

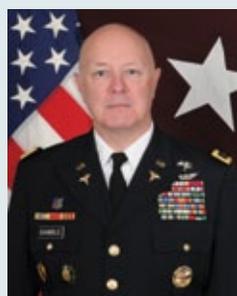
*The Doctor is in ...*

## Electronic Health Records and You

**W. Bryan Gamble, M.D., FACS**

*Brigadier General, US Army*

*Deputy Director, TRICARE Management Activity*



**H**ealth professionals have long known the promise of electronic health records. For more than two decades, the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have been working together to apply the benefits of this fast evolving technology. The Departments already share more clinical health information than any

two health care systems in the world and, together, will comprise the largest integrated health network in the world, with more than 18 million total members worldwide.

The new DoD/VA Interagency Program Office (IPO), where I serve as Director, is responsible for implementing an integrated Electronic Health Record (iEHR) for the DoD and VA. When operational, the iEHR will follow you from the first day of your military career, throughout your lifetime. It will be the single source for service members, veterans and beneficiaries to access their medical history. Additionally, it will ensure the seamless transition of care when service members go from active duty to veteran status.

Your complete medical record will follow you when you move, switch medical providers or need emergency care while traveling. Your family medical history and medical allergies will be immediately available to every doctor or nurse who treats you within DoD and VA health systems. With the ability to view consistent and comprehensive patient data, medical providers will be able to give you better care.

Researchers will also be able to study trends, securely and privately, across the large population in the system. This can lead to new medical breakthroughs that benefit everyone. For example, we can develop a registry of diabetes patients to measure the outcomes of current treatments to improve treatment protocols and quality of care now and for generations to come. A diabetes patient registry could help us minimize the number of amputations or instances of blindness.

The iEHR is a key component of the President's Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record (VLER) initiative—a groundbreaking vision for the future of electronic data sharing among federal agencies and the private sector. If you receive private sector health care, VLER Health is a way to send those requests for care out to the private sector and, most importantly, to bring that data back. This ensures you have a complete medical record that captures all the information about all the care you receive.

We are committed to a fully operational iEHR no later than 2017, with clinical capabilities deployed in Hampton Roads, Va., and San Antonio by 2014—a significant challenge, but one that is critical for our nation's service members, veterans and beneficiaries.

For more information about the DoD/VA IPO, visit [www.tricare.mil/tma/ipo](http://www.tricare.mil/tma/ipo). To learn more about the role of electronic health records in today's medicine, go to [www.healthit.hhs.gov](http://www.healthit.hhs.gov). ■

### Inside This Issue ...

- Stay Healthy for the Holidays
- Fight the Flu: Get Vaccinated
- Filling Prescriptions with TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery
- Three Ways to Reduce Your Child's Risk of Obesity
- TRICARE West Region To Be Served by UnitedHealthcare Military & Veterans
- Five Ways to Save Time Online



**An Important Note About TRICARE Program Information:** At the time of printing, this information is current. It is important to remember that TRICARE policies and benefits are governed by public law and federal regulations. Changes to TRICARE programs are continually made as public law and/or federal regulations are amended. **Military treatment facility guidelines and policies may be different than those outlined in this publication.** For the most recent information, contact your TRICARE regional contractor, TRICARE Service Center, or local military treatment facility.

## Stay Healthy for the Holidays

Throughout the holiday season and into the new year, you may face many choices that impact your overall health, from what you eat to how you exercise to whether you go to the doctor.

