



**HEALTH & WELLNESS**  
**VANDERBILT FACULTY & STAFF**

The Occupational Health Clinic Health Plus  
Work/Life Connections - EAP

# Connection

Providing programs that support the well-being and productivity of Vanderbilt's most valuable asset... YOU!

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 February, March 2022

## January Kicked Off the Start of Go for the Gold

2022 began a new chapter for your health and for our Go for the Gold program! This year, you'll be able to kick-start your wellness actions log earlier than ever. Check out the steps below and get started today!

### STEP 1 Health Risk Assessment

Check in on your health to identify health risks and ways to improve!

### STEP 2 Wellness Actions Log

To earn actions, you will need to participate in select Health Plus programs throughout the year, so get started now!

Several actions are available now:

- Be Mindful — participate in at least two Mindful Stretch Breaks
- Is Your Pressure Rising? — register for and complete at least three modules in Control is the Goal
- Visit the Nutrition Corner — complete at least one Nutrition Corner module
- Know Your Blood Pressure and Weight — participate in at least one Know Your Numbers since November 1, 2020
- Weight Maintenance Challenges — complete initial and final weigh-ins during Hold the Stuffing or Spring into Summer
- Step it Up with Health Plus Step Challenges — register for and accumulate 100,000 steps during at least one Step Challenge
- Babies & You — register for and complete at least three sessions

Additional actions are being added regularly!

### STEP 3 Game Plan for Your Health — Coming soon!

Log in to the Health and Wellness Information Portal to begin Steps 1 and 2 at [bit.ly/healthplusgogold](http://bit.ly/healthplusgogold).



## Care Gap Alerts

### Sleep



Raghu Upender, MD, MBA  
 Associate Professor, Neurology

#### What are some of the benefits of sleep?

Shakespeare's Macbeth says it best, "Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care, the death of each day's life, sore labour's bath, balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course, chief nourisher in life's feast." A good night's sleep provides much needed rest to the body. Sleep cleanses the brain of toxins, replenishes neurotransmitter and energy reserves, and prunes brain networks, enabling them to function more efficiently. Thus, sleep improves mood, concentration, judgment, learning, and memory, and allows us to function at our best.

#### How many hours of sleep is recommended for the average adult?

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine and Sleep Research Society recommends at least seven hours of sleep per night for adults. However, the optimal amount of sleep varies from person to person and changes with age. Sleep duration generally declines across age groups. As follows, toddlers sleep about 11 to 12 hours, school-aged children sleep about 10 hours, adolescents sleep 9 to 10 hours, and adults sleep between 7 to 9 hours per night.

#### What are the most common factors that interfere with quality rest?

The biggest threat to our sleep is our modern lifestyle. The abundance of artificial light and multimedia entertainment extends our day well into the night and contributes to chronic sleep

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## Work/Life Connections-EAP

# The Counselor's Corner

Ellen Clark, LCSW, CEAP  
Clinical Counselor, Work/Life Connections



## Eleven Tips on Improving Relationships

February is American Heart Month and a month that celebrates love and relationships. The quality of the significant relationships in our lives is the standard by which overall happiness is often measured. Enduring patterns of behavior that undermine these relationships can diminish the parties involved and result in ongoing conflict or avoidance. To change the tide from stressful to enriching relationships, it is important to know what patterns of behavior people can adopt to promote relationship health.

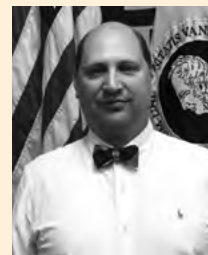
Here are 11 tips to practice:

1. Listen to understand the other person's perspective.
2. Communicate what you think and feel in ways other people can hear.
3. Avoid language that makes other people responsible for your feelings or attacks the other party.
4. Comment on the positive. Be generous with compliments.
5. Show appreciation. Social graces are not just for strangers.
6. Learn the fine art of compromise.
7. Don't sweat the small stuff.
8. Make time to share activities and interests.
9. Get good at forgiveness.
10. Share the work as well as the fun.
11. Keep expectations realistic.

When relationship difficulties persist and/or there are issues of drug and alcohol abuse or domestic violence, do not hesitate to seek individual counseling. Work/Life Connections-EAP counselors are available to assist at **615.936.1327**.



