





Melissa Bryant, 78th Air Base Wing Affirmative Employment Program manager, center, and Stephanie Hawthorne, 78th ABW Disability Acton Team manager, right, share information with a base employee about the Member Employee Resource Group during a health fair at Robins Air Force Base Feb. 24. The MERG is composed of base employees who are working to determine barriers to hiring, retention and representation. (U.S. Air Force photo by Kisha Foster Johnson)

# Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Office seeks volunteers

By Kisha Foster Johnson  
78th Air Base Wing Public Affairs Office

The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Office at Robins Air Force Base is putting out a call for help. Melissa Bryant, 78th Air Base Wing Affirmative Employment Program manager, said there is a recruitment effort underway for the Member Employee Resource Group.

“The role and responsibility of MERGs are directly related to helping achieve diversity, inclusion and equality of opportunities in recruitment, hiring, training, development and advancement,” Bryant said. “This will also be an opportunity to bring ideas, inputs, and qualitative data to the Affirmative Employment Program that could potentially identify triggers and/or barriers or simply demystify perceptions and myths associat-

ed with Robins AFB.

“As a MERG, Team Robins members will have the ability to foster an inclusive and collaborative workforce,” she continued. “They can help create a platform to share common career and professional goals and communicate areas of concern and interest to leadership.”

MERGs will work alongside the Special Emphasis Program Managers, who work to enhance employment and employee development.

They also support initiatives by helping address professional development, along with advancement and training of underrepresented groups, so the groups have the opportunity to reach their full employment potential.

All are dedicated to creating a sense of belonging to Team Robins’ members who have

historically been marginalized. MERGs do not have to belong to a particular affinity group, just have the desire to want to help.

“Volunteers are needed,” said Bryant. “We are looking for people who want to be a wingman for other co-workers. People with the ability to empower, communicate positively, show empathy and humility, be passionate and committed, have respect for all individuals, be patient and persistent and be a person of integrity.

“Ultimately, we want people to realize that our differences shouldn’t divide us, but instead, make us stronger as we bring various perspectives to the workforce.” Bryant continued.

For more information about the Robins MERG, <https://www.robins.af.mil/Units/78th-Air-Base-Wing/DEIA/>.

# Wage Grade Career Path Website

By Program Development & Sustainment  
Air Force Sustainment Center Workforce Development

Are you part of the wage grade workforce and ready for career growth? Look no further than the Wage Grade Career Path Website!

This one stop career planning website provides information on:

- How to progress in your career
- Resources to access education and training at your installation
- How to find a mentor

- Building a resume
- Applying for jobs
- Development through formal education and professional and technical training
- Plus much more!

Who does this website apply to?

Wage Grade, Work Leader, Wage Supervisor at any pay grade

You can access the site using your computer or mobile device at [www.afsc.af.mil/AFSC-Wage-Grade-Career-Path/](http://www.afsc.af.mil/AFSC-Wage-Grade-Career-Path/)

AFSC WAGE GRADE EMPLOYEE LEVELS AND COMPETENCY FOCUS				
Apprentice/Helper/Trainee	Less than Journeyman/Intermediate	Journeyman	Work Leader	Supervisor
WG	WG	WG	WL	WS
No skills/knowledge required before hire Master simple to common work tasks under supervision Learn and advance through three levels of apprenticeship: 1-Beginning: Do simple work tasks under close supervision 2-Middle: Do the less difficult common work tasks under close supervision 3-Advanced: Do common work tasks under close supervision Develop Competencies: focus on Developing Self category	Line of work skills/knowledge required before hire Master common work tasks under supervision	Line of work skills/knowledge required before hire Master common to complex tasks with minimal supervision Provide production support services	Line of work skills/knowledge required before hire Master common to complex tasks to include ability to inspect and teach others Provide production support services Sharpen lead or supervisory skills	Line of work skills/knowledge required before hire Master ability to supervise groups of workers through one or more levels of subordinate supervisors Combine occupational skills with Competencies: focus on Developing Self, Others, Orgs, Ideas categories

# Medal of Honor spotlight Navy Rear Adm. Robert Cary Jr.

By KATIE LANGE  
DoD News

Navy Rear Adm. Robert W. Cary Jr. had a long military career that included both world wars, but the actions that earned him the Medal of Honor happened when he was only a few months into life as a commissioned officer.

