

# ALBANY STRATTON VA WOMEN'S HEALTH NEWSLETTER

MAY 2025 EDITION



**VA**



**U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs**  
Stratton VA Medical Center

# MATERNITY CARE AT THE STRATTON VA

## What resources and services does VA provide for maternity care?

VA covers a wide range of maternity care services throughout pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum. Maternity care services available through VA include:

- Full physical exams and lab tests
- Prenatal education and screening
- Obstetrical ultrasounds
- Genetic tests and specialty consults
- Prescription drugs
- Labor and delivery
- Newborn care on the date of birth plus 7 days immediately after birth
- Lactation support
- Support and services in case of miscarriage or stillbirth
- Social work and mental health services
- [Maternity Care Coordinators \(MCC\)](#)

## Maternity Care Coordinators

Every VA offers maternity care coordination. VA Maternity Care Coordinators can answer questions you have about services and coverage through every stage of your pregnancy. Maternity Care Coordinators can help you:

- Navigate health care services both inside and outside of VA
- Access care for your other physical and mental health needs
- Connect to community resources
- Cope with pregnancy loss
- Connect to care after delivery
- Answer questions about billing

In addition to the above, with the support of our dedicated volunteers, stakeholders, & Albany Stratton VA Medical Center's Center for Development & Civil Engagement we receive generous donations regularly and this allows the Women's Health Department at the Albany Stratton VA Medical Center to host a bi-annual baby shower for our pregnant Veterans. These events feature a catered meal, shower games with prizes and beautiful gifts.



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Courtney O'Keefe, RN, BSN  
Maternity Care Coordinator  
Albany Stratton VA Medical Center

## YOUR MATERNITY CARE COORDINATOR

**Pregnant women Veterans:** Every VA facility has a Maternity Care Coordinator ready to support you, provide health screenings, and ensure you have access to needed education, resources, and supplies throughout your pregnancy and the year afterward. Maternity Care Coordinators understand the unique needs of women Veterans, and having one at your side means you've got an advocate to ensure you and your baby receive the best care.

Whether it's your first pregnancy or you're adding to your family, your Maternity Care Coordinator is in your corner, ready to provide guidance, resources, and compassionate care. You don't have to navigate the system alone—VA is here for you and your growing family.

Contact your VA health care provider or your local [Women Veterans Program Manager](#) to connect with your Maternity Care Coordinator. We are here to ensure you have the support and resources you need. Learn more by visiting the [VA Women's Health Maternity Care page](#).



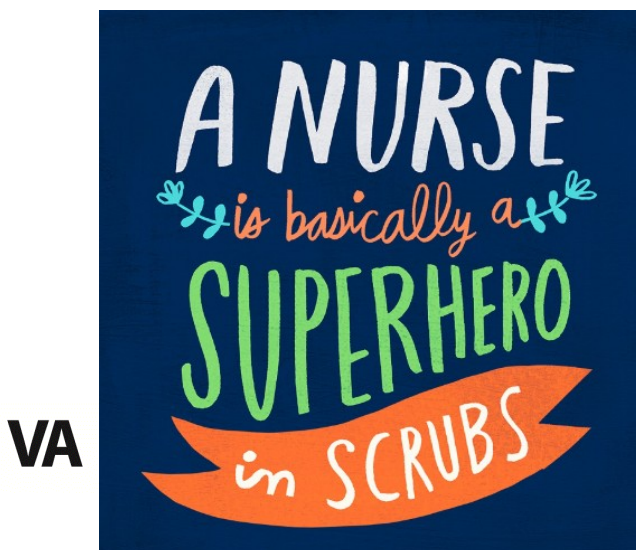
## SHE WEARS THE BOOTS

[She Wears the Boots: A Podcast for Women Veterans](#) is an official VA sponsored podcast that focuses on topics relevant to Servicewomen and women Veterans. The goal of this podcast is to enhance the lives of women Veterans by sharing information on women's health care services offered through VA.



