

Healthy Living Message

Strive for a Healthy Weight

This information is for clinical staff to share with the Veteran.

Key Message for Veterans: Strive for a healthy weight. If you need to lose weight, losing even a little will help. If you are of normal weight, maintain it. Staying in control of your weight helps you be healthy now and in the future.

Expanded Message for Veterans:

- Maintaining a healthy weight means balancing the number of calories you eat with the calories your body uses or burns.
- If you maintain your weight, you are “in balance.” You are eating close to the same number of calories that your body is using. Your weight will remain stable.
- If you are gaining weight, you are eating more calories than your body is using. These extra calories will be stored as fat, and you will gain weight.
- If you are losing weight, you are eating fewer calories than you are using. Your body is using its fat storage cells for energy, so your weight is decreasing.
- A simple way to know if you are at a healthy weight is to know your body mass index (BMI).
 - Link to BMI table:
http://www.move.va.gov/download/NewHandouts/Miscellaneous/M06_BMIChart.pdf.
 - BMI Guidelines:
 - Underweight = BMI less than 18.5
 - Normal weight = BMI of 18.5 – 24.9
 - Overweight = BMI of 25 – 29.9
 - Obesity = BMI of 30 or greater
- Being a healthy, normal weight is good for you and will help you prevent and control many diseases and conditions. Being overweight or obese increases your risk for diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol problems, heart disease, gallbladder disease, female health disorders, arthritis, some types of cancer, and sleep apnea.
- Eat wisely and choose a variety of low calorie, high nutrition foods and beverages in the basic food groups. Select foods that limit your intake of fats, cholesterol, added sugars, salt, and alcohol.
- Be as physically active as possible. For health benefits, adults should do at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes a week of vigorous intensity



aerobic physical activity or an equal combination of both. You'll see a difference in your weight and your health.

- Lifestyle changes that include healthy eating, regular physical activity, and maintaining a healthy weight are the keys to good health. If you need to lose weight, losing even a little will help.
- Losing as little as 5-10% of your current body weight can lower your risks for many diseases.
- A reasonable and safe weight loss is 1-2 lbs per week. It might take 6 months to reach your ultimate goal, but making gradual lifestyle changes can help you maintain a healthier weight for life.
- If you are normal weight, congratulations! To maintain your weight, engage in regular physical activity, eat wisely and weigh yourself regularly.

Message Delivery by Clinical Staff:

During Face to Face Encounters:

- Discuss during routine primary care encounters.
- Discuss during any clinical or patient education encounter (individual or group, in person, virtual, or by telephone) if information is requested.
- Screen patients based on BMI and offer enrollment in MOVE! (if applicable) if patient expresses desire to participate.
- Discuss and review results of the VHA online Health Risk Assessment (under development) during a clinical visit.
- Use print, audiovisual, and electronic media.
- Encourage social support interventions in the community setting (family, buddy system, contracts, etc.).

At the Facility Level:

- Participate in weight management local and national campaigns and events (VA and non VA).
- Support and participate in community-wide campaigns and events.
- Post "point of decision" prompts (example: to encourage stair use, park far away, etc.).

Important Considerations:

If a Veteran needs more intensive intervention in this area than the clinical staff member delivering the message is able to provide, the staff member should refer the Veteran to the appropriate clinical staff, clinic or program for further education or clinical care, following local referral/consult protocol.



Clinical Staff Tools: (Staff may also benefit by reviewing the Veteran Tools listed in the next section).

- MOVE! Intranet Website for staff tools: vaww.move.med.va.gov
- MOVE! Online Training – access via intranet: vaww.move.med.va.gov
- MOVE! Group Sessions: <http://www.move.va.gov/GrpSessions.asp>
- MOVE! Share point: vaww.national.cmpo.va.gov/ncp/move/default.aspx
- MOVE! Reference Manual (updated Clinical Reference Manual and Quick Start Manual) via intranet <http://vaww.move.med.va.gov/moveReferenceManual.asp>
- MOVE! Toolkit and Marketing Items (brochures, staff introduction, patient introduction, public service announcements, posters, point of decision prompts, pocket guides, 2009 MOVE Forward Together Training DVD) via intranet
- Health coach and TEACH training resources website toolkit (presentations, posters, logos, field reports, media products) via intranet
- Guidance regarding community partnering, national outreach events
- Health Risk Appraisal (under development)
- VISN and Facility MOVE! Coordinators, Physician Champions and MOVE! Teams
- NCP Conference Calls, MOVE! Conference Calls, Health Promotion Disease Prevention Committee Conference Calls
- BMI Adult Calculator
http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/adult_bmi/english_bmi_calculator/bmi_calculator.html*
- BMI Table
http://www.move.va.gov/download/NewHandouts/Miscellaneous/M06_BMIChart.pdf

Veteran Tools:

- MOVE! Internet Website for patients: www.move.va.gov
- MOVE!23 Patient Questionnaire www.move.va.gov/move23.asp
- MOVE! Success Stories www.move.va.gov/SuccessStories.asp
- Over 120 different MOVE! Handouts: www.move.va.gov/handouts.asp?all
- Aim for a Healthy Weight www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/aim_hwt.pdf*
- Healthfinder: Watch Your Weight
<http://www.healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=25>*

* Indicates that the link leads to a non-VA website. The VA is not responsible for the content that is on the site.



