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Fueling body to optimize performance important component of Total Force Fitness

By Jean Clavette Graves
BJACH Public Affairs Officer

FORT POLK, La. — Nutritional and physical fitness go hand in hand. For optimal performance, Soldiers must have the strength, stamina and conditioning necessary to succeed on and off the battlefield. The total force fitness domain looks at a Soldier's ability to physically accomplish the mission without injury and to sustain performance through appropriate quantities and quality of food, beverages and supplements.

1st Lt. Rebecca Prince, chief of nutrition care division and a registered dietician for Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital said that nutritional fitness is the foundation for physical fitness, health and longevity.

Prince said learning to eat healthy is not complicated, understanding the basics is all it takes to experience the benefits of proper nutrition.

"Nutrition helps reduce the risk of chronic illnesses," she said. "If you want to live a long and prosperous life, while continuing to enjoy an active lifestyle as you age, proper nutrition will help you get there."

She said a good nutritional foundation is one of the most important things a person can do for themselves.

"We experience nutrition every single day of our lives," she said. "Food and water are basic human needs, understanding the importance of our choices will ultimately allow us to live long and healthy lives."

Staff Sgt. Christopher Gadson a nutrition care specialist at BJACH works closely with dieticians to assist patients and Soldiers with their individual nutritional needs.

"My job is understanding how to fuel for performance, supplementation, and assisting patients with nutrient timing," said Gadson. "The best way to maintain nutritional fitness is to understand what your body needs."

He said food fuels performance and the right "fuel" helps you perform at your best. A good diet isn't just healthy and nutritious, it must be sustainable.

Gadson said understanding your nutritional needs in relation to your physical goals is an important first step towards fitness and weight management.

"Regardless of your objectives sitting down with a dietician can be very productive," he explained. "The dietician will help you calculate your micro and macro nutrients, give you advice on

See **PERFORMANCE**, Page 6

NMCS D neurosurgeons performs hospital's first procedure using 3D surgical microscope

By Petty Officer 3rd Class
Jacob L. Greenberg
Naval Medical Center San Diego

SAN DIEGO, Ca. — Neurosurgeons assigned to Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCS D) performed a herniated disk repair procedure, and for the first time at the hospital, used a 3D surgical microscope Dec. 6.

The 3D capabilities of this new microscope yield a multitude of benefits to surgical personnel.

"One of the major benefits to using a mobile, 3D microscope is the lack of strain it puts on the surgeon," said Michael Hinz, a representative from the microscope's manufacturer. "The surgeons can position the microscope exoscopically, meaning over the patient. The surgeons won't be hunched over and put extraneous strain on their lower back or neck. They can perform the procedure standing at ease, looking through either the binoculars or the 3D glasses onto a 4K monitor."

Hinz said the microscope has three valuable, primary modalities that benefit operating room personnel.

"In addition to exoscopic capabilities, the microscope can be used in a traditional manner, and as a micro-inspection tool," said Hinz. "An attachment plugs into the microscope, and surgeons have the ability to work endoscopically. This means [surgeons can place the attachment] inside of the anatomy to look around corners, for example. [They'll] generally have a better field of vision than with a normal, superficial microscope."

Cmdr. Shawn Belverud, a neurosurgeon assigned to NMCS D, led the procedure

See **MICROSCOPE**, Page 5



(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jake Greenberg)

Cmdr. Shawn Belverud, a neurosurgeon assigned to Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCS D), performs a herniated disk repair procedure utilizing a 3D surgical microscope Dec. 6. The new 3D surgical microscope can be used in a traditional, superficial manner, exoscopically and endoscopically. 3D glasses and 4K monitors allows those not physically beside the operating table to see a stereoscopic view during a procedure. This was the first procedure at NMCS D that used a 3D surgical microscope.

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COVID-19 vaccine arrives at Aviano

By Staff Sgt. K. Tucker Owen
31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy – The 31st Fighter Wing received its first batch of Moderna COVID-19 vaccines on Jan. 7, with inoculations for first-tier recipients beginning Jan. 8.

The vaccine was granted emergency use authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use in prevention of the coronavirus disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

“Because the vaccine has very specific storage requirements, our medical logistics team had to coordinate efforts with civilian shipping partners, the Office of the Command Surgeon (USAFE-AFAFRICA), host nation customs, and the Defense Logistics Agency,” said Maj. Allison James, 31st Medical Support Squadron medical logistics flight commander. “A specialized shipping container was utilized to maintain [the] temperature

and integrity of the vaccines.”