## NATIONAL NURSES DAY

In 1974, President Nixon proclaimed a National Nurse Week. New Mexico nurses initiated a resolution in 1981 to have May 6th declared National Recognition Day for Nurses. The American Nurses Association (ANA) Board of Directors took up the banner and promoted the proposal. In 1982, the United States Congress designated May 6th to be National Recognition Day for Nurses and President Ronald Reagan signed the proposal. The ANA Board of Directors later expanded the celebration in 1990 to a week-long celebration known as National Nurses Week. Which begins on May 6th and ends on May 12th, which is the birthday of Florence Nightingale.





Save  
the Date

**WOMEN VETERAN  
COLLABORATION CLUB**



**05|21|25**

**10:30AM TO 12:00 PM**

**ALBANY STRATTON VA MEDICAL CENTER  
113 HOLLAND AVENUE - ALBANY  
WOMENS HEALTHCONF. RM. D805**

**RSVP:**

**JAMIE.HARRIGAN@VA.GOV**

**MEETS THE 3RD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH**

# wish list

## ONGOING:

DIAPERS  
WIPE  
GIFT CARDS  
(TARGET, WALMART, AMAZON)

CLOTHING - NEWBORN - 6 MONTHS  
DIAPER CREAMS  
SHAMPOO/BODY WASH/LOTIONS -  
(UNSCENTED)  
BURP CLOTHS  
NEUTRAL PACIFIERS  
DISPOSABLE NURSING PADS  
MILK STORAGE BAGS (ARDO EASY STORE)  
CRIB SHEETS  
BOTTLE/BOTTLE BRUSHES  
THERMOMETERS  
GROOMING KITS  
TEETHING RINGS  
STROLLER TOYS/INFANT TOYS  
BABY LOVIES/ANIMAL BLANKETS  
CROCHETED/KNITTED BEARS/BUNNIES

CELEBRATING  
VETERAN MOMS

&

THEIR BUNDLE OF JOY



## NATIONAL MILITARY AWARENESS MONTH

**National Military Appreciation Month**, also known as **Military Appreciation Month**, is a month-long observance in the United States, dedicated to people who are currently serving in, and veterans of, the United States military. Each year, the observance runs from May 1 to May 31.

Senator John McCain proposed the month long observance on February 9, 1999. On April 30, 1999, Congress designated National Military Appreciation Month as a month-long observance. Congress chose May because many military related observances such as Memorial Day and Loyalty Day are celebrated and observed on that date. Congress recognized the month after a unanimous vote of 93–0 in April of that year.

Military Appreciation Month plays a crucial role in fostering awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by the military community. It provides a platform for education and dialogue about the experiences of service members, veterans, and their families.

Each year, the president makes a proclamation reminding Americans of the important role the U.S. Armed Forces have played in the history and development of our country. May was chosen because it has many individual days marked to note our military's achievements, including Loyalty Day, established in 1921, Victory in Europe (VE) Day commemorating the end of WWII in Europe in 1945, Children of Fallen Patriots Day, and the anniversary of the death of Osama bin Laden.



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*Did you know.....June 3, 1861 in Warrenton, VA was the location of the first Civil War Soldier's grave to be decorated?*

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## MEMORIAL DAY

The first national observance of Memorial Day occurred on May 30, 1868. Then known as *Decoration Day* and observed on May 30, the holiday was proclaimed by Commander in Chief John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic to honor the Union soldiers who had died in the American Civil War. This national observance followed many local observances which were inaugurated between the end of the Civil War and Logan's declaration. Many cities and people have claimed to be the first to observe it. However, the National Cemetery Administration, a division of the Department of Veterans Affairs, credits **Mary Ann Williams** with originating the "idea of strewing the graves of Civil War soldiers—Union and Confederate" with flowers.

Official recognition as a holiday spread among the states, beginning with New York in 1873. By 1890, every Union state had adopted it. The world was turned it into a day of remembrance for all members of the U.S. military who fought and died in service. In 1971, Congress standardized the holiday as "Memorial Day" and changed its observance to the last Monday in May.