I Am Vanderbilt celebrates the people of Vanderbilt and the unique talents and contributions they bring to their work at the university each day.



## I Am Vanderbilt

### Brandon Hulette

Brandon Hulette is a longtime U.S. Army reservist with broad experience in epidemiology, public health, emergency management, and more. However, he primarily considers himself a teacher.

An instructor with Vanderbilt's Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps since 2017, Hulette works directly with students, teaching military history and population health topics as well as helping cadets hone their leadership and technical skills in preparation for careers as Army officers.

In addition to Vanderbilt's Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps, he also holds a teaching appointment in human and organizational development and is affiliated with the department of history. "I very much enjoy the opportunity to both teach and conduct research across multiple disciplines as well as collaborate with some outstanding colleagues," said Hulette.

Much like the military, Vanderbilt is a complex organization with many parts moving toward a common goal.

"I think I contribute to the mission of the institution by bringing a unique, multidisciplinary perspective to a wide variety of problems that allows me to empower and support a vast array of the activities here," said Hulette.

"Everyone here is willing to share insights as well as work with people from a variety of backgrounds," he said. "Vanderbilt is made up of people who have a love and passion for their own discipline while always being willing to work with those of other disciplines and backgrounds in a mutually supportive way."

Hulette contributes to a range of projects across campus that provides him with valuable intellectual stimulation. To fuel his personal well-being, he turns to other interests, such as physical activity several times a week and his favorite hobby, cooking.

— Kara Furlong

*(continued from page 1)*

deprivation. Other factors that contribute to poor sleep include obesity, lack of exercise, consumption of caffeine and alcohol, and chronic stress.

**What are some tips on how to combat these factors and get a good night sleep?**

Reduce the stimulation in your environment, especially in the evening before bedtime. Keep the lights dim and put away all electronic devices. Read a book or listen to an audiobook to wind down before bed. Use the bedroom for sleep and sex only. Wake up at the same time each morning and limit the total time in bed to match your sleep need (7 to 9 hours for adults).

**Occupational Health Clinic talk:**

# The Importance of Skin Care

**Tanicia Washington Haynes, MSN, APRN, AGPCNP-BC**  
Nurse Practitioner, Occupational Health Clinic



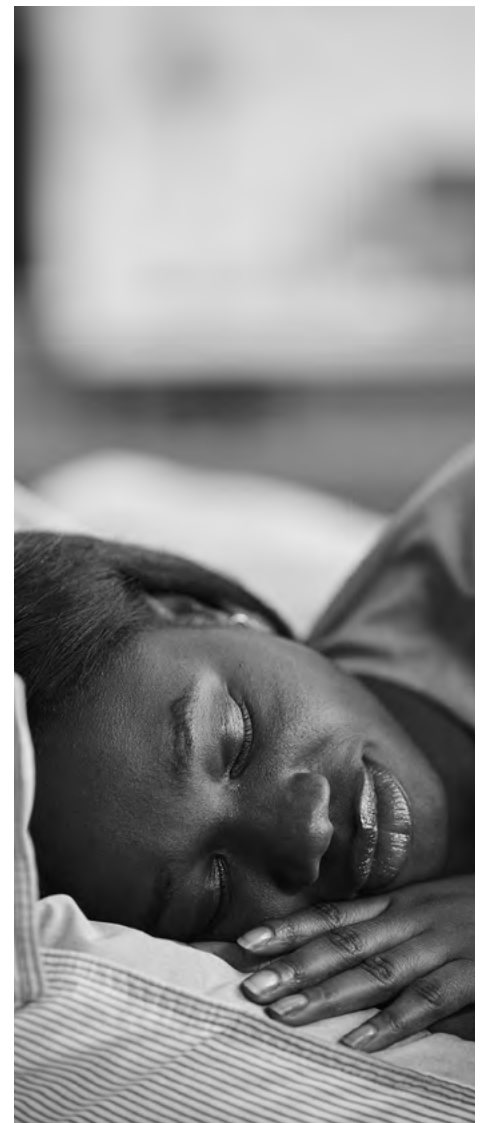
Acne can be a great nuisance, especially when it continues into adulthood. It goes past the skin-deep feeling for several adults, and it can be linked back to genetics and daily routines. Many have attributed their acne to having a lower self-esteem and increased anxiety or depression. There are many factors that can increase the risk of having acne such as hormones, family history, lack of skin care routine, unhealthy diet, or stress.