Cary was born on Aug. 18, 1890, in Kansas City, Missouri, to Robert and Lalla Cary. According to a Kansas City Times article, he was a descendant of Meredith Miles Marmaduke, the governor of Missouri in 1844.

After graduating from Kansas City’s Westport High School, Cary went to William Jewell College and the University of Missouri before attending the



Photo courtesy defense.gov  
Navy Rear Adm. Robert Cary Jr.

U.S. Naval Academy, which he graduated from in 1914. About seven months later, he found himself serving as an ensign on the USS San Diego.

On Jan. 21, 1915, the San Diego was off the coast of La Paz, Mexico, conducting a four-

hour, full-speed endurance trial, when all hell broke loose.

Toward the end of the trial, Cary was working in the ship’s boiler rooms with the job of taking steam pressure readings from every boiler every half-hour. He had just read the steam and air pressure on the No. 2 boilers and had stepped through the electric watertight door into the No. 1 boiler room when the No. 2 boilers exploded.

Apparently, one of the boiler tubes had become blocked, causing an explosion that led to a chain reaction.

As the emergency unfolded, the ship’s bridge started to electronically close the doors between the rooms. Cary didn’t want the men in the No. 2 room

See HONOR, page 3

# BBB: Scammers may be targeting your smart TV

Scammers can target victims through any device connected to the internet, and your TV is no exception. BBB Scam Tracker has seen an influx of reports about scammers catching people off guard with pop-ups on their smart TVs. Their objective is to steal your personal information and money.

## How the scam works

You open a familiar streaming service on your smart TV. However, you can’t log in. Instead, a pop-up appears, telling you there is a problem with your device or your streaming subscription. You need to call a phone number or visit a website to fix it.

Don’t fall for it! If you call the number, scammers pretend to be customer service representatives. They will insist you pay an activation fee or allow them remote access to your smart TV. These con artists will get your credit or debit card number if you pay the fee.

If you give them access to your device or click on a link they provide, the scammers may install malware on your TV and use it to gain access to sensitive personal information.

Sometimes scammers ask you to “fix” the issue by paying them in gift cards. One consumer reported that after calling a number that appeared in a pop-up on their smart TV, a scammer instructed them to purchase three \$100 Xbox gift cards to add “anti-hacking protection” to their account.

After buying the gift cards and contacting the number again, it became clear they were dealing with scammers.

## How to avoid smart TV scams



Kelvin Collins

However, a quick online search reveals that Roku never charges activation or registration fees.

■ **Don’t fall for fake websites.** Scammers love to create imitation websites using URLs that are just a letter or two off. Fake websites are a threat, even on smart TVs, so double-check the URL.

Another way to protect yourself is to avoid clicking on links in pop-ups and, instead, type web URLs directly into your browser.

■ **Check before you call.** If a “customer service” phone number appears in a pop-up, double-check it before you call. Contact a streaming service or TV manufacturer’s website to find their customer support number.

■ **Never let anyone control your device remotely.** Scammers usually ask for remote computer access, but they could also ask for access to your smart TV. Don’t ever give control of your device to a stranger.

For more information or to get more advice about tech support scams, visit [BBB.org](http://BBB.org). If you spot a smart TV scam, report it to [BBB.org/ScamTracker](http://BBB.org/ScamTracker). Your report can help boost consumer awareness.



PHOTO SOURCE: (c) Jacob Lund / iStock via Getty Images Plus

# Ways to spend more wisely at the grocery store

(StatePoint) Whether you are packing school lunches or hosting a dinner party, you want your fridge and pantry to be stocked with the highest-quality foods for the best value.

Thankfully, there’s a better way to navigate store aisles than just picking products at random and hoping for the best, one which doesn’t involve hours of product research.

Product of the Year USA, the largest consumer-voted awards program centered around product innovation, recently announced the winners of the 2023 Product of the Year Awards across 36 trending categories.

Determined through a national study of 40,000 American shoppers in partnership with Kantar, a global leader in consumer research, the winners represent the best new products when it comes to thoughtful design, quality and innovation.

“It’s easier than ever for today’s consumers to be overwhelmed by choice. Far beyond retail aisles, they now have direct-to-consumer options, grocery delivery in the palm of their hands, and a never-ending stream of their favorite

influencers reviewing products,” says Mike Nolan, global CEO of Product of the Year Management. “It’s important to us to help consumers and their families cut through the noise.”