Supporting Information:

Definitions:

- Body Mass Index (BMI): BMI is a screening test for the identification of overweight/obesity. BMI estimates total body fat based on height and weight. The formula for the calculation is:

Formula: $\text{weight (kg)} / [\text{height (m)}]^2$

Calculation: $[\text{weight (kg)} / \text{height (cm)} / \text{height (cm)}] \times 10,000$

- Normal Weight: A normal weight is a BMI between 18.5 and 24.9. BMI may overestimate body fat in athletes and others who have a muscular build and underestimate body fat in older persons and others who have lost muscle mass.
- Waist Circumference Measurement: Waist circumference measurement can assess abdominal girth and provide an independent prediction of risk over and above that given by BMI alone. Risk increases with a waist measurement greater than 35 inches for women or greater than 40 inches for men.
- Calorie reduction formula to lose weight: For a weight loss of 1-2 lbs per week, daily intake (food and beverages) should be reduced by 500 to 1,000 calories.

Evidence and/or Guidelines:

- Normal weight patients (BMI between 18.5 and 24.9) should receive information about healthy lifestyle behaviors, be advised of their BMI and their weight range margins, and instructed to return for further evaluation should those margins be exceeded. [Expert Opinion]
- Health can be improved with relatively minor weight losses. A weight loss of 10% may ameliorate health risks associated with excessive body weight (see first 2 references below).
- The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) evidence review and guidance for healthy lifestyle (diet and physical activity) is scheduled for public release late in 2010.
- Currently the USPSTF recommends that clinicians screen all adult patients for obesity and offer intensive counseling and behavioral interventions to promote sustained weight loss for obese adults. [Rating: B Recommendation](#)^{*1-18}

VHA Guidance:

- VA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
[MOVE! Program Handbook 1101.1 March 2006](#)
- VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline For The Screening & Management of Overweight and Obesity
[Practice Guideline November 2006*](#)



VHA Program Office Stakeholders:

- National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
- MOVE! Program
- My HealtheVet
- Veterans Canteen Service
- Primary Care
- Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards
- Office of Nursing Service
- Nutrition and Food Service
- Office of Information and Technology
- Geriatrics and Extended Care

VHA Content Experts:

- National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
- MOVE! Program
- Nutrition and Food Services
- Mental Health Service
- Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
- Veterans Canteen Service

Source Documents:

1. Achieving and Maintaining a Healthy Weight. <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/>.
2. The 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines>.
3. Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults-The Evidence Report. National Institutes of Health. *Obes Res.* Sep 1998;6 Suppl 2:51S-209S.
4. Seagle HM, Strain GW, Makris A, Reeves RS. Position of the American Dietetic Association: weight management. *J Am Diet Assoc.* Feb 2009;109(2):330-346.
5. CDC. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Nutrition website. <http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/>.
6. VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline for Screening and Management of Overweight and Obesity: VHA; 2006.
7. MOVE! Weight Management Program Clinical Reference Manual. 2nd ed:www.move.va.gov/download/Resources/moveCRM.pdf.
8. MOVE! Weight Management Program for Veterans Handout Booklet. <http://www.move.va.gov/Handouts.asp>. Accessed Version 3.5.
9. MOVE! Group Sessions. <http://www.move.va.gov/GrpSessions.asp>.



10. Finding Your Way to a Healthier You: Based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/pdf/brochure.pdf>.
11. The Guide to Community Preventive Services-Nutrition - website.
<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/nutrition/index.html>.
12. Aim for a Healthy Weight.
http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/.
13. Assessing Your Weight. *Healthy Weight - It's not a diet, it's a lifestyle!*
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/index.html>.
14. Balancing Calories. *Healthy Weight - It's not a diet, it's a lifestyle!*
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/calories/index.html>.
15. Healthy Eating for a Healthy Weight. *Healthy Weight - It's not a diet, it's a lifestyle!* http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/index.html.
16. Losing Weight. *Healthy Weight - It's not a diet, it's a lifestyle!*
http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/losing_weight/index.html.
17. Preventing Weight Gain. *Healthy Weight - It's not a diet, it's a lifestyle!*
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/prevention/>.
18. Physical Activity for a Healthy Weight. *Healthy Weight - It's not a diet, it's a lifestyle!* http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/physical_activity/.

