

TREES



MEDIUM

WEEDS



NOT COUNTED

GRASS



HIGH

MOLD



LOW

HEALTH BRIEFS



AP PHOTO | JOSE LUIS MAGANA, FILE

The Food and Drug Administration seal is seen at the Hubert Humphrey Building Auditorium in Washington, April 22, 2025.

New kind of flu shot is on the way as the FDA approves Moderna’s mRNA-based vaccine

WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration has approved a new flu vaccine for older people, the first made with the same mRNA technology that was key to ending the COVID-19 pandemic. Moderna announced the approval late Wednesday. The Cambridge, Massachusetts-based company says it expects some supply to be available in certain stores soon. The shot is called mFlusiva and is for adults age 50 or older. It offers an additional option among the multiple flu vaccines available, including three specifically recommended for people age 65 or older who are especially vulnerable to influenza.

The Associated Press

U.S. sees a big jump in nausea cases among frequent marijuana users in the hospital

NEW YORK — The U.S. has seen a rise in cases of cannabis hyperemesis syndrome, a nausea condition caused by heavy marijuana use. This increase follows the introduction of a specific diagnosis code last fall. It has provided a clearer picture of the issue. Hospital emergency room diagnoses more than tripled in late 2025 and early this year compared to the previous two years. The syndrome affects frequent marijuana users and causes recurring nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. The findings suggest a need to raise awareness about the syndrome, particularly in teens and younger adults.

The Associated Press



AP PHOTO | GENE J. PUSKAR, FILE

Kellogg’s Froot Loops are displayed in a Costco in Pittsburgh, July 14, 2025.

Kellogg says it’s removing artificial dyes from cereals by the end of this year

WK Kellogg said Thursday that it will remove artificial colors from all its cereals by the end of this year. The change comes a year ahead of schedule. Kellogg said last August that it would remove synthetic dyes from its cereals by the end of 2027. But the company said Thursday it has identified fruit- and vegetable-based juices that will give cereals like Froot Loops and Apple Jacks their distinctive colors. The Battle Creek, Michigan-based company said it is also removing BHT, an artificial preservative, from the small number of cereals that still contain it.

The Associated Press

Mental health expert weighs in on psychedelic-assisted therapy for veterans with PTSD

BY LISA DAVIDSON
HERALD CORRESPONDENT

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, an average of nearly 18 veterans died by suicide each day in 2022 – the most recent year for which data is available. For many of those veterans, conventional treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder had provided only partial relief, leaving families, clinicians and policymakers searching for new answers.

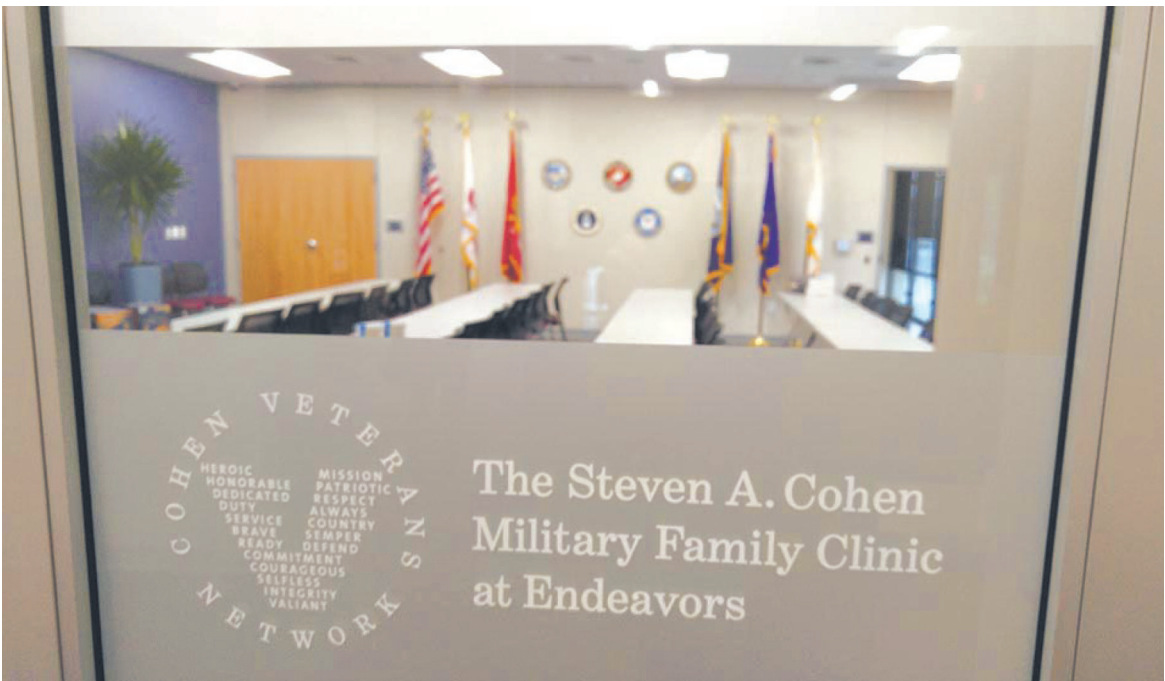
That search has now reached the highest levels of the federal government. Earlier this year, President Donald Trump signed an executive order directing federal agencies to accelerate research and improve access to psychedelic compounds as potential treatments for serious mental illnesses, with particular emphasis on veterans. Shortly after, the VA launched its first clinical trial studying MDMA-assisted therapy for PTSD and alcohol use disorder, recruiting approximately 80 veterans to participate.