To make your visits to the supermarket a breeze, consider this year’s 20 food and beverage winners, listed by category:

- Bread | ALDI-exclusive Specially Selected French Baguette – ALDI
- Breakfast | Quaker Puffed Granola – PepsiCo
- Cheese | ALDI-exclusive Emporium Selection Feta Block Assortment – ALDI
- Coffee Creamer | Lactose-Free Flavored Creamer in French Vanilla and Sweet Cream – Organic Valley
- Condiment | ALDI-exclusive Burman’s Dipping Sauces – ALDI
- Convenience Meals | Hot Pockets Deliwich – Nestlé USA
- Entrée | Pasta-Roni Heat & Eat – PepsiCo
- Frozen Dessert | ALDI-exclusive Sundae Shoppe Gelato – ALDI
- Keto | ALDI-exclusive Benton’s Keto Cookies – ALDI
- Meal Replacement |

Complete Nutrition Shakes – Soylent

● Meal Solution | Bob Evans Mashed Cauliflower – Bob Evans Farms

● Non-Chocolate | HARIBO Berry Clouds – HARIBO of America, Inc.

● Non-Dairy | ALDI-exclusive Friendly Farms Non-Dairy Whipped Toppings – ALDI

● On-The-Go Snack | ALDI-exclusive Park Street Deli Sweet Snack Selects – ALDI

● Premixed Drink | ALDI-exclusive Zarita Margaritas – ALDI

● Salty Snack | Takis Hot Nuts Fuego – Barcel USA

● Smoothie | DOLE BOOSTED BLENDS Berry Spark Smoothie – Dole Packaged Foods

● Snack & Appetizer | El Monterey Chili Cheese Chimichanga – Ruiz Foods

● Soft Drink | Nitro Pepsi – PepsiCo

● Wine | ALDI-exclusive Don’t Mind If I Do Sauvignon Blanc – ALDI

For more information about this year’s winners, visit [productoftheyearusa.com](http://productoftheyearusa.com).

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DPMAPS

From page 1

you did in order to EXCEED the “standard”. Perhaps the input would read, “Used appropriate testing equipment and reliably troubleshot equipment and insured equipment was accurately tuned, aligned, and calibrated 100% of the time”. This, then, would support an OUTSTANDING rating. Support this with whatever documentation you can. However, this is hard to support, right (see a few paragraphs down)? Third, address the “specific” guidance that was provided to you at the midterm when you asked (according to Article 015.02.g) for clear guidance what you needed to do to

EEO

From page 1

within the same racial category. An example is people being of the same race but not same color. She added: “It’s important to remember that people can exhibit prejudice against any types of these visual differences, including their own. For there isn’t any kind of protection to say you can’t discriminate against your own protected category.” 3. Religion. It, she said, doesn’t have to be a widely-popular religion. “It just has to be a set of beliefs. And atheism is included, or it can be lesser-known religions.” 4. National Origin. This, she said, can be an individual or his or her ancestor’s place of national origin or the physical, cultural or linguistics of a National Origin group. “So physical would be like how you dress, women who a headdress or men who wear a Yakima for example. “A cultural example would be celebrating certain holidays or engaging in certain activities. And linguistic examples would be the language someone can speak and access.” 5. Sex. It, Vemury said, includes gender female but also includes an array of other categories. “Like gender-stereotyping which is over generalization of an entire group based on gender. Or sexual harassments. “Or pregnancy discrimination, discrimination against pregnant women in sex discrimination. And that was an update that happened in 2014. We also have sexual orientation and that includes being transgender.”

HONOR

From page 2

to be trapped, so he forced the doors to remain open so they could escape, even as the steam from the ruptured boilers swirled around him. That quick thinking saved the lives of three men. Cary’s cool demeanor also kept the men in the No. 1 boiler room calm enough to remain at their posts, even though five nearby boilers had exploded and more were expected to explode. Eventually, Cary was able to direct the men in the No. 1 boiler room into a bunker for safety. The entire incident killed five men and injured at least seven others, according to the Naval History and Heritage Command. Cary was cool and collected during the ordeal and showed a lot of bravery during a dire situation. But it would be 19 years before he would earn the Medal of Honor for those actions. Cary continued his service in the Navy. During World War I, he served on destroyers and earned the Navy Cross for bravery when the potential for an explosion threatened another ship. On Nov. 7, 1918, Cary was an executive officer on the USS Sampson when, during a heavy storm, a depth charge on the ship’s fantail broke loose – something that could lead to an explosion. Cary and three enlisted men quickly went to the fantail and secured the depth charge to quell the danger, despite almost being washed overboard. At some point early in his career, Cary married a woman named Jane Watt. After she died in 1931, he remarried a woman named Jane Christian. Between the two marriages, Cary had a son, Robert, and four daughters. After World War I, Cary remained in the Navy, serving in

