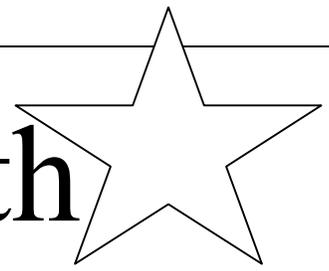


# To Your Health



VA Palo Alto Health Care System ★ Patient Education Newsletter ★ Spring 2002

*"Promoting good health through information"*

## SPRINGING INTO SNEEZIN' SEASON

Rael J. Arriola, PharmD



Spring is **here and** so is allergy season! About 26 million Americans suffer from chronic seasonal allergies. Spring is traditionally the main season when allergies blossom because of new growth on trees and weeds. Tiny particles, known as pollen, are released from these plants and they travel through the air, entering human noses and throats, triggering seasonal allergic rhinitis, also known as "hay fever."

### *What are the symptoms?*

- Sneezing with a runny or clogged nose
- Coughing and post-nasal drip
- Itching eyes, nose, and throat
- Watering eyes
- Conjunctivitis (inflammation of the membrane that lines the eyelids, causing red-rimmed, swollen eyes and crusting of the eyelids)

### *How can I reduce my allergy symptoms?*

- Keep windows shut to prevent pollens from entering your home.
- Purchase an air filter to clean out pollens, molds and dust.
- Minimize clutter; book and magazine collections can collect dust and pollens.
- Keep your pets outside or bathe them regularly if they are indoors.

*Continued on back...*

### **MAY IS STROKE AWARENESS MONTH**

Stroke is the #3 killer in the nation. Know the warning signs of stroke:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg, especially on 1 side of the body
- Sudden confusion or trouble speaking
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden difficulties with walking or loss of balance

If you notice one or more of these signs in another person or yourself, do not wait. Call 911 immediately and get the person to a hospital right away! Treatment can be more effective if given quickly. Every second counts!

## ♥ RECIPE FOR HEALTH ♥

### RAINBOW FRUIT SALAD

from [www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

### Ingredients

#### Fruit salad:

- 1 mango, peeled & diced
- 2 cups fresh blueberries
- 2 bananas, sliced
- 2 cups fresh strawberries, sliced
- 2 cups seedless grapes
- 2 nectarines, unpeeled, sliced
- 1 kiwi fruit, peeled and sliced

#### Honey ginger sauce:

- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1/4 tsp ground ginger
- Dash of nutmeg

### Directions

- 1) Prepare the fruit.
- 2) Combine all the ingredients for the sauce.
- 3) Just before serving, pour honey **ginger** sauce over the fruit.

Yield: 12 servings--Serving Size: 4 oz cup

#### *Per serving:*

Calories	96	Total fat	1g	Sodium	4 mg
Cholesterol	0	Saturated fat	<1g		

## ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR OUTPATIENT VA DENTAL CARE?

Veterans often have questions about whether or not they can get dental care at the VA. Federal law limits the dental benefits provided by the VA. Our VAPAHCS dentists are committed to providing quality care to eligible veterans. This article answers some common questions about who may qualify for outpatient VA dental care.

### *Who is eligible for routine outpatient dental care?*

- Veterans who receive money for a service-connected dental disability or those who are 100% service-connected for any condition.
- Veterans who were prisoners of war for 90 days or more.
- Veterans recently discharged from active duty that did not have their dental treatment completed before discharge. They can receive one-time treatment if their DD214 shows dental treatment was not completed. An application must be made within 90 days of separation from active duty.

*Continued on back...*

*Continued... (Dental)*

**Who is eligible for emergency dental care?**

- Veterans with an outpatient dental emergency such as severe pain, infection, trauma, or significant bleeding may receive an evaluation free of charge. Treatment for patients not otherwise eligible is limited to treating pain or treating a dental condition that endangers the patient's life or health. These patients will be billed for the treatment and referred to the private sector for routine care needs. The present fee for emergency care is \$157.00 per visit.

**If I received routine dental care while I was in the service are my teeth service connected?**

- No. Only those veterans that have been rated under the 9900 series of the schedule for rating disabilities are service connected for their teeth.

**Do any other veterans receive outpatient dental care?**

- Veterans who have a very serious medical condition, which could be complicated by certain dental problems, may receive necessary limited dental care to improve the dental condition. Examples include patients undergoing heart transplant or valve replacement surgery, chemotherapy or radiation therapy.
- Veterans approved for a VA vocational rehabilitation program that are referred by their rehabilitation counselor may receive basic dental care necessary to enable them to enter or remain in their rehabilitation training.
- Any veteran with a non-healing oral lesion can be seen for a head and neck oral cancer screening examination. Biopsies may be done to rule out oral cancer.
- Veterans receiving outpatient medical care may receive limited dental care if the dental condition is determined by their VA medical and dental care providers to be complicating a medical condition currently under treatment by the VA.
- Patients who were seen for dental treatment while hospitalized in the VA medical center may receive limited outpatient dental care to follow up on their dental condition.

**If I am not eligible for routine dental care from the VA can I get information about reduced fee dental services available in the community?**

- Yes. Stop by one of our dental clinics and ask for a list of reduced fee dental services in the Greater Bay Area.

The laws that determine who qualifies for Dental Care are even more complex than the summary given above. If you believe that you qualify for VA Dental Care, then contact the eligibility office to verify your service connection and to apply for care. You may also discuss your problems with your health care provider who can review your conditions. Your health care provider may refer you for a Dental Consult to see if you are eligible for Outpatient Dental Care. If you have questions about Dental Care, you may contact Dr. Beeninga or Dr. Beatty at extension 65621. ★



**POISON CONTROL NUMBER**



Did you know that wherever you are in the country you only have to remember one phone number to be linked to a poison control center? The number is **1-800-222-1222**. Your local poison control number will continue to work. According to the Food and Drug Administration, the 65 poison control centers in the United States handle more than 6000 calls a day. They help in emergencies as well as answering questions on everything from medicines and household products to insect bites. So, keep this number handy, at home and on the road! ★

**To Your Health is published quarterly for VAPAHCS veterans and their families.**

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*Continued... (Allergy)*

**What over-the-counter medications are available to treat my symptoms?**

- Antihistamines: *Chlorpheniramine* or *diphenhydramine* are effective for runny noses, sneezing, and itching, but can make you drowsy.
- Decongestants: *Pseudoephedrine* can help relieve symptoms such as congestion, stuffy nose, and discomfort in the sinus areas.
- Nasal sprays: Decongestants can also be found in nasal sprays, but these may have a "rebound effect" and after about 3 days, they will make your nose even more congested. One nasal spray that does not cause this effect is *cromolyn sodium*.

Over-the-counter medications should not be used for more than a few days. If these medications are ineffective or cause intolerable side effects, ask your **provider** about prescribing non-sedating antihistamines or topical nasal steroid sprays. ★

This information was extracted from [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov).