## MARY ANN WILLIAMS

### CINCO DE MAYO

**Cinco de Mayo** is an annual celebration held on May 5 to celebrate Mexico's victory over the Second French Empire at the Battle of Puebla in 1862,<sup>[1][2]</sup> led by General Ignacio Zaragoza. Zaragoza died months after the battle from an illness, however, and a larger French force ultimately defeated the Mexican army at the Second Battle of Puebla and then occupied Mexico City.

Cinco de Mayo is sometimes mistaken for Mexican Independence Day—the most important national holiday in Mexico—which is celebrated on September 16, commemorating the Cry of Dolores in 1810, which initiated the Mexican War of Independence from Spain.<sup>[1][9]</sup> Cinco de Mayo has been referenced and featured in entertainment media, and has become an increasingly global celebration of Mexican culture, cuisine, and heritage.



**Mary Ann Williams** (also known as Mrs. Charles J. Williams) (10 August 1821 – 15 April 1874) was an American woman who was the first proponent for Memorial Day, an annual holiday to decorate soldiers' graves.

Mary Ann Howard was born in Baldwin County, Georgia. She was the daughter of Major Jack Howard. She married Charles J. Williams in 1847 when he returned from the Mexican–American War. Mary Ann had presented his regiment with a flag made by the ladies of the city when they left in 1846. According to the 1860 census of Columbus, Georgia, they had four children Charles Howard, Caroline, Mary, and Lila. Charles pursued his career as a lawyer and Mary Ann supported a number of civic projects.

Mary Ann joined the Soldiers Aid Society to support the local soldiers in the war effort. He returned to Columbus in February 1862 in very ill health. He died within a few days and was buried in the City Cemetery, now known as Linwood. Mary Ann continued her activities in the Soldiers' Aid Society and inaugurated the Soldiers' Home in Columbus.

In early 1866, the Soldiers' Aid Society was reorganized as the Ladies Memorial Association at the Tyler home on the corner of 4th Ave and 14th street. The building is long gone but a monument marks the spot. The officers elected were Mrs. Robert Carter, president; Mrs. Robert. A. Ware, vice president; Mrs. J. M. McAllister, second vice president, Mrs. M. A. Patten, treasurer and Mrs. Williams was elected Secretary of the Association. As secretary, Mrs. Williams was tasked with writing a letter to the ladies of the South to inaugurate an annual holiday to decorate the soldiers' graves. It is for this letter that she is best remembered.

The letter Mrs. Williams wrote to her two local newspapers was a request to the ladies of the South to set one day aside each year to decorate the soldiers' graves. It was long on flowery language and was considered a "thrilling appeal". She did not sign her own name but closed the letter with "Southern Women". It was picked up by newspapers across the South. In *The Genesis of the Memorial Day Holiday in America*, Bellware and Gardiner provided evidence that her letter was published in cities outside of Columbus, Georgia.

Mrs. Williams died on April 15, 1874, less than two weeks before the ninth observance of Memorial Day in Columbus. Her funeral was held on April 16 and was attended by the Columbus Guards. Ten days later, at the end of the Memorial Day wreath laying ceremonies, the battalion of the Columbus and City Light Guards stacked arms. Then, each soldier proceeded to Mrs. Williams' grave and one-by-one laid a rose on her grave as they passed.





# REDEFINE YOUR HEALTH TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE

## Diabetes Prevention Program

Type 2 Diabetes Is Preventable! About one in three American adults – 86 million people have prediabetes. Only 11% are aware of it.

### About Our Program

The National Diabetes Prevention Program helps those at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles by eating healthier, increasing physical activity and losing a modest amount of weight in order to reduce their chances of developing the disease. Research by the National Institutes of Health shows that Diabetes Prevention Programs can reduce the number of new cases of diabetes by 58% overall and by 71% in individuals over age 60.