achieve an Outstanding rating. Chances are this has not been done by the supervisor but, hell, maybe they did. Read 15.02.g to discover how to determine whether the supervisor provided you the documentation you requested. When you receive your appraisal, if it does not reflect the Outstanding performance you have illustrated, immediately ask the supervisor (both verbally and in email) to provide YOU with documents that supported the “percentage” the supervisor claims you achieved. Percentages are based on numbers, right? 90% percentage MUST be based on your specific actions and NOT what the workforce or your coworkers have done. Saying 90% of shops productivity is basing YOUR performance on how the office

did and NOT on what you, yourself, accomplished. This rating would not be in accordance with guidance as it is an appraisal based on the shop’s performance and not yours. One of my favorites is something along the lines of “exceeds productivity of 50% of the crew” or some-such. All this tells me is that 50% of your crew is going to be, at best, fully successful. Is this a fair representation of YOUR performance? I think not! I cannot promise the Agency/Supervision will rate you any differently than they have for the past five years (pretty much however they wish). What I can tell you is that an Arbitrator is going to be mighty suspicious as to how you were rated “Fully Successful” if YOU supply input that clearly docu-

ments OUTSTANDING. Also, don’t forget to ask for “clear guidance” on how to be rated OUTSTANDING at both the performance plan and the midterm ... in an email. I’m sure you trust your supervisor but trust ME when I tell you that, at a hearing, if the supervisor is asked, if you asked them this question, they are going to say “no”. Do you know why? It’s because you don’t have one shred of evidence that you did! Create your own evidentiary file to assure yourself an OUTSTANDING!! Good luck with this year’s appraisal rating of record. I hope it is an honest reflection of actual work performed and earns you an OUTSTANDING rating in ALL categories. If it doesn’t, reckon I’ll see you at an arbitration.

What does EEO not do?

- Prohibit all forms of discrimination and reprisal
- Establish quotas
- Protect one race, gender, religion, et cetera over another
- Attack unfair treatment
- Fix poor management
- Cure personalit conflicts

6. Reprisal/Retaliation. The definition for it is “unique” for EEO purposes, she said. She also cautioned it wasn’t for union activity, saying it was a “great way for you cases to be easily dismissed. “If your union activity included representing individuals on EEO cases, that is you being an ‘EEO representative,’ which is an ‘EEO’ activity. I don’t want you to focus on your union activity. And that is because that would be a reason for the judge to dismiss the case if you’re saying it’s because of your union status versus you being an EEO representative. “I know that might sound like a strange distinction, but it’s important we have that distinction because the EEOC does not have the ability to litigate based on your union status. “So, it’s the only protected EEO act which is covered. Or, I should say all EEO activity is covered but we would like to look at the main types of EEO activity, which is being a ‘complainant,’ being a ‘witness’ or being a ‘representative.’ But if you tell your manager that you are going to file an EEO complaint, you are going to be covered for that ... (You’re also pro-

tected to request a Reasonable Accommodation based on your disability or religion.” On “opposing discrimination,” she gave the example of a person being a new-hire lead and the manager came to them and asked them to hire a woman. “Because,” she said – the manager’s explanation, “a woman will be more outgoing and a better coworker. If you push back because you know that’s illegal and then your manager reprimands you, then you have a case for EEO retaliation because you opposed a legal action.” 7. Age. “You’re only protected if you’re over 40 and you’re treated less preferably than younger people,” she said, explaining: “Say there’s a situation where the individual is

39 and another 40. The individual who is 40 can be covered, so technically you have a case. “But when we’re talking about an individual who is 40 and 60, it would have to be the older individual who is alleging age discrimination. So 60 versus 40. So not less than 40 but the older has to be at least 40.” 8. Disability. This, she said, was another definition unique to EEO. It is: “Physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity ... Not like having a parking sticker or being disabled for VA purposes,” she said. “You have to show that there is some kind of daily activity you’re not able to do in order to get a commendation. “Or if you’re perceived as disabled you can file a harassment claim or a disparaging treatment claim, disparate impact claim based on that perception.” 9. Genetic Information. This includes information about an individual’s genetic tests and the genetic tests of individual family members, as well as information about the manifestation of a disease or disorder in an individual’s family members. “Family medical history” is included in the definition.