Distribution for the vaccinations across the 31st FW has been divided into three categories, or phases – Phase 1, which includes health care providers, health care support, and emergency and safety personnel such as first responders; Phase 2, high risk populations; and Phase 3, the remaining, healthy population.

The first six recipients of the vaccine at Aviano received their inoculation Friday morning.

“I got the vaccine so I could help encourage my fellow wingmen who are hesitant about it to take care of themselves, and to take those first steps toward easing the lockdown restrictions,” said Senior Airman Victor Lopez, 31 Operational Medical Readiness Squadron flight medicine technician, one of the first Airmen to receive the vaccine.

Though the vaccine is voluntary, U.S. military leadership still recommends its use. Following inoculation, Department of Defense personnel will continue to follow all CDC guidelines, including the use of masks, until there is a significant decrease in risk of COVID-19 spread.

The health and safety of Wyvern Nation is and always will be a top priority for 31st FW leadership. For more information on when and how you may receive the vaccine, visit the Aviano website (www.aviano.af.mil/Site-Pages/COVID-19-Coronavirus/Covid-Vaccine-Distribution).

For more information on the vaccine, including its creation and possible side effects, review the FDA fact sheet regarding the Moderna vaccine (www.fda.gov/media/144638/download).



(U.S. Air Force photos by Staff Sgt. K. Tucker Owen)

U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Siejeay Dimla, 31st Medical Support Squadron medical logistics technician, opens the case holding Moderna COVID-19 vaccines at Aviano Air Base, Italy, Jan. 7, 2021. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorized the vaccines by an Emergency Use Authorization on Dec. 18, 2020.

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Six Airmen assigned to the 31st Medical Group receive the first Moderna COVID-19 vaccines at Aviano Air Base, Italy, Jan. 8, 2021. Inoculations for the 31st Fighter Wing will be given in a tiered approach, with first-tier recipients including healthcare workers and first responders such as law enforcement and firefighters.

What you should know about getting the COVID-19 vaccine

By Amber Kurka

Public Health Command - Pacific

Over the last several weeks, vaccines for COVID-19 have been rolled out to locations throughout the Indo-Pacific region.

The vaccines are currently only approved for emergency use and are not mandatory for Department of Defense personnel and beneficiaries at this time. However, military health officials are urging prioritized DoD personnel and beneficiaries to get vaccinated to protect their health, their Families, and their community, and lower the public health risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

To determine whether the vaccine is right for you and your Family, Lt. Col. Ronald Cole, Public Health Command-Pacific's Human Health Services director and a public health nurse, shared his experience receiving the vaccine, as well as advice and tips you should consider.

"As a public health nurse, getting the COVID-19 vaccine was important for me in order to maintain mission readiness," said Cole.

"Many people have asked me why I received the COVID-19 vaccine," he said. "I respond by noting that the FDA has ensured the safety for U.S. citizens by enforcing strict standards on all vaccines, so I trust the system and I understand the importance vaccinations play in protecting the public. Being vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine is really important in developing herd immunity which can control the spread of the virus and support returning to a more familiar way of life."

While those who are offered the first-available vaccine are considered to be in groups that are most in need of COVID-19 protection, vaccinated people are protecting themselves, as well as their Families and all those they interact with.

According to the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention, all COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the U.S. have been shown to be highly effective at preventing COVID-19.

"Based on what we know about vaccines for other diseases and early data from clinical trials, experts believe that getting a vaccine may also help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19," explained Cole.

Even if someone has already had COVID-19, the CDC recommends people should still get vaccinated.

"The duration of immunity following COVID-19 infection is unknown, and the vaccine may be effective in protecting previously infected people," explained Cole.

