

# Veterans' Health Today

WINTER 2007

Diabetes Q&A

Welcoming our newest veterans

New veteran ID cards

**VA DESERT PACIFIC  
HEALTHCARE NETWORK**





**Q:** I've just been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. I knew it ran in my family, and I'm angry because I didn't take better care of myself over the years. Are my feelings normal, and how can I turn that anger around?

**A:** A diabetes diagnosis may trigger unexpected emotions. While feeling angry or blaming yourself is normal, it isn't helpful. Genetics plays a large part in diabetes and your genes are a fact of life. If a family member had diabetes complications and lost a limb, became blind or required dialysis, your risk of those complications may be higher. But with proper care and management of your diabetes, you can beat those odds and avoid the same thing happening to you.

Rather than look back at what you might have done differently, it's more productive to recognize that you're better off knowing you have diabetes. Once diagnosed, you have the ability to make lifestyle changes that will improve your health and reduce your risk of complications.

Denial is also common among the newly diagnosed, but it may actually be your way of coping with the news initially and gradually accepting it. Continued denial, however – telling yourself that one bite won't hurt or I don't have time to test right now – can pose serious health risks.

Talk to your health care provider if you experience any of the following for more than two weeks:

- ➔ Feeling sad, nervous or guilty.
- ➔ Inability to accept your diagnosis.
- ➔ Difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep or sleeping more than usual.
- ➔ Eating considerably more or less than you did prior to your diagnosis.
- ➔ Problems concentrating, constant worry or having trouble making decisions.

# Diabetes

## Q&A

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### My Health@Vet

Online at [www.myhealth.va.gov/](http://www.myhealth.va.gov/)  
Review health and disease information, record personal statistics such as blood sugar and weight, and maintain an activity journal.

### American Diabetes Association

Online at [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)  
1-800-DIABETES  
(1-800-342-2383)

Read the latest diabetes news, find meal and snack recipes, join a message board, and find community events.

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Online at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
Calculate your BMI and learn more about weight management. Search key word “BMI.”

**Q:** My primary care provider referred me to a dietitian. What is a dietitian and how can he/she help me?

**A:** A dietitian is a specially trained professional that is an integral part of your diabetes health care team. He/she can explain how food works inside your body, why it’s important to make good food choices, and how to make smart selections when eating out or attending special events. Besides teaching you to recognize foods and ingredients that are healthy for you, a dietitian can show you how to read food labels, provide tasty recipes or help locate appropriate cookbooks, and help personalize an eating plan based on your desired weight, lifestyle and medication. If you’re carrying a few extra pounds, a dietitian can help you lose reasonable amounts of weight over a proper period of time.

**Q:** What things should my primary care doctor and I do to prevent complications of diabetes?

**A:** Two important actions are to take your medication as your doctor prescribes and keep your weight at a proper level for your height—this is known as Body Mass Index, or BMI. It can be calculated and is used to determine a “healthy” weight for your height and is different for men and women. You should have periodic tests, one or more times a year, of your blood to determine how well-controlled your diabetes is – this is called a Hemoglobin A1c test. A value for HgbA1c below 7 is excellent; not all diabetic patients can achieve this without having symptoms of low blood sugar, in which case, you should aim to achieve a level of less than 9. You should keep your blood pressure in normal range (below 130/80) and have

annual tests of your blood “fat” levels to maintain your LDL level less than 120. Your doctor will also order periodic eye exams to make sure you do not have retinal damage from high blood sugar, and should evaluate your feet for nerve changes at least once a year. Depending on your other medical conditions, your doctor may order other tests and/or medications to help prevent or to control complications of diabetes.

**Q:** Besides my doctor, what resources do I have for learning about diabetes?

**A:** The more you know about diabetes, the more in control you’ll feel. Be careful about where you get the information, though. If your local VA facility doesn’t offer a formal education program, contact the American Diabetes Association to find a source in your community. Well-meaning friends and neighbors may want to share their experiences, but be wary about their advice on what to eat, how to take insulin, manage blood sugar, etc.

Remember, diabetes is not a death sentence. On the contrary, the diagnosis may have saved your life! Learn all you can about it from good sources, follow the advice of your primary health care provider, and bravely go forth to beat the odds!

### COMMON DIABETES MYTHS

- Myth #1** Diabetes is contagious.
- Myth #2** People with diabetes should never eat sweets or chocolate.
- Myth #3** Eating large amounts of sugar causes diabetes.
- Myth #4** People with diabetes should eat special diabetic or dietetic foods.
- Myth #5** Insulin causes weight gain so you shouldn’t take it.