Register today @  
[ahealthyfuturedpg.com](http://ahealthyfuturedpg.com) or  
scan the QR code



### CLASS INFO

- ✓ Start date May 20, 2025
- ✓ Tuesdays 6:00PM-7:00PM for 20 weeks followed by 6 monthly maintenance sessions.
- ✓ No Cost for Qualifying Albany County Residents
- ✓ Hybrid Classes will be held @ UHLS hilltown libraries of Rensselaerville, Westerlo, and Berne.
- ✓ For more information, or to register contact:  
[katebailey@ahealthyfuturedpg.com](mailto:katebailey@ahealthyfuturedpg.com)



**Kate Bailey, NBC-HWC, DPP Lifestyle Coach  
A Healthy Future Diabetes Prevention Group**  
I am passionate about good nutrition and fitness. Because of the growing number of adults facing chronic diseases and type 2 diabetes, I am dedicated to educating others to help reduce their health risks and improve their lifestyle habits through the diabetes prevention program.

## TAKE THE RISK TEST



Daniel P. McCoy  
Albany County Executive

**ALBANY COUNTY**  
*Cares* about our community



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs  
Stratton VA Medical Center





# Prediabetes Risk Test

NATIONAL  
**DIABETES  
PREVENTION  
PROGRAM**

## 1. How old are you?

Younger than 40 years (0 points)  
40–49 years (1 point)  
50–59 years (2 points)  
60 years or older (3 points)

Write your score in  
the boxes below

## 2. Are you a man or a woman?

Man (1 point) Woman (0 points)

## 3. If you are a woman, have you ever been diagnosed with gestational diabetes?

Yes (1 point) No (0 points)

## 4. Do you have a mother, father, sister, or brother with diabetes?

Yes (1 point) No (0 points)

## 5. Have you ever been diagnosed with high blood pressure?

Yes (1 point) No (0 points)

## 6. Are you physically active?

Yes (0 points) No (1 point)

## 7. What is your weight category?

(See chart at right)

Total score:

Height	Weight (lbs.)		
4'10"	119-142	143-190	191+
4'11"	124-147	148-197	198+
5'0"	128-152	153-203	204+
5'1"	132-157	158-210	211+
5'2"	136-163	164-217	218+
5'3"	141-168	169-224	225+
5'4"	145-173	174-231	232+
5'5"	150-179	180-239	240+
5'6"	155-185	186-246	247+
5'7"	159-190	191-254	255+
5'8"	164-196	197-261	262+
5'9"	169-202	203-269	270+
5'10"	174-208	209-277	278+
5'11"	179-214	215-285	286+
6'0"	184-220	221-293	294+
6'1"	189-226	227-301	302+
6'2"	194-232	233-310	311+
6'3"	200-239	240-318	319+
6'4"	205-245	246-327	328+
	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points
	You weigh less than the 1 Point column (0 points)		

Adapted from Bang et al., Ann Intern Med 151:775-783, 2009. Original algorithm was validated without gestational diabetes as part of the model.

## If you scored 5 or higher

You are at increased risk for having prediabetes and are at high risk for type 2 diabetes. However, only your doctor can tell for sure if you have type 2 diabetes or prediabetes, a condition in which blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not high enough yet to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes. **Talk to your doctor to see if additional testing is needed.**

*If you are African American, Hispanic/Latino American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian American, or Pacific Islander, you are at higher risk for prediabetes and type 2 diabetes. Also, if you are Asian American, you are at increased risk for type 2 diabetes at a lower weight (about 15 pounds lower than weights in the 1 Point column). Talk to your doctor to see if you should have your blood sugar tested.*

## You can reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes

Find out how you can reverse prediabetes and prevent or delay type 2 diabetes through a CDC-recognized lifestyle change program at <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/lifestyle-program>.

Risk Test provided by the American Diabetes Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



## SECOND LIEUTENANT ELSIE OTT

Second Lieutenant **Elsie Ott** (1913–2006) was the first woman to receive the United States Air Medal. She was awarded this medal in recognition of her heroism in determining a way to evacuate the wounded from the front line. Elsie S. Ott was born in 1913 in Smithtown, New York. After completing high school Ott attended the Lenox Hill Hospital School of Nursing in New York City. She worked various positions at several different hospitals before she joined the Army Nurse Corps in September 1941. Given the position of second lieutenant soon after entering the corps, Ott immediately went on assignments in Louisiana and Virginia before making the long journey to Karachi, India.