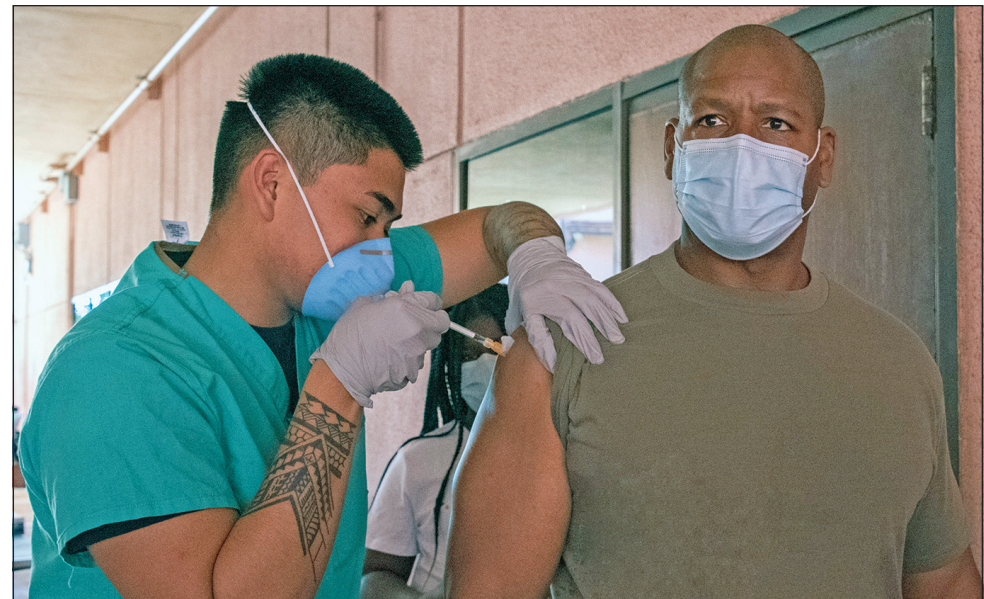
The CDC states that current evidence suggests reinfection with COVID-19 is uncommon during the 90 days after initial infection. Experts don't know for sure how long this protection lasts, and the risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 far outweighs any benefits of natural immunity.

"COVID-19 vaccination will help protect people by creating an antibody (immune system) response without having to experience sickness," said Cole.

"One myth that I want to dispel is that it is possible to get COVID-19 from vaccinations," he added. "Vaccines against COVID-19 use inactivated virus, parts of the virus, or a gene from the virus. In short, the vaccine does not contain SARS-CoV-2 and cannot give you COVID-19. History has proven that vaccines are tools to prevent serious complications that result from certain diseases, COVID-19 is no exception."

While some people may experience flu-like symptoms such as aches, headache and fever, Cole pointed out that these are normal reactions to most vaccines.

"These symptoms occur with all vac-



(U.S. Army photos by Amber E. Kurka)

Lt. Col. Ronald Cole, Public Health Command-Pacific's Human Health Services director and a public health nurse, receives the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine at Tripler Army Medical Center, Honolulu, on Dec. 23, 2020. The inoculation was part of the Department of Defense COVID-19 vaccine distribution and administration plan that is a phased, standardized and coordinated strategy for prioritizing, distributing, and administering COVID-19 vaccines to protect DoD personnel, maintain readiness, and support the national COVID-19 response.

cines and naturally when bacteria or viruses enter your body," he said. "Your immune system reacts to the foreign substance and stores a memory of the invader and create antibodies as a protective measure for future encounters."

Vaccines work with your immune system so your body will be ready to fight if you are exposed to the virus. The CDC recommends continuing to follow other steps, like covering your mouth and nose with a mask, and staying at least 6 feet away from others, to help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others, even after being vaccinated.

"Stopping a global pandemic requires using all the tools available," explained Cole. "Together, getting a COVID-19 vaccination and following the CDC's recommendations on how to protect yourself and others will offer the best protection from getting and spreading the virus."

Cole suggested that experts need to understand more about the protection COVID-19 vaccines provide before deciding to change current CDC prevention protocols.

"Other factors experts need to consider include how many people get vaccinated, which vaccine they receive, any adverse reactions, strain identification, and how the virus is spreading in communities," explained Cole.

As experts continue to assess the data, the DoD remains dedicated to providing the latest information about the vaccines available as they are released so that personnel and TRICARE beneficiaries can make informed decisions.

"We must remain vigilant to protect those on the front lines and the high-risk population during this COVID-19 pandemic to save lives, protect our people, maintain readiness, and support our nation," said Cole. "In order to achieve our goals and end this global pandemic, we must be vaccinated against COVID-19. For me, I am looking forward to receiving my second vaccine in mid-January as my duty of protecting those I love."

For the latest information on COVID-19 vaccination visit: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html



Lt. Col. Ronald Cole does push-ups after receiving the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine. Cole explained that push-ups help relieve the side effect of having a sore arm after receiving a vaccine. He recommended that Soldiers do push-ups, if possible, if they normally tend to experience soreness after an inoculation.