# Welcoming our newest veterans



“The bottom line is that we are here to ensure a seamless transition from DoD to the VA with no disruption in care. We try to make it easy. We want to get veterans enrolled as soon as possible so they can fully utilize all of the benefits.”

**W**elcome home and thank you for your service to our country. We at the VA understand that one of the last things on your mind when returning home is health care. We also understand that returning combat veterans often overlook their current health issues in order to return home sooner. At the same time, we know that good health care is a benefit you’ve not only deserved, but one that you need to take advantage of now so that it will always be available to you. That is why we’re continuously trying to make it easy for you to enroll.

When Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) service members leave active duty, a VA team is invited to post deployment sessions to share information about VA benefits with veterans and their family members. VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network staff attend these sessions not only to greet combat veterans and outreach to their families, but we are there to educate veterans about our available services and support systems. We want to make sure, that at the very least, you have the right information on our locations and services so that you can access care now and when you need it.

Whether returning to reserve status or separating from the military completely, newly-returning combat veterans are eligible for up to two years of primary care, dental care, rehabilitation, or help with readjustment issues (such as post-traumatic stress disorder or substance abuse). VA services do not require a co-payment for these two years, and veterans who enroll can start receiving care the day they leave active duty—they can even be enrolled for benefits and set scheduled appointments at the post deployment sessions or other outreach meetings!

According to Lisa Tinch, OIF/OEF Coordinator, the benefit information that veterans receive at outreach events is part of a collaborative effort between the Department of Defense (DoD) and the VA. “The bottom line is that we are here to ensure a seamless transition from DoD to the VA with no disruption in care. We try to make it easy. We want to get veterans enrolled as soon as possible so they can fully utilize all of the benefits.”

If a veteran chooses not to sign up for health care benefits at an outreach event they are still entitled to care, but must complete the enrollment process at another time. Tinch adds, “They can come in any time. Every VA facility has a point-of-contact and a case-manager to help coordinate each individual veterans care.”

In addition to participating in post deployment briefings, the VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network makes other outreach efforts through periodic phone calls and mailings to veterans, and by ensuring that information is easily accessible through the internet at [www.visn22.med.va.gov](http://www.visn22.med.va.gov). A full range of high quality health care services are available to our newest veterans through large medical centers, smaller community clinics, and Vet Centers that specialize in readjustment services for the whole family.

For OIF/OEF veterans that have serious injuries, VA offers Level I and II Poly Trauma Centers that offer state-of-the-art specialized care to meet the needs of these veterans as they transfer from the DoD system of care to VA. The VA Medical Center in Palo Alto, California provides Level I services with the Medical Center in West Los Angeles offering Level II.

We are here for you. Come and enroll and experience the high quality care VA provides all veterans.

# Got your new Veterans Identification Card?



**V**A has announced the release of a new Veterans Identification Card (VIC) that protects the privacy of your personal information. The new card no longer shows your Social Security Number or date of birth. Your personal information is now coded on the back of your card, so you will still need to safeguard the new card like any other identification card or credit card. The new cards will show “Former POW”, “Purple Heart” and “Service-Connected” for enrolled veterans with confirmed status. In addition, the cards have a new design with an enhanced color photo to provide positive identification while visiting VA medical facilities.

If you have an old identification card, contact your local VA medical center or clinic and arrange to get a new Veterans Identification Card. After your enrollment is verified and your picture is taken, the card will be mailed to you within five to seven days at the address you provide. If the U.S. Postal Service cannot deliver the card to you, it will be returned to the facility where you requested the card. VA is phasing out the old veterans identification cards so it's important that you get your new card as soon as possible.

For additional information about obtaining your new card, call your local VA enrollment department or the Health Benefits Service Center at 1-877-222-VETS (8387) for assistance.



## The Veterans Identification CARD

with Former POW & Purple Heart Identifiers

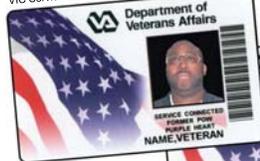


### Great Things About The VIC Card...

- **Service Connected, Former POW & PH identifiers will be displayed on the front of the card**
- **Modern and patriotic design**
- **Limited personal info displayed to ensure and promote privacy**
- **Enhanced color photo**
- **Barcode scanning & magnetic swipe capability**
- **Positive identification while visiting VA medical facilities**
- **Cards are mailed directly to veterans or to the facility**
- **Once the veteran's picture is taken and eligibility is verified, the card will be mailed; usually within 5-to-7 days**

The Department of Veterans Affairs is providing a Veterans Identification Card (VIC) for use at VA medical facilities. The VIC protects the privacy of sensitive information. It does not show Social Security numbers or date of birth on the card. The VIC includes a larger, enhanced color picture and will display Service Connected, Former POW and/or Purple Heart indicators on the front of the card. Only veterans who are eligible for VA medical benefits will receive the new VIC. Once the veteran's picture is taken for the card at the VA facility and eligibility is verified, the VIC will be mailed to the veteran's address, usually within 5 to 7 days. Please note that the VIC cannot be used as a credit, banking or insurance card. It does not authorize payment of care at non-VA facilities.