In India, Ott would be a part of the first ever intercontinental air evacuation. She was assigned the flight with only 24 hours notice, had zero air-evacuation training, and had never flown in a plane before. On January 17, 1943, Ott served as an in-flight nurse for five soldiers during a week-long venture — a trip that previously could only have been accomplished by ship and would have taken three months. The flight was a success, and Ott helped transport wounded soldiers from Karachi all the way to the Walter Reed Hospital in Washington D.C.

Knowing that her log of how she handled the flight would be important, Ott made sure to take careful notes. She listed things that would have been of benefit and suggested them for future evacuations. Among the things that Ott recommended for subsequent trips were: more bandages, extra blankets and oxygen. Two months after her flight, Ott was awarded the first Air Medal presented to a woman.





# QUINOA BURRITO BOWLS

## INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups cooked quinoa
- 2 cups black beans rinsed, warmed, cooled
- 2 cups cooked ground chicken/beef taco meat
- 1 cup shredded cheddar or Colby-jack cheese
- 1 cup frozen corn thawed
- 1 cup pico de gallo
- 1 avocado diced
- Chives or cilantro for garnish based on preference
- Salsa (optional)
- Sour cream (optional)



## DIRECTIONS:

1. DIVIDE THE QUINOA INTO 4 SERVING BOWLS
2. SPOON 1/2 CUP OF THE BLACK BEANS ON TOP OF QUINOA, FOLLOWED BY EQUAL AMOUNTS OF THE COOKED GROUND CHICKEN/BEEF TACO MIXTURE.
3. ADD TOPPINGS TOO THE QUINOA BOWLS AND SERVE IMMEDIATELY

## NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:

**SERVING: 4G | CALORIES: 613KCAL | CARBOHYDRATES: 61G | PROTEIN: 40G | FAT: 26G | SATURATED FAT: 8G | POLYUNSATURATED FAT: 4G | MONOUNSATURATED FAT: 12G | TRANS FAT: 0.1G | CHOLESTEROL: 119MG | SODIUM: 655MG | POTASSIUM: 1401MG | FIBER: 14G | SUGAR: 8G | VITAMIN A: 641IU | VITAMIN C: 10MG | CALCIUM: 194MG | IRON: 5MG**



## Women Veterans Engage

CONNECTING WITH YOU WHERE YOU ARE AT!

**ALBANY COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE BUREAU INVITES YOU:**

### **NATIONAL WOMEN VETERANS ENGAGE CONFERENCE**

The Engage Conference breaks down geographical barriers, creating opportunities for women Veterans from underserved and underrepresented communities to connect, engage, and grow. By fostering an inclusive environment, the conference provides a platform to share resources, build meaningful relationships, and amplify the voices of women Veterans, ensuring no one is left behind due to location or circumstance.

**SATURDAY, MAY 31, 2025**

**CELTIC HALL  
430 NEW KARNER ROAD  
ALBANY, NY 12205  
9:00AM - 4:30PM**



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER, SCAN OR VISIT:  
**[WWW.ALBANYCOUNTYNY.GOV/VETERANS/EVENTS](http://WWW.ALBANYCOUNTYNY.GOV/VETERANS/EVENTS)**



Daniel P. McCoy  
Albany County Executive

**ALBANY COUNTY**  
*Cares* about our Veterans

Albany County Veteran Service Bureau | 100 Heritage Ln., Rm. 500, Albany, NY 12211 | (518) 447-7710

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs  
Stratton VA Medical Center



## Sleep Enhancement Skills Group

Offers psychoeducation and skills to promote more healthy and peaceful sleep each night



Group is virtual and meets every Thursday from 11AM-12PM for four consecutive weeks

### Group Topics

**Week 1:** *Sleep Education*

**Week 2:** *Sleep Hygiene*

**Week 3:** *Sleep Skills*

**Week 4:** *Sleep Plan*



Request a referral through your current provider or contact  
**Dr William Breen (518-626-5377)** for more information