Forums for EEO issues

- Contract violation - Grievance/Arbitration
- Contract
- 5 CFR 2425
- Merit Systems Protection Board
- 5 CFR 1201
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- 29 CFR 1614

many capacities at several duty stations. It was during this period between wars that he finally received the Medal of Honor for the 1915 incident on the San Diego. On May 23, 1934, then-Lt. Cmdr. Cary received the nation’s highest award for valor. Cary went on to serve in various European campaigns during

World War II, including as the commanding officer of the USS Savannah during the U.S. invasion of Italy. On Sept. 11, 1943, the ship was struck by a German glide bomb off the coast of Salerno. About 200 sailors were lost during the incident, but the ship managed to make it to Malta to be salvaged. By the time he

retired in 1946, he’d reached the rank of rear admiral. As a civilian, he worked various jobs in industry and business. Cary died of a heart attack while in Toledo, Ohio, on July 15, 1967. At the time, he was the chairman of the board of Trans-World Service Inc., Toledo’s largest freight forwarder. He was 76.

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Actions/decisions:

Keystone Foods LLC to pay \$60,000 to settle pregnancy discrimination lawsuit

Keystone Foods LLC, which operates a food processing facility in Eufaula, Alabama, agreed to pay \$60,000 to settle a retaliation lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the federal agency announced recently. According to the EEOC lawsuit, Keystone extended job offers to a group of 17 former employees during a series of job fair interviews for positions in its Eufaula plant, but retracted its offer to a female former employee when a records review revealed she previously filed a complaint of pregnancy discrimination and an EEOC charge against her former employer.

This alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which protects pregnant workers from employment discrimination and bars employers from retaliating against employees who report pregnancy discrimination or file an EEOC charge against their employer.

The two-year consent decree resolving the suit prohibits Keystone from discriminating and retaliating against employees in violation of Title VII. Additionally, Keystone will issue a written statement to all employees at its Eufaula facility stating it will not violate Title VII by retaliating against employees or job applicants who engage in activity protected under Title VII. Keystone will educate employees about the process to report complaints of discrimination and retaliation and will conduct training of its employees on the requirements of Title VII, including its anti-retaliation provisions. “Retaliation remains the most common type of charge filed with the EEOC. Retaliation claims account for over 56% of the total charges,” said EEOC Birmingham District Director Bradley Anderson. “As this case demonstrates, employers would do well to recognize that Title VII’s anti-retaliation provisions protect both current and former employees.”

Sacramento paper plant to pay \$385,000 to settle race harassment lawsuit

Paper manufacturers Packaging Corporation of America Central California Corrugated, LLC. (PCA) and Schwarz Partners LP will pay \$385,000 and implement preventative measures to settle a racial harassment lawsuit seeking relief for two African American men who worked at a manufacturing plant located in McClellan, California, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission announced recently.

According to EEOC’s suit, co-workers and a shift supervisor commonly used racial slurs and derision, even broadcasting these phrases over the facility’s radio system. The Black workers also faced graffiti of swastikas and were taunted with a makeshift noose. The employers failed to act on the harassment, according to the EEOC. For instance, after one employee submitted a photo of the drawing his shift lead had scribbled onto his workstation, comprised of a confederate flag inscribed with the phrase “Long Live the Confederacy,” human resources closed the investigation due to insufficient evidence, without interviewing the alleged harasser.

Racial harassment violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which requires employers to take prompt action to investigate and stop the misconduct after they learn of it.

The three-year consent decree settling the lawsuit provides for \$385,000 in lost wages and emotional distress damages to the two former employees. The defendants will revamp company policies and train employees on preventing and reporting racial harassment. The companies will also implement policies and procedures to facilitate the prompt and thorough investigations of any future complaints of discrimination or harassment.

National Labor Relations Board

Actions/decisions:

Amazon required to ‘cease and desist’ from firing employees for protected activities

Judge Diane Gujrati of the United States District Court for the District of Eastern New York issued a Section 10(j) injunction recently against Amazon.com Services LLC directing it to cease and desist from discharging employees, and from engaging in any like or related conduct, in retaliation for employees engaging in protected activities. The injunction also directs Amazon to post, distribute, and read the Court’s order to employees at the Employer’s Staten Island facility (“JFK8”).