VIC Service Connected Sample w/ POW/PH (Front)



VIC Non Service Connected Sample (Front)



VIC (Back)



Your VIC point-of-Contact

VHA Office of Information  
National Training and Education Office - HSITES  
May 2006

Employees can find more information pertaining to this effort at: <http://vaww.vista.med.va.gov/VistaU/vic/>

# How are we doing?

*Thank you for your service to our nation and for choosing to receive your health care at one of our VA medical centers or clinics.*



**A**s part of receiving your care with us, you may be asked to complete a special survey that has you rate the care we provide. We encourage you to take the time to offer your evaluation and comments. We realize there are many questions, but they all deal with different parts of your care. We take your responses very seriously, as they help give us a better understanding of how we can provide you with exceptional health care.

It is our hope that you will be able to rate us as “excellent” or “always” meeting your expectations. We do realize, however, despite our best intentions we may not totally meet your expectations in some areas. Should that be the case, we would like to hear how we can serve you better.

We encourage you to contact one of our customer service staff to discuss your concerns. With your help, and our dedicated staff, we can continue delivering veterans “the best care anywhere.”

## Customer Service Staff

### Healthcare System Location

Greater Los Angeles  
Southern Nevada  
Loma Linda  
Long Beach  
San Diego

### Phone Number

(310) 268-3068  
(702) 636-6337  
(909) 583-6133  
(562) 826-5467  
(858) 552-4392



**Share VA health care with a fellow veteran –**

*tell your neighbors or friends*

**VA Health Benefits:**

**877-222-VETS**

**[www.visn22.med.va.gov](http://www.visn22.med.va.gov)**

**Flu Shots**  
*It's not too late!*

Flu shots are free for all veterans enrolled with the VA. Get yours today at drive-through or walk-in clinics at your local VA medical center.

# PROVIDING SAFE CARE FOR VETERANS IS OUR PRIMARY CONCERN

*Please tell us your ideas for improving patient safety at your VA Medical Center*

Send an email message to  
[V22PatientSafety@med.va.gov](mailto:V22PatientSafety@med.va.gov)

## Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations:

VA facilities in So. California and So. Nevada will receive unannounced surveys from the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations in 2007. All employees, patients and families have the right to contact the medical center leadership without fear of punishment should they have a concern about quality of care or patient safety. If the concerns cannot be resolved at the facility level, the patient or family may contact the Joint Commission's Office of Quality Monitoring by either calling (800) 994-6610 or by e-mailing [complaint@jcaho.org](mailto:complaint@jcaho.org).

## VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network Vet Centers

### Anaheim Vet Center

859 South Harbor Boulevard  
Anaheim, CA 92805-5157  
714-776-0161

### Corona Vet Center

800 Magnolia Ave., Suite 110  
Corona, CA 92879-3123  
951-734-0525

### East Los Angeles Vet Center

5400 E. Olympic Boulevard  
Suite 150  
Commerce, CA 90022-5147  
323-728-9966

### Las Vegas Vet Center

1919 S. Jones Blvd., Suite A  
Las Vegas, NV 89146  
702-251-7873

### Los Angeles Vet Center

1045 W. Redondo Beach Boulevard  
Suite 150  
Gardena, CA 90247-4129  
310-767-1221

### San Bernardino Vet Center

155 W. Hospitality Lane, Suite 140  
San Bernardino, CA 92408-3305  
909-890-0797

### San Diego Vet Center

2900 Sixth Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92103-1003  
619-294-2040

### Sepulveda Vet Center

9737 Haskell Avenue  
Sepulveda, CA 91343-1618  
818-892-9227

### Ventura Vet Center

790 E. Santa Clara, Suite 100  
Ventura, CA 93001-2964  
805-585-1860

### Vista Vet Center

1830 West Drive, Suites 103/104  
Vista, CA 92083-6125  
760-643-2070

### West Los Angeles Vet Center

5730 Uplander Way, Suite 100  
Culver City, CA 90230-6615  
310-641-0326

## Please . . . Don't be a "No Show"

### Help us serve you and your fellow veterans better.

Here is how you can help:

- ✓ If you cannot keep your scheduled appointment, *always call* to cancel as soon as possible.
- ✓ Your cancelled appointment will be offered to another veteran.
- ✓ Please inform us of changes in your address or phone number.