So, what is acne, anyway? Acne is caused by inflammation of hair follicles and sebaceous glands. Sebaceous glands release oils through skin pores, which helps hydrate the skin. However, this oil can also clog pores from contact with skin cells, dirt, or bacteria. The clogged pores can become inflamed which leads to acne. Acne can present itself as whiteheads, blackheads, or painful, larger lumps under the skin, called cystic acne.

While some acne may be directly linked to hormones or a family history, there are ways to reduce breakouts. The Mayo Clinic suggests developing a home skin care routine and a few other tips to help reduce the risk of a breakout:

1. Wash your face twice daily with a gentle cleanser.
2. Avoid skin irritants, such as astringents or facial scrubs.
3. Avoid aggressive skin cleansing and picking at acne-prone areas.
4. Wear sunscreen to protect skin.

If a home skin care routine does not prove effective against acne, see your primary care provider or a dermatologist. There are prescriptive medications that can be added to skin care routines to reduce acne occurrences, and even procedures that can be done for people with severe acne. If you have questions about your skin issues, please speak with your primary care provider or dermatologist.



# Get On Your Game (Plan)!

## 6 Tips for Making Our Comeback with Compassion

In this issue, we continue to help you Get On Your Game (Plan) and implement the tips given by our Vanderbilt experts for cultivating compassion! No matter what comes our way, we come back stronger when we respond with compassion!

You can view the Game Plan for Your Health video *Making Our Comeback with Compassion* at [bit.ly/healthpluscompassion](https://bit.ly/healthpluscompassion).

### 6 Tips for Coming Back with Compassion!

1. Grow compassion for yourself!
2. **Grow compassion for others!**
3. Keep the growth going!
4. Share compassion!
5. Create a compassionate environment!
6. Enjoy the benefits of compassion!

We are fortunate there are many ways to grow our compassion for others! One way you can enjoy greater compassion and connection with others is to take a few moments daily to practice “Loving Kindness.”

## LOVING KINDNESS practice

Take a few moments to be quiet and still. Breathe.



Bring to mind someone you love and feel kindly towards.

Let the sensation of that love and kindness fill your heart. Send this loving kindness to this person with warm wishes, such as “May you have peace. May you have joy.”



Now bring to mind someone you feel neutral towards.



Continue to send the kindness you are feeling to this person. “May they have peace. May they have joy.”

Now bring to mind someone you find difficult in your life.

Continue to send the same kindness you are feeling to this person. “May they have peace. May they have joy.”

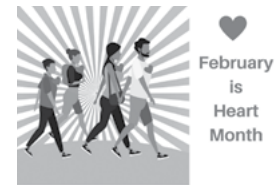


**This final step can be challenging and that's okay. Feel free to simply return to the first step or practice again tomorrow.**

*It's easiest to cultivate love and kindness for your loved ones. But what I found to be the most fruitful is to cultivate love and kindness for someone who is difficult in your life. Find somebody whom you actively dislike and try to cultivate the same unconditional love that you have for, say, your child, for that person who is difficult in your life. In fact, Buddhists will always say, “Oh, wonderful! You have somebody who is a jerk in your life. That's great! Now you have an object of compassion!” So, look for the difficult people in your life as opportunities because those are the people in your life whom you really want to try to cultivate compassion for.*

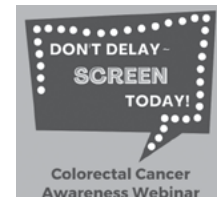
— David Vago, PhD, Research Associate Professor, Department of Psychology

## Can't-Miss Health *Plus* Activities in February and March!



### Count on Your Heart!

February is American Heart Month. Join with Health *Plus* for a variety of fun and informative events and programs! Visit [bit.ly/healthplusheart](https://bit.ly/healthplusheart) for details.



### Don't Delay — Screen Today!

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Join with Health *Plus* to learn the facts and raise awareness! Visit [bit.ly/healthplusdontdelay](https://bit.ly/healthplusdontdelay) for details.



### Celebrate a World of Flavors

March is National Nutrition Month. Celebrate with Health *Plus*! Visit [bit.ly/healthplusnmm](https://bit.ly/healthplusnmm) for details.