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NMCCL recognized by local college for outstanding clinical training

By Michelle Cornell

Naval Medical Center Camp Lejeune

Coastal Carolina Community College faculty recently recognized Naval Medical Center Camp Lejeune's operating room staff for their continuous educational support of the school's Surgical Technology Program. A letter of appreciation sent from the CCCC Surgical Technology Instructor highlights the dedication and commitment of the surgical staff at NMCCL.

"We are honored to have a legacy of over a 20-year partnership with the operating room at Navy Medical Center," writes Intisar Al-Hayek. "Even during these unprecedented times, the dedicated surgical technologists and registered nurses have continued to provide outstanding clinical instruction for the Coastal Carolina students."

The Surgical Technology Program's goal is for participants to receive eventual national certification to work in any state as a surgical technologist. Part of completing the program is clinic training rotation in medical facilities like NMCCL. Each semester NMCCL sees approximately three or four students typically two to three days a week for their hands-on, clinical training.

NMCCL staff considers the partnership a win-win. U.S. Navy Lt. Commander Carlton Bennett, Department Head of the Operating Room, states the partnership is beneficial to his staff members.

"This partnership gives our staff the opportunity to learn and develop precepting skills," says Bennett. He explains that precepting skills are necessary in identifying the best approach to teaching and developing proficiency of skills to current employees.

"Our staff members tend to be a mix of new and experienced members and precepting skills are necessary in this field where there are continu-

ous competency sets that need to be acquired," explains Bennett.

Surgical technologists play an important role in the surgical team. Technicians work with surgeons, nurses, anesthesiologists and other members during surgery, and their role is crucial to ensuring an organized and sterile work environment.

Bennett believes what makes the clinical partnership between NMCCL and CCCC unique is the diverse exposure to the different departments, procedures performed, and the skill level of the staff at NMCCL.

"I do have the benefit of having some extremely talented surgical techs that are available to teach them," states Bennett. "Our staff range anywhere from recently graduated up to 15 plus years [experience], so they get a wide range of exposure to surgical techs with a wealth of knowledge."

Clinical curriculum for the students is predetermined by the program's instructors and are based on which skills the students need to develop. The students are then assigned to different areas of the operating room based on those needs. One of the key elements in the successful partnership is the open communication with the staff and instructors.

"What is extremely helpful is the surgical technologists and registered nurses at Naval Medical Center let me know what skills they observe the students need extra practice on," says Al Hayek.

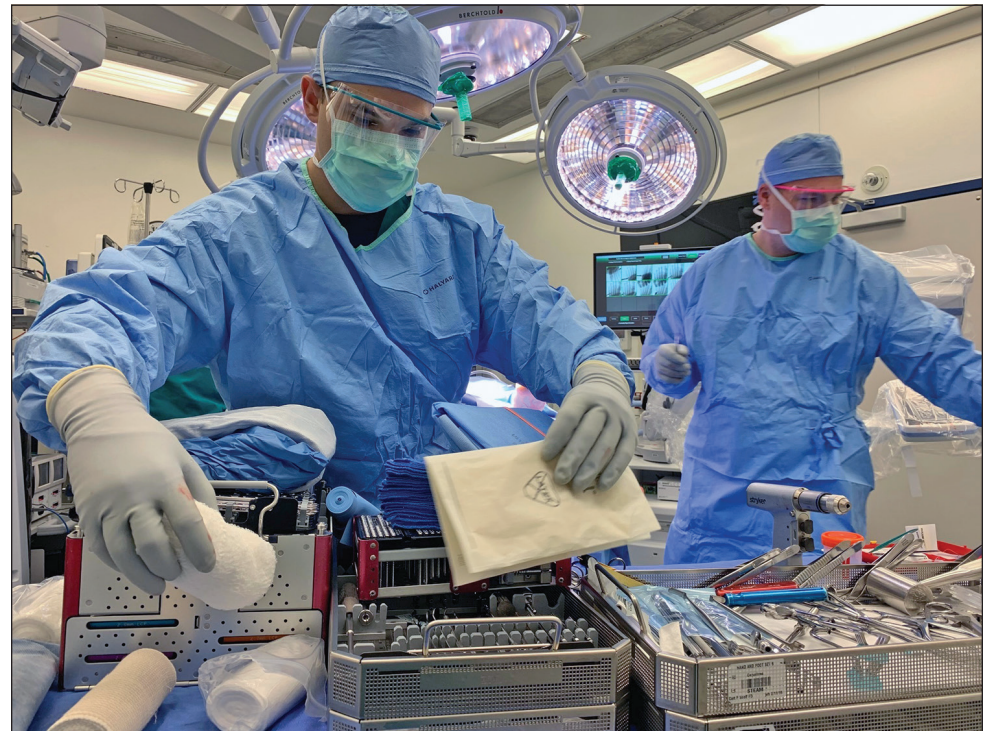
The staff at NMCCL are dedicated to ensuring the students receive the full experience of what it is like to be a surgical technician working in the field. The General Surgery staff Bennett represents is excited about the future of the partnership.