Food choices, physical activity, sleep, stress, tobacco use, alcohol use and behavioral health all impact your well-being. For instance, unhealthy eating and little exercise over the holidays can lead to higher blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose, plus weight gain. These are major risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

You can reduce your risk of serious health problems by making good decisions during the holiday season and throughout the year, including:

- **Eating a balanced diet.** Choosing healthy meals and snacks can help you maintain a healthy weight. Even when holiday treats are in great supply, don't skip your vegetables, fruits and healthy sources of protein, including poultry and fish. A well-balanced diet will give you the vitamins and nutrients you need to keep up your energy, immunity and overall health. Ask your doctor if you think you may need to change your diet by reducing salt intake, eating fewer calories, adding supplements or making other changes.
- **Enjoying holiday treats in moderation.** For most people, it is difficult to avoid the rich foods of the holiday season. You can help prevent overindulging by eating healthy snacks before holiday meals or parties. Watch your portion sizes—try using a small plate, or filling more than half of your plate with vegetables.

- **Exercising regularly.** Physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight and help lower your blood pressure and cholesterol. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults get two hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (e.g., brisk walking) every week and do muscle-strengthening activities on two or more days a week.<sup>1</sup> You can make small changes to move more, including taking the stairs instead of the elevator or parking farther from your destination at the office or shopping mall.
- **Not using tobacco.** Cigarette smoking greatly increases your risk for heart disease, lung disease, cancer and other diseases. Smokeless tobacco use can also cause life-threatening problems including cancer.
- **Limiting alcohol consumption.** Alcohol use can cause high blood pressure and contribute to weight gain. Limit your intake of alcohol and any other high-sugar or high-calorie beverages. If you drink alcohol, do so responsibly and in moderation.
- **Managing stress.** Don't let the holiday season get the best of you. Stress contributes to health problems like high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes. Make time for stress-relieving activities such as exercise, yoga or meditation.
- **Seeing your doctor regularly.** Your doctor can conduct tests to see if you need to change your diet or exercise, and may prescribe medications to help you control cholesterol, blood pressure or blood glucose.

Visit [www.tricare.mil/healthyliving](http://www.tricare.mil/healthyliving) for healthy living tips. ■

1. <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.html>

## Fight the Flu: Get Vaccinated

As the flu season begins, TRICARE encourages you to get a flu vaccine. There are two forms of influenza vaccines distributed in the United States: a shot and a nasal spray. Both versions of the flu vaccine are available without copayments or cost-shares to all TRICARE beneficiaries.

While TRICARE recommends that all beneficiaries get vaccinated, it is important to remember that certain people are at a higher risk from the flu, including:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months old
- Health care and emergency medical services personnel

- Everyone between the ages of 6 months and 24 years
- People ages 25–64 with chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems
- Older people with diabetes, cardiovascular disease, asthma or HIV

During flu season, avoid close contact with sick people and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer.

For more information about military treatment facilities, providers and pharmacies that offer the flu vaccine, please visit [www.tricare.mil/flu](http://www.tricare.mil/flu). ■

## Filling Prescriptions with TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery

If you currently fill prescriptions for maintenance medications at retail pharmacies, you can reduce your out-of-pocket costs by switching to TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery. Rarely, TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery may be unable to fill your prescription. There are steps you can take to avoid having your prescription returned:

- Ask your doctor to send prescriptions electronically to Express Scripts Mail Pharmacy. Electronic prescriptions are less likely to have missing or illegible information.
- If you do submit a prescription via mail, make sure your name, your sponsor's Social Security number or 11-digit Department of Defense Benefits Number, your date of birth and your address are clearly written on the back of the prescription.
- If you receive a message from Express Scripts, Inc. (Express Scripts) about your prescription, call back within

two business days to help fill your prescription quickly. The customer service department is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Your prescription may also be returned or denied if the medication is not covered. If you are prescribed a new medication and you are not sure whether it is covered, call Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303 or check the formulary search tool online at [http://pec.ha.osd.mil/formulary\\_search.php](http://pec.ha.osd.mil/formulary_search.php).