### Eat Well, Live Well Presentation

Discover the essentials for nourishing your body and feeling your best! Wednesday, March 9, 12:00 p.m. Register at [bit.ly/healthpluseatwell](https://bit.ly/healthpluseatwell).

# Ask a Lifestyle Coach

**Q** At my annual primary care appointment, some of my bloodwork was higher than last year. My provider asked me to make some lifestyle changes. Where do I start?

**A** Working with your primary care provider is a great first step. These regular health check-ins can give you important information about your health risks. There are many worthwhile lifestyle goals, but when you first start out, try to focus on one goal at a time. Instead of thinking about what you want to remove from your routine, consider what you can add! For example:

- **Goal: Get Active** — “I will do 25 squats before I get dressed in the morning.”
- **Goal: Eat Healthy** — “I will cook dinner at home 3 nights each week.”
- **Goal: Reduce Stress** — “I will spend 10 minutes of screen-free time before bed.”

Next, it's time to make an action plan for your goal. Planning can help you create the right roadmap for success. Remember, change takes time and requires support. Use the roadmap below to help guide you!



Rachel Bowman, CHES  
Health Educator, Health Plus

## A Lifestyle Change

### Roadmap



- 1 What area of my health would I like to improve?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 What are my 3 best reasons for making this change?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 What personal strengths, people, and resources can support me?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 What possible roadblocks are there? What can I do about them?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 What will it take for me to move forward? What steps can I take this week?  
\_\_\_\_\_

To get support with your health goals, complete the Lifestyle Coaching form at: [bit.ly/healthpluscoach](http://bit.ly/healthpluscoach).



Learn about a different nutrition topic each month to support your health. With tips and delicious recipes, Nutrition Corner makes healthy eating simple.

**February — Eat Healthy Fats**

**March — CSA: Fresh, Local, Healthy**

Enjoy this recipe from February's Nutrition Corner!

## Vegetable Stir-Fry with Tempeh and Peanut Sauce

Serves 4.

### Ingredients:

#### Peanut Sauce

- 5 tablespoons natural peanut butter (smooth or chunky)
- 5 tablespoons warm water
- 1 tablespoon seasoned brown rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon raw honey
- Dash of cayenne pepper

#### Stir-fry and Tempeh

- 6 cups chopped broccoli
- 2 cups sliced carrots
- 2 cups sliced red bell pepper
- 1 cup cooked brown rice
- 1 (8 ounces) tempeh, cut into 8 pieces, widthwise
- 2 green onions, chopped

### Directions:

1. Whisk peanut sauce ingredients until smooth.
2. In pan, sauté 6 tablespoons peanut sauce with broccoli, carrots, and bell pepper for 6 to 8 minutes, until vegetables are crisp-tender. Stir in brown rice.
3. In a pot with steamer basket and 1-inch water on the stove, steam tempeh for 8 minutes or until tender. Remove and brush with peanut sauce.

For each serving: Plate 2 cups stir-fry and 2 pieces tempeh. Sprinkle with green onions.

### Nutrition Information per Serving:

Calories 400 | Total Fat 17g | Saturated Fat 2.5g  
Trans Fat 0g | Cholesterol 0mg | Sodium 370mg  
Total Carbohydrate 45g | Dietary Fiber 9g  
Sugars 13g | Protein 21g

Source: [eatright.org](http://eatright.org)

Log in to Nutrition Corner in February and March for more delicious recipes. Go to [bit.ly/healthplusnutritioncorner](http://bit.ly/healthplusnutritioncorner).

# Reminder to Submit your 2021 FSA Expenses

Please remember to submit your 2021 FSA expenses if you still have funds remaining in your 2021 health care and/or dependent care flexible spending account (FSA). While eligible expenses for use of those funds must have been incurred January 1, 2021, through March 15, 2022, the deadline to file claims for reimbursement for those expenses is *April 15, 2022*. **Please file your claims for reimbursement on or before April 15, 2022, or you'll lose funds remaining in your 2021 FSA.**

### WHAT TO DO NEXT:

- **To check your FSA balance in My VU Benefits:**

- Log in with your VUnetID and password
- At the bottom of the page are **Helpful Links**
- Click on **View My Reimbursement Account**
- In the **My Accounts** box on the left side, look for the balances for **2021**