Dr. David Linkh, director of the Cohen Veterans Network Institute for Quality and a retired U.S. Air Force colonel with 26 years of service, said the growing interest is understandable given the burden PTSD places on the veteran community. Veterans face disproportionately high rates of PTSD, depression and suicidal behavior compared with their non-veteran peers, and for many, conventional treatments have not provided adequate relief.

But Linkh urges careful, measured expectations. “It is appropriate to be skeptical of claims of miraculous results,” he said. “While some firsthand testimonials can seem very compelling, it is essential that these substances be systematically evaluated according to the same standards as other pharmaceuticals.”

He noted that virtually all psychedelics, with the exception of ketamine and esketamine, remain Schedule I controlled substances under DEA classification. This means they are considered to have no accepted medical uses and high potential for abuse. The FDA has granted breakthrough therapy designation to MDMA and psilocybin to support further research and expedite their approval processes, but full approval remains pending.

For veterans in the Killeen-Fort Hood area who have not found relief through standard



STEVEN A. COHEN MILITARY FAMILY CLINIC AT ENDEAVORS

The Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Endeavors in Killeen provides mental health services to post-9/11 veterans, active-duty service members and military families, including evidence-based therapies for PTSD such as Prolonged Exposure Therapy and Cognitive Processing Therapy. The clinic is located at 1103 W. Stan Schlueter Loop, Building A, Suite 100.

treatments, Linkh said the first step is not to seek out psychedelics but to reconsider whether they have truly exhausted evidence-based options.

“We need to be cautious about characterizing ‘traditional PTSD treatments’ with a broad brush,” he said. “The gold standard treatments for PTSD presently are cognitive behavioral evidence-based practices, including Prolonged Exposure Therapy and Cognitive Processing Therapy, but there is also substantial evidence for Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing and newer protocols such as Written Exposure Therapy.”

According to Linkh, these therapies are highly effective when properly delivered.

“The troubling reality is that most people are not offered these evidence-based approaches,” he said.

These evidence-based approaches are available through the VA and a range of veteran service organizations, including Cohen Veterans Network, STRONGSTAR, Wounded Warrior Network and PsychArmor, according to Linkh.

“The key point is that not all trauma therapies are equally effective,” he said. “The goal should be to find a therapist who has military cultural competence, is trained in one or more of these evidence-based practices, and that the veteran feels comfortable with.”

The Cohen Veterans Network, which operates a clinic in Killeen, offers these evidence-based therapies to post-9/11 veterans,

active duty service members and military families. Since its founding in 2016, the network has treated more than 103,000 clients through more than 927,000 clinical sessions. According to clinic information, most clients achieve their treatment goals or experience clinically meaningful improvement.

While evidence-based therapies remain the recommended first step, Linkh also addressed the growing number of veterans considering psychedelic treatments outside of approved clinical settings and warned against doing so, including at retreats in Mexico or Central America. “Accessing psychedelic therapies outside controlled clinical research environments introduces significant risks, and the lack of informed consent puts the veteran in a precarious position,” he said. “As a clinician and researcher, as well as a veteran, I could not recommend seeking psychedelic-assisted therapy outside an approved medical or clinical research context.”