For more information, visit [www.tricare.mil/homedelivery](http://www.tricare.mil/homedelivery) or Express Scripts at [www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE](http://www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE). You can also call the Member Choice Center at 1-877-363-1433 or download the Express Rx mobile app for iPhone or Android to transfer your existing prescriptions to home delivery. ■

## Three Ways to Reduce Your Child's Risk of Obesity

**M**ore than one-third of children and teenagers are overweight or obese. These kids are at a greater risk for serious problems that may follow them into adulthood including diabetes, heart disease, joint and bone problems and poor self-esteem.

Here's the good news: Small changes at home can reduce your child's risk of obesity by up to 40 percent.<sup>1</sup>

Here are three ways to reduce your child's risk:

**Catch up on sleep.** Children with short or irregular sleep hours are four times more likely to become obese.

**Take a TV time-out.** Research has shown a direct correlation in children between watching TV for two hours or less per day and having a lower body mass index (BMI).

**Spend quality time at the table.** Eating meals at home equals more fruits and vegetables in your child's diet. It also means a decrease in fried foods and saturated fat.

By taking an active role in promoting a healthy lifestyle for your children, you can lower their risk of obesity today and in the future. ■

1. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/125/3/420.full>

## TRICARE West Region To Be Served by UnitedHealthcare Military & Veterans

**B**eginning April 1, 2013, UnitedHealthcare Military & Veterans will be the new contractor for TRICARE beneficiaries in the West Region.

TRICARE's top priority is to ensure a smooth transition under the new contract on behalf of service members, families and retired beneficiaries. During the transition, TRICARE and the contractors will ensure the continuation of high-quality care and outstanding customer service.

For more information about the transition, visit [www.tricare.mil/t3contracts](http://www.tricare.mil/t3contracts). ■

# TRICARE HealthMatters

TriWest Healthcare Alliance  
P.O. Box 42049  
Phoenix, AZ 85080

## TRICARE

### An Excellent Value

- Generous coverage
- Superior health care
- Decisions are health driven, not insurance driven
- High satisfaction with care
- Low out-of-pocket costs
- Easy access



*"TRICARE" is a registered trademark of the TRICARE Management Activity. All rights reserved.*

## Five Ways to Save Time Online

**M**any of your day-to-day health care needs can be met with the simple click of a mouse. You can manage your health at your convenience using the TriWest Healthcare Alliance (TriWest) website at [TriWest.com](http://TriWest.com). You can do everything from reviewing claims information to finding an urgent care provider. Here are some of the features of the TriWest website that can help you manage your TRICARE benefit:

- **Secure Account**—Register or log in to your secure TriWest account to review claims information, confirm specialty care referral status, change your address and more.
- **QuickAlerts**—TriWest's QuickAlerts electronic notifications can alert registered users by e-mail, text message or phone when an authorization or claim has been processed. Save time and schedule specialty care sooner when you get a QuickAlert.
- **Find a Provider**—You can use TriWest's Online Provider Directory to find an urgent care center, a network specialty care provider or primary care manager near you. Use your smartphone to access TriWest's mobile website at [m.triwest.com](http://m.triwest.com). With the mobile directory, you can find health care providers near your current location.
- **Automatic Payments**—If you pay a fee for your TRICARE Prime enrollment, automatic payments save you time each

month. If your amount due changes, such as when you change plans or when there is an annual fee or premium change, TriWest will adjust your automatic payments for you. Simply update your payment method if you close an account, your credit or debit card expires or your address changes. To sign up:

1. Log in to your secure TriWest.com account.
2. Go to "Make a Payment" in the "Online Payment" section, then click the "Make a Payment" button.
3. Select the preferred method of payment under "Would you like to set up a recurring payment?" and choose "Continue."

Once you are signed up for automatic monthly payments, you will receive monthly confirmations by e-mail.

- **TriWest Mobile**—You can manage your health care on the Web even when you are away from your computer. Formatted to fit your phone, TriWest's mobile site at [m.triwest.com](http://m.triwest.com) lets you log in to your secure account to view your:

- Specialty care referrals and authorizations
- Claims
- Fees or premiums due (and make a one-time payment) ■