped to lower his A1C level to a normal range. Before his weight loss, his level was considered borderline diabetic. He offers that “weight loss is mind over matter” and “it takes concentration”, but the end result has given him more energy and the freedom to get out!



Know Your Numbers

Want to improve your health in 2017? Looking to lose some weight? Check out these numbers:

BMI is a screening test to identify overweight or obesity in people. It estimates total body fat, using height and weight. A normal BMI is between 18.5 and 24.9. If your BMI is > 25,

you may be overweight. If you're an athlete or have a very muscular build, BMI may overestimate body fat. Older persons and those who have lost muscle mass may have higher body fat than BMI reflects.

Number of calories to trim from your diet for a safe weight loss of **1-2** pounds per week: **500 to 1000** calories daily. Losing half a pound per week is progress!

Waist measurement can assess belly fat and predict health risk. For women, a waist measurement **> 35** inches increases health risk. Men who have a waist **> 40** inches have increased health risk.

Losing as little as **5-10%** of your current body weight can lower risk for many diseases.



Basics of Weight Control

To lose weight you need to:

- ▶ Eat and drink fewer calories
- ▶ Increase physical activity
- ▶ Combine the two for the best results

When you take in more calories than you use, you gain weight. Calories that aren't used are stored as body fat.

You can use more calories by increasing physical activity. Manage your weight by balancing what you eat and drink with how active you are. Maintain by balancing.

Tracking what you eat in a food diary helps with awareness of how much and what you're eating. A physical activity diary, or activity tracker, also helps you to know how active or inactive you are.

Adapted from www.move.va.gov

Simple Changes Make a Big Difference

- ▶ Drink a glass of water before eating.
- ▶ Drink water instead of sugar-sweetened liquids.
- ▶ Don't keep snack foods that are high in calories around the house. If they're not available, you won't be as tempted.
- ▶ Keep healthy snacks easily available.
- ▶ Broil, bake, steam or grill your food instead of frying it.
- ▶ Choose lean cuts of meat and cut off visible fat.
- ▶ Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains and low-fat dairy products.
- ▶ Plan snacks and meals ahead of time.

If you have medical conditions that require a special diet different from above, follow the advice you have received from a VA nutritional expert.

Adapted from www.move.va.gov



VA Helps Get You Moving

Are you looking to increase your activity, but don't know where to start? Fargo VA Healthcare System offers a chance to get you moving to improve your mental and physical health.

Who? All Veterans & their support systems

When? Every Tuesday from 9:00-9:30 a.m.

Where? Meet in the Health Hub on 1st floor

What? Warm up/cool down stretches along with either chair exercises or a walking group, depending upon your ability. Led by a physical therapist.

No registration is required. Just show up when you can!

Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT)
Nutrition Clinic

Nutrition plays a critical role in managing weight and health. From heart health and weight management to diabetes and food allergies, nutrition is a vital part of good overall health. Registered Dietitians, your nutrition experts, are here to help! However, this resource can often be overlooked when thinking about the many other aspects of our healthcare.

In an effort to make nutrition education more convenient for Veterans, an open access nutrition clinic was created at Fargo. Veterans have the ability to see a Registered Dietitian on the same day as other scheduled appointments, instead of waiting for an additional appointment to be scheduled in the future.

Patients who have an interest in nutrition-related care, but are not able to commit to the MOVE! program, have the option of a walk-in visit with a dietitian. That option can include following weight, if so desired. Veterans can simply check in at the front desk in the main lobby at the Fargo VA and ask to see the PACT dietitian. Patients outside the Fargo area have the option to let their PACT team know they want to use this service, and they can connect with a dietitian either by telephone or telehealth.

We hope you use this opportunity to receive the nutrition-related care for your health.



What is your Health Age?

A powerful tool can help Veterans better understand their health habits and overall health. You can also get advice on ways to improve well-being. It's called the "HealthLiving Assessment" or "HLA" and it's available at the My HealthVet Web site (<https://www.myhealth.va.gov>).

HLA asks a set of personalized questions. The questions cover things like diet, exercise, weight, family medical history, and alcohol and tobacco use. Answers are used to calculate "health age" and risk for disease. It takes about 20 minutes to complete and is available online 24/7. All registered My HealthVet users can take the HLA, even Veterans' family members and caregivers.

Users can choose health recommendations, then recalculate their health age and disease risk. This can help show which changes most benefit their health. For example, users who select "increase physical activity" will see a positive change in their health age and a lower risk for heart disease and diabetes.

HLA can help Veterans make positive health changes to live a healthier life. Find out how a healthy weight impacts your health age today!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- VHA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention: www.prevention.va.gov

Follow our monthly Healthy Living Messages on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/VAFargo>