"As the department head, I engage the students in the operating room, just like anybody else, so they get exposure to the entire chain of leadership in the OR," states Bennett. "We are really proud to be in this partnership

with Coastal Community College, and we are glad they are happy about the kind of training they get here."

According to Al-Hayek, the current Surgical Technology Program at CCCC has a 100% pass rate of students taking national certification. In the future, CCCC will offer an Associate Degree

Program for Surgical Technologists. Following completion of clinical training and graduation, students will seek employment in the surgical field or can continue their education in other related career opportunities such as materials management positions and surgery scheduler.



(Photos by NMCCL Public Affairs)

(Above and below) Members of the surgical team at NMCCL assist students from Coastal Carolina Community College's Surgical Technology Program during their clinical training portion of curriculum. The college faculty recently recognized NMCCL's operating room staff for their continuous educational support. A letter of appreciation sent from the CCCC Surgical Technology Instructor highlights the dedication and commitment of the surgical staff at NMCCL. "We are honored to have a legacy of over a 20-year partnership with the operating room at Navy Medical Center," writes Intisar Al-Hayek. "Even during these unprecedented times, the dedicated surgical technologists and registered nurses have continued to provide outstanding clinical instruction for the Coastal Carolina students."





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• Microscope (Continued from front page)



(U.S. Navy photos by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jake Greenberg)

Lt. Cmdr. Scott Donoughe, a neurology resident (left), and Cmdr. Shawn Belverud, a neurosurgeon (right), both assigned to Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCS), suture a patient after performing a herniated disk repair procedure utilizing a 3D surgical microscope Dec. 6. The new 3D surgical microscope can be used in a traditional, superficial manner, exoscopically and endoscopically. 3D glasses and 4K monitors allows those not physically beside the operating table to see a stereoscopic view during a procedure. This was the first procedure at NMCS that used a 3D surgical microscope.



Cmdr. Shawn Belverud, a neurosurgeon (left), and Lt. Cmdr. Scott Donoughe, a neurology resident (right), both assigned to Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCS), perform a herniated disk repair procedure utilizing a 3D surgical microscope Dec. 6. NMCS's mission is to prepare service members to deploy in support of operational forces, deliver high quality healthcare services and shape the future of military medicine through education, training and research. NMCS employs more than 6,000 active duty military personnel, civilians, and contractors in Southern California to provide patients with world-class care anytime, anywhere.

and used the new microscope.

"3D integration certainly helps bring together other members of the team in the room," said Belverud. "It allows better and more germane input from partners that are helping during the operation. The provided 3D glasses and 4K monitors allow [those not physically at the operating table] to see what the surgeons are seeing. This yields another level of safety to the procedure, and thus, better outcomes."

Moving forward, Belverud said NMCS's two 3D surgical microscopes will be used more regularly.

"The introduction to this technology and this system of illumination and magnification into the neurologic practice at NMCS sets a new standard for the community and the care of our patients," said Belverud.

Often at the forefront of military medicine, NMCS looks toward the future for ways to make procedures safer and more efficient with better patient outcomes.

NMCS's mission is to prepare service members to deploy in support of operational forces, deliver high quality healthcare services and shape the future of military medicine through education, training and research. NMCS employs more than 6,000 active duty military personnel, civilians and contractors in Southern California to provide patients with world-class care anytime, anywhere.

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• Performance (Continued from front page)

supplements and help you figure out how to cut carbs, fat and sugar in your meals.”

Staff Sgt. James Mattson, as an occupational therapy specialist and certified occupational therapy assistant said he helps patients develop, recover, improve and maintain skills necessary for daily living and working.

