USING MOBILE HEALTH APPLICATIONS:  
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

A RESOURCE FOR VETERANS, SERVICE MEMBERS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

As the use of smartphones and other communication devices has increased, so has the number and type of mobile applications, or “apps.” The number and type of “apps” range from travel to finance to games to almost anything you can imagine! Apps related to health and fitness have also become popular for everything from fitness training to food and nutrition to sleep or about specific health conditions. With so many mobile applications for personal use to choose from, it is important to determine which apps will provide the most accurate health information.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR DOWNLOADING APPS TO MANAGE YOUR HEALTH:

• Find out if the app is produced by a reputable organization with expertise in the subject area to ensure that the information presented is accurate. It is important to know that the information provided by the app is reliable and up-to-date.

• Be aware an app may have a government name but not be an official app actually created by a government agency. Always discuss your plans with your health care provider before starting any new physical activity or exercise program. Give your provider information on any mobile applications you are thinking of using for tracking physical activity to see if it is appropriate for you.

• Some apps charge a fee to use. These fees can be a one-time only purchasing fee or the fee may be charged on a weekly, monthly or yearly basis. Make sure you are aware of what charges you may incur before downloading an app.

• Research the application developer’s privacy policy before downloading the app. This information should be available on the developer’s website.

• You may be able to limit what information can be seen in the app, such as turning off location-sharing capabilities on your smartphone.

• Apps may have been reviewed by other users. You might find these reviews helpful in deciding if the app would be useful for you. Reviews can be found with the app information before downloading or purchasing.

HERE ARE EXAMPLES OF MOBILE APPLICATIONS developed by VA for Veterans’ use. All of these mobile applications are free downloads to smartphones/tablets using the indicated operating system:

MOVE!® Coach
MOVE!® Coach is a weight self-management app that provides education, tools, and guidance designed to help you meet your weight and health goals. The app allows you to monitor, track, and receive feedback regarding your progress. It also provides users with the motivational resources needed to successfully overcome challenges and meet their goals. (Currently for iOS devices only)

Stay Quit Coach
The Stay Quit Coach App helps you “stay quit” after you stop smoking with tools to control cravings, reminder messages and support links. Stay Quit Coach is best used while in treatment with a therapist or after your treatment has ended. (Currently for iOS devices only)

Concussion Coach
The Concussion Coach App provides you with resources to help you manage symptoms of concussion or mild to moderate traumatic brain injury. Concussion Coach can be used alone, but may be more helpful when used along with treatment from a provider. (Currently for iOS devices only) (continued)
Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry

The Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry is an online database of health information provided by OEF/OIF/OND or 1990-1991 Gulf War Veterans and Service members. You can view Airborne Hazards and Burn Pit resources and includes information on eligibility to be entered into the registry. (iOS & Android)

CBT-i Coach

The CBT-i Coach App helps you get the most out of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-i) so that you can develop good sleep habits and sleep better. CBT-i Coach is best used while in therapy with a provider. (iOS & Android)

Mindfulness Coach

The Mindfulness Coach App provides you with tools and guided exercises to help you practice mindfulness, which means paying purposeful attention to the present moment without passing judgment on it or your feelings. Mindfulness Coach can be used alone, but is not intended as a substitute for therapy. (Currently for iOS devices only)

PTSD Coach

Developed by VA’s National Center for PTSD in cooperation with T2, the PTSD Coach App helps you learn about and cope with the symptoms related to Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that commonly occur following trauma. PTSD Coach can be used alone, but is not intended as a substitute for mental health treatment. (iOS & Android)

PE Coach

The PE Coach App helps you work with a mental health professional during Prolonged Exposure (PE) therapy. PE therapy is used to reduce symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) by helping you decrease distress about your trauma by engaging with reminders of the experience (triggers). The App helps you track your progress, appointments and PTSD symptoms. PE Coach is not a self-help tool and should only be used while in therapy with a provider. (iOS & Android)

ACT Coach

ACT Coach was designed for Veterans, Servicemembers and others who are in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) with a mental health professional and want to use an ACT App in conjunction with their therapy. The App is designed to improve rates of patient participation in treatment and, as a result, treatment outcomes. (Currently for iOS devices only)

Ask a Pharmacist

If you are a Veteran, the Ask a Pharmacist App enables you to access information about VA pharmacies and medication easily — with the comfort of knowing the information is valid and from trusted sources. If you have a verified My HealtheVet account (credentials for VA’s personal health record), you can link to VA pharmacy and Secure Messaging services via the app, allowing you to quickly go to your personal medication and health information as well as learn about pharmacy-related topics. (iOS, Android, and Windows operating systems, and is supported by these Internet browsers:

- Internet Explorer 11 and higher
- Safari 7 and higher
- Google Chrome 40 and higher
- Mozilla Firefox 36 and higher (continued)
Moving Forward

With the Moving Forward mobile App you can access on-the-go tools and learn problem solving skills to overcome obstacles and deal with stress. The App is designed for Veterans and Service members, but is useful for anyone with stressful problems. It is especially helpful in managing challenges such as: returning to civilian life, balancing school and family life, financial difficulties, relationship problems, difficult career decisions, and coping with physical injuries. It may be used alone or in combination with the free Moving Forward online course (www.Veterantraining.va.gov/movingforward/). The Moving Forward mobile App and online course were developed by VA and Department of Defense (DoD) and mental health subject matter experts across the country. (Currently for iOS devices only)

★ As with any mobile application, you may be giving out your personal information when downloading and using an app. Be aware that you may be giving out information regarding a health condition or illness that you may not want to be made public or shared with an advertiser.