The injunction was issued based on a petition for Section 10(j) injunctive relief filed by Kathy Drew King, former Regional Director of Region 29 of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Section 10(j) of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) authorizes the NLRB to seek injunctions against employers and unions in federal district courts to ensure that employees’ rights will be adequately protected from remedial failure due to the passage of time.

The petition alleged that Amazon unlawfully fired an employee at JFK8 for advocating, with his co-workers, for workplace health and safety protections in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and by protesting with his co-workers Amazon’s failure to provide greater safety protections to employees. While the injunction does not order interim reinstatement of the employee at this time, it does order Amazon to cease and desist from further discharging any employees for protected activities under the NLRA, or in any like or related manner interfering with, restraining, or coercing employees in the exercise of the rights guaranteed to them by Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act. If Amazon violates the cease-and-desist order, it could be held in contempt by the court.

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Pacific Time Eastern Time

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FERS Special Supplement	Health Insurance Coverage
Retirement Eligibility	FEGLI Coverages
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# Helping Heroes Handle IBD



Photos courtesy of Getty Images

## FAMILY FEATURES

**F**or many veterans, their greatest battle isn't against enemy forces. It's a challenge that lies within their own bodies. An estimated 66,000 veterans live with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Whether diagnosed while in service or after discharge, it's normal to have questions about the disease, need resources to navigate care options and want to connect with others who understand what you are experiencing. Regardless of your specific circumstances, learning to be an advocate for your health can take some time as you complete your transition process into the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) health care system. Being a proactive participant in your health care can help you in your journey. Arm yourself with more information about IBD and your options with these tips from the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation.

### Learn About IBD

No matter where you are in your disease journey, you may have questions about Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. Focus groups led by the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation revealed many veterans living with IBD want to learn more about their diet and how to manage their disease symptoms. Living with IBD means paying special attention to what you eat. Your diet needs to include enough calories and nutrients to keep you

healthy and avoid malnourishment. Some of the best ways to maintain adequate nutrition are to work with your health care team, seek help from a dietitian, make healthy food choices and avoid foods that make your symptoms worse. Many people with IBD also take medications on a regular basis to manage symptoms and help prevent flares, even when the disease is in remission. Patients may sometimes use complementary therapies together with traditional medicine; however, it is important to remember complementary therapies should not replace the treatment prescribed by your doctor.

### Continuous Care

Living with a chronic illness like Crohn's or colitis means seeing your doctor regularly. Continuous care helps ensure your needs are being addressed and you're receiving the care you need. Working on an ongoing basis with a primary care doctor and gastroenterologist (ideally an IBD specialist) allows you to focus on targeted IBD and preventive care such as immunizations, cancer screenings and bone health monitoring. Keep these tips in mind as you navigate your care, whether it be through a VA hospital, community center or private physician outside the VA.

- Seek help from a social worker, care coordinator or patient navigator.
- Adhere to recommendations for follow-up visits with your health care team.
- Keep a list of all prescribed and over-the-counter medications in your smartphone or on paper.
- Sign up for the VA's health app, Myhealthvet, to communicate with your health care team, access your records, request prescription refills and access other helpful tools.

### Mental Health and Emotional Wellness

People with IBD are 2-3 times more likely to experience anxiety and depression than the general population, according to the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation. However, there are ways to help you cope with these feelings and concerns. Coping tips include engaging in activities like exercise, relaxation techniques and meditation. You might also consider seeking help from a mental health professional who can assist you with acquiring skills to cope with your fears, worries and emotions. To find more resources, including perspectives from other veterans managing IBD, visit [crohnscolitisfoundation.org/veterans](https://crohnscolitisfoundation.org/veterans), where you can also find a link to a support group for veterans with IBD on Facebook.

## Manage Your Menu

It's not always easy knowing what foods best fuel your body, especially when you have Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis. Your diet and nutrition are a major part of life with IBD, yet there is no single diet that works for everyone. Nutrition affects not just your IBD symptoms, but also your overall health and well-being. Without proper nutrients, the symptoms of your Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis can cause serious complications, including nutrient deficiencies, weight loss and malnutrition. While there is no one-size-fits-all for meal planning, these tips can help guide you toward better daily nutrition:

- Eat small, frequent meals daily.
- Stay hydrated with water, broth, tomato juice or a rehydration solution. Drink enough to keep your urine light yellow or clear.
- Drink slowly and avoid using a straw, which can cause you to ingest air that may cause gas.
- Prepare meals in advance and keep your kitchen stocked with foods you tolerate well.
- Use simple cooking techniques such as boiling, grilling, steaming and poaching.
- Use a food journal to keep track of what you eat and any symptoms you experience.