According to the FDA, psychedelic compounds used outside controlled clinical settings, including ayahuasca and ibogaine, carry considerable medical and psychological risks, and their long-term effects have not been systematically evaluated.

Despite the promise psychedelics show in early research, the path forward requires patience and scientific rigor.

“I don’t think the answer to veteran mental health consists of a single solution, but of a concerted effort to use the best



STEVEN A. COHEN MILITARY FAMILY CLINIC AT ENDEAVORS

Dr. David Linkh, director of the Cohen Veterans Network Institute for Quality and a retired U.S. Air Force colonel, said psychedelic-assisted therapies show promise but must be fully evaluated for safety and effectiveness before being incorporated into routine veteran mental health care.

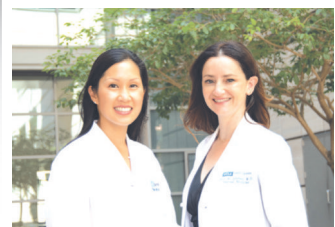
approaches individually and in combination,” he said. “Psychedelics offer an intriguing new tool and show some promise, but we owe it to veterans to fully establish their safety and effectiveness before incorporating them into routine mental health care.”

The Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Endeavors in Killeen provides services for veterans, active duty service members and military families, including spouses and children. The clinic is located at 1103 West Stan Schlueter Loop, Building A, Suite 100, Killeen, Texas 76549. More information is available at endeavors.org.

Veterans in crisis can contact the Veterans Crisis Line by dialing 988 and pressing 1, texting 838255 or chatting at VeteransCrisisLine.net.

Cyclosporiasis outbreak linked to contaminated foods

ASK THE DOCTORS



ELIZABETH KO, M.D.
AND EVE GLAZIER, M.D.

DEAR DOCTORS: I keep hearing on the news about a stomach bug that’s getting a lot of people sick. How serious is it? What are the symptoms that people should be watching out for? I’m always careful about washing produce. Is that enough or is there something else we should be doing?

DEAR READER: The current intestinal illness outbreak you’re asking about is called cyclosporiasis. Thousands of people across the United States

have gotten sick from it so far. Symptoms of cyclosporiasis include severe diarrhea, nausea and fatigue. It is caused by a tiny, one-celled parasite, called Cyclospora cayetanensis. People get infected when they eat or drink contaminated food or water. The contamination comes from the stool of an infected person. This transfer usually happens during growing, harvesting or processing produce. Unlike many intestinal illnesses, cyclosporiasis does not spread directly from one person to another.

Symptoms usually begin about one week after infection. They can also start anywhere from several days to two weeks later. Symptoms include watery and sometimes explosive diarrhea, stomach cramps, bloating, gas and poor appetite. Some people also have a low-grade fever and fatigue. Doctors diagnose the illness by testing a stool sample for the parasite. Cyclosporiasis is treated with antibiotics. Without treatment,

symptoms can last for weeks. In the worst cases, the symptoms can cause severe dehydration, which can require a hospital stay to help you recover.

Here in the U.S., outbreaks are usually traced to fresh produce. Due to the long incubation period, it is hard to trace where cases came from. Cases of cyclosporiasis occur in the U.S. each year in small numbers. Other foodborne illnesses, such as salmonella and E. coli, are far more common. However, this summer, cyclosporiasis has spread wider and faster than before.

To avoid infection, you have to remove or kill any parasites that may be present in raw food. This includes vegetables, fruit, berries, leafy greens and fresh herbs. Washing your produce is helpful, but Cyclospora is hard to remove. The parasite’s outer wall helps it to cling to surfaces. The parasite’s outer wall also protects it from common sanitizing methods, such as a chlorine rinse. Alcohol-based

hand sanitizers also do not kill the parasite.

The best way to kill Cyclospora is by cooking your produce. Heat it to at least 158 degrees Fahrenheit before eating it. Make sure to wash your hands with soap and water well after using the bathroom. Also wash your hands well before and after handling produce.

If someone gets symptoms seen in cyclosporiasis, they should see their doctor. A doctor can order tests to diagnose and then provide treatment. Diagnoses also help trace the current outbreak. Tracing outbreaks provides useful data that helps officials identify what could be causing the outbreak and where. You should also watch for Food and Drug Administration food recalls. These can alert you to specific products linked to the current outbreak.

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