*Thank you for your help!*

# REACHING US IS EASY

## ★ VA Medical Centers

**VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System**  
P.O. Box 360001  
Las Vegas, NV 89036  
702-636-3000

**Mike O'Callaghan Federal Hospital**  
4700 Las Vegas Boulevard North  
Las Vegas, NV 89191  
702-653-2215

**VA Loma Linda Healthcare System**  
11201 Benton Street  
Loma Linda, CA 92357  
909-825-7084

**VA Long Beach Healthcare System**  
5901 East 7th Street  
Long Beach, CA 90822  
562-826-8000

**VA San Diego Healthcare System**  
3350 La Jolla Village Drive  
San Diego, CA 92161  
858-552-8585

**VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System**  
11301 Wilshire Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90073  
310-478-3711

## ▲ Community Clinics

**Anaheim**  
1801 W. Romneya Drive  
3rd Floor, Suite 303  
Anaheim, CA 92801  
714-780-5400

**Antelope Valley**  
547 W. Lancaster Blvd.  
Lancaster, CA 93534  
661-729-8655

**Bakersfield**  
1801 Westwind Drive  
Bakersfield, CA 93301  
661-632-1800

**Cabrillo**  
2001 River Avenue  
Long Beach, CA 90810  
562-826-8414



**Symbol Key**  
★ VA Medical Centers  
▲ Community-Based Outpatient Clinics

**Chula Vista**  
835 3rd Avenue  
Chula Vista, CA 91910  
619-409-1600

**Corona**  
800 Magnolia Avenue #101  
Corona, CA 92879  
951-817-8820

**East Los Angeles**  
5400 E. Olympic Boulevard #150  
City of Commerce, CA 90040  
323-725-7557

**Escondido**  
815 East Pennsylvania Avenue  
Escondido, CA 92025  
760-466-7020

**Gardena**  
1251 Redondo Beach Boulevard  
3rd Floor  
Gardena, CA 90247  
310-851-4705

**Henderson**  
2920 Green Valley Parkway,  
Suite 215  
Henderson, NV 89014  
702-456-3825

**Imperial Valley**  
528 G Street  
Brawley, CA 92227  
760-344-9085

**Las Vegas - Homeless Veterans**  
912 West Owens Avenue  
Las Vegas, NV 89106  
702-636-4077

**Lompoc**  
338 S. Dakota Avenue, Bldg. 13850  
Vandenberg AFB, CA 93437  
805-605-2120

**Los Angeles**  
351 E. Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
213-253-2677

**Mission Valley**  
8810 Rio San Diego Drive  
San Diego, CA 92108  
619-400-5000

**Oxnard**  
250 W. Citrus Grove Avenue  
Suite 140  
Oxnard, CA 93030  
805-983-6384

**Palm Desert**  
41865 Boardwalk, Suite 103  
Palm Desert, CA 92211  
760-341-5570

**Pahrump**  
2100 E. Calvada Boulevard  
Pahrump, NV 89048  
775-727-7535

**Pasadena**  
420 W. Las Tunas Drive  
San Gabriel, CA 91776  
626-289-5973

**San Luis Obispo**  
1288 Morro St., #200  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
805-543-1233

**Santa Ana**  
Bristol Medical Center  
2740 S. Bristol Street  
1st Floor, Suite 110  
Santa Ana, CA 92704  
714-825-3500

**Santa Barbara**  
4440 Calle Real  
Santa Barbara, CA 93110  
805-683-1491

**Sepulveda**  
16111 Plummer Street  
Sepulveda, CA 91343  
818-891-7711

**South Los Angeles**  
3737 E. Martin Luther King Jr.  
Blvd., Suite 515  
Lynwood, CA 90262  
310-537-6825

**Sun City**  
28125 Bradley Road  
Suite 130  
Sun City, CA 92586  
951-672-1931

**Upland**  
1238 E. Arrow Highway,  
No. 100  
Upland, CA 91786  
909-946-5348

**Victorville**  
12138 Industrial Boulevard  
Suite 120  
Victorville, CA 92392  
760-951-2599

**Vista**  
1840 West Drive  
Vista, CA 92083  
760-643-2000

**Whittier/Santa Fe Springs**  
10210 Orr and Day Road  
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670  
562-864-5565

**Veterans' Health Today**  
5901 E. 7th St.  
Long Beach, CA 90822

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This publication is provided as a service to enrolled veterans in So. California and So. Nevada.

Additional copies can be found at [www.visn22.med.va.gov/publicaffairs.htm](http://www.visn22.med.va.gov/publicaffairs.htm)  
Address changes should be sent to your local VA medical center.