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**Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.**

**My first job was working at an orange juice factory but, I got canned because I couldn't concentrate.**

**What do lawyers wear to court?**  
**Lawsuits.**

CUPADDLEOWUVRCTYPDWINI  
ZDZKVEOHVPVLTNVVDIRDKKH  
AKCIDDAZKRRORQFXDXBBBACL  
UZUONDASMI ECRLTATVOVYB  
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GRPRSHUDDERDFUZOMECLFU  
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ADD	BLADDER	CADDY
DUDDY	EDDY	FIDDLE
GRIDDLE	HIDDEN	IMBEDDED
JUDDER	KIDDO	LADDER
MUDDLER	NODDY	ODDS
PADDLE	RADDLE	SHUDDER
TEDDY	UNRIDDLE	WADDY
WIDDER	ZADDICK	ZADDIK

1. Blood-related problem
5. Econ. measure
8. Blue
11. A perch for Christmas partridge?
12. Domain
13. Fill college entrance form
15. Archaic preposition
16. Chili seed
17. Ski run
18. \*Swedish environmental activist
20. Makes lace
21. Pi meson, pl.
22. Digital map marker
23. \*Rachel Carson's "\_\_\_\_\_ Spring"
26. Heater
30. "Wheel of Fortune" vowel request
31. Trouble, in Yiddish
34. Epochs
35. Type of single-story house
37. Noble title
38. Sandler and Driver
39. Not "out of"
40. Advice on shampoo bottle
42. \*Pollinator of plants
43. \_\_\_\_\_ Cray, a.k.a. the father of supercomputing
44. \*Earth Day founder
47. Benatar or Boone
48. Lacking clarity
50. Singer-songwriter Tori
52. \*1969 Santa Barbara disaster
55. To some degree
56. Dig like a pig
57. Honoree's spot
59. Apartments, e.g.
60. Swine and avian diseases
61. Primary source for Nordic mythology
62. Cash machine

1. PC “brain”
2. Christian fast
3. The Hippocratic one
4. Group of minstrels, e.g.
5. \*Environmentally-friendly
6. Draws close
7. Spasm of pain
8. See him run?
9. “The Sound of Music” backdrop
10. Yellow #5 in list of ingredients
12. Highly-ranked ecclesiasts
13. On the move
14. Arranged in advance
19. Usually the last inning
22. Wound fluid
23. Delhi dresses
24. Absurd
25. Like a dryer trap
26. \*Cuyahoga River disaster, Clean Water Act precursor
27. Omani and Yemeni
28. Tarantino in his own movie, e.g.
29. Ruhr’s industrial center
32. \_\_\_\_-friendly
33. Mourner’s wish
36. \*Refuse turned fertilizer
38. Consumed (2 words)
40. Monotonous routine
41. Teenagers’ emotions
44. A mirage?
46. City in Netherlands
48. Between violin and cello
49. Not silently
50. Polly to Tom Sawyer
51. Disfigure
52. \_\_\_\_ Approach, music education
53. Serve soup
54. \*Plastic tops of coffee cups
55. Sine \_\_\_\_ non
58. College entrance exam, acr.

1	2	3	4			5	6	7				8	9	10
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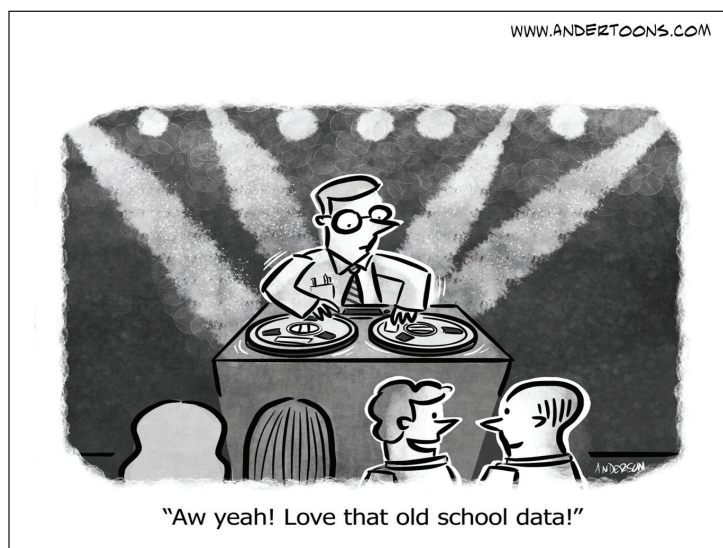


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	1							5

You can find more help and strategies at [www.str8ts.com](http://www.str8ts.com) along with more puzzles, Apple apps and books.