“Physical fitness is absolutely necessary for all human beings and very important to me personally,” he said. “I like to say, motion is the lotion; as you move your body you burn calories, your joints loosen up, your muscles including your brain get moving. Physical fitness keeps all of your internal systems running smoothly.”

Mattson said physical fitness is more than your body mass index, run time, or how many push-ups you can do. To optimize your physical fitness you need strength, flexibility, balance, and endurance all working together. He explained that each element of the total force fitness ideology is important and they are all interrelated.

“Fitness is a very important part of my life. It is the most under used stress regulation and reduction method available,” he said. “I’ve learned that if you

get a good night sleep, exercise regularly and eat a healthy breakfast each day, you can face anything in life.”

Mattson said fitness and nutrition have helped him through difficult times in his life. He said prioritizing fitness in your own life is the only way to make it a habit.

“There is a high prevalence of healthy activities for Soldiers at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk,” he said. “There is a lot of opportunity to form holistic and healthy habits for Soldiers here.”

Mattson said setting aside time for healthful habits is good start to achieve physical and nutritional goals. He said, positive sleep habits, a nutritious diet and daily physical activity will enhance overall well-being.

The Fort Polk Army Wellness Center offers a variety of free classes and prevention services to promote a healthy lifestyle and improved health and wellness for Soldiers, Department of the Army civilian employees, Family members and retirees.

Eric Middleton, supervisory health educator with the AWC, said there are a lot of facets to nutritional and physical fitness.

“You are what you eat. If you make

poor nutritional choices it will affect your performance,” he said. “We try to teach our clients to prep nutritionally, create healthier options for themselves which in turn builds a framework for success. Providing higher quality fuel for the body will enhance cognitive, spiritual and physical performance.”

Middleton said the Army Wellness Center provides a comprehensive approach to overall health and fitness. He said his staff offers classes on stress management, nutrition education, sleep hygiene and a performance optimization curriculum.

“We look at individuals on a holistic spectrum,” he explained. “We talk to clients individually and help them make small changes to achieve their goals. We are able to use scientific measurements to let the client know where they currently are and help them make choices to achieve their goals.”

He said that unlike dietitians the staff at the Army Wellness Center are exercise scientists.

“We take a comprehensive approach to address a client’s needs,” he said. “We look at all aspects of an individual’s behaviors, nutrition, stress, fitness and overall well-being. We help our clients see the impact of their choices

on a physical, cognitive and performance level with a variety of different factors.”

He said they don’t direct clients what to do, they help them identify small changes that will facilitate the achievement of their goals. Clients are able to pick and choose what will work for them and sit-down with staff members every 30 days to reassess and make adjustments to benefit their overall health.

“Taking care of yourself and putting yourself first is important,” he said. “If you don’t invest time in your health now, you’ll be forced to invest for your health later on in life.”

Middleton encourages everyone to invest a little bit of time in their health each day. He recommends eating right and exercising daily as the first step to optimal health and performance.

Editor’s note: To learn more about Total Force Fitness visit www.health.mil/News/In-the-Spotlight/Total-Force-Fitness. To schedule an appointment at the Army Wellness Center call 337-531-3055. BJACH Dietitians are available to all Tricare beneficiaries, ask your primary care manager for more information and for a referral.

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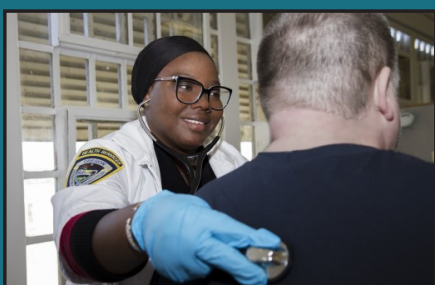
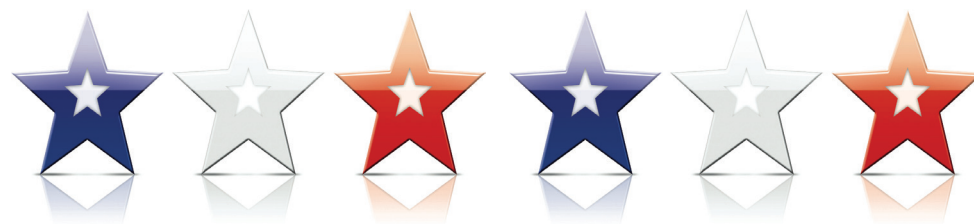
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