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9	8	1	7	6		4	3	2
8	9	7	6	1	3	5	2	4
6	7	8	9	2	4	3		

How to beat **Str8ts** –  
Like Sudoku, no single number can repeat in any row or column. But... rows and columns are divided by black squares into **compartmentments**. These need to be filled in with numbers that complete a 'straight'. A **straight** is a set of numbers with no gaps but can be in any order, eg [4,2,3,5]. Clues in black cells remove that number as an option in that row and column, and are not part of any straight. Glance at the solution to see how 'straights' are formed.



# Fun Easter ‘Egg-turnatives’

4 creative alternatives to decorating eggs this Easter

## FAMILY FEATURES

While decorating eggs for Easter is a tradition that dates back centuries, the high cost of eggs may make it more difficult for some families this year. However, that doesn’t mean you can’t find creative ways to keep the season special and create memories with loved ones.

With more than 140 years of experience, the Easter egg decorating experts at PAAS® are sharing some ideas and inspiration on fun things to do with your Easter decorating kit. These “egg-citing” alternatives to using traditional eggs can help keep those simple moments of connection and creativity alive:

### Pretty in Plastic

Dyeing plastic eggs is an activity perfect for all ages with less stress and less mess since they don’t crack or break when dropped. Dyeable plastic eggs also typically come in packages of more than a traditional dozen, offering more opportunities for creativity. Another added bonus: You can decorate your home every year with the finished product since they don’t go bad. They are also perfect for DIY projects, such as making them into garland, hanging ornaments, place settings or gifts that can be used for years to come.

### Baked Easter Decor

Instead of buying eggs, you can make your own baking soda dough eggs using 1/2 cup corn starch, 1 cup baking soda and 3/4 cup water. Combine the ingredients, roll into egg shapes and bake in the oven for 1 hour at 175 F then simply dye them as you would real eggs using your favorite PAAS egg decorating kit. Fun for all ages, these eggs can be turned into a variety of decor and mementos with kids taking the lead on mixing the dough batter and shaping the eggs before an adult helps with the baking.

### Creative Kitchen Canvases

Coffee filters are good for more than just making coffee; they make perfect canvases for Easter decorating and naturally take dye. With 100-250 coffee filters per package, they’re a cost-effective way to maximize crafting opportunities and let creativity run wild. Once dyed and dried, you can turn the filters into flower centerpieces, papier mache eggs, artwork to frame and more.

### Repurposed Treasure from Nature

Kids often love to hunt for fun-shaped and colorful rocks when exploring outdoors or collect seashells while on vacation or taking a walk on the beach. Now, rather than storing them in a “treasure box” or throwing them back outside, they can be creatively decorated for Easter using paint, stickers, glitter, accessories and other add-ons. Some seashells can even be dyed. Using rocks and shells of all shapes and sizes is a cost-effective, low-waste alternative that allows children to use their imaginations for creative play once they’re done decorating.

For more tips and ideas to make Easter “eggstra” special this year, visit [paaseastereggs.com](https://paaseastereggs.com).



Photos courtesy of Getty Images



### Sustainable Tips to Avoid Egg Waste

If you plan to keep the tradition of dyeing eggs alive this year, you can take steps to avoid food waste once you’re done decorating. Consider these sustainable tips from the experts at PAAS:

- **Make Deviled Eggs:** As long as you refrigerate the eggs shortly after dyeing them, you can use them to make deviled eggs – an Easter brunch staple – for your family meal.
- **Create Centerpieces:** Dyed eggs can be used to make a beautiful centerpiece for your family dinner. Simply spread them over your table runner around other decor, fill a glass bowl or jar with the eggs or place them within a floral arrangement to add pops of color to the table.
- **Serve a Salad:** Eating the eggs saves you from food waste, and eggs can be used in a variety of salads, including egg salad, potato salad or chef’s salad, to add a boost of protein and flavor.
- **Start a Compost Pile:** If you don’t plan to eat the eggs once you’re done decorating, you can create a compost pile near your garden. Hard-boiled eggshells are a rich source of calcium and other essential nutrients plants need.

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