- While in My VU Benefits, if you need to determine if an expense is **eligible** for reimbursement:

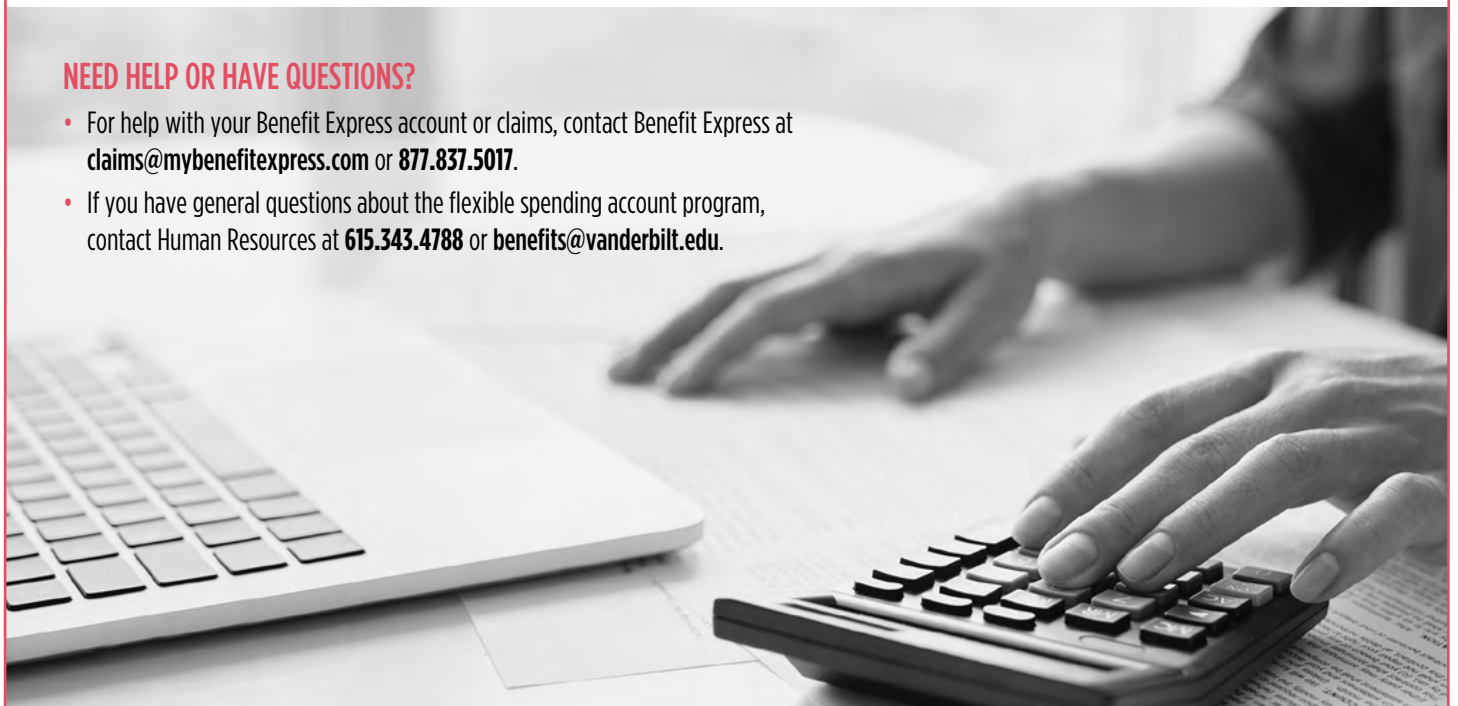
- Go to the **Resources** drop-down list at the top of the page
- Click on **Find Eligible Items**

- **Submit your claims by April 15:**

1. Go online to My VU Benefits, log in and then scroll to the bottom of the page and click on **Reimbursement Tools**.
2. The below pop-up window will appear. Click on **Open**.
3. You will be taken to the Flexible Spending Account Reimbursement Request Form.
4. Print it out and complete it with your eligible claim information. Take copies of the receipts associated with the claims you are submitting on the form.
5. Fax the form and receipts to Benefit Express at **253.793.3766**
6. OR scan your completed form and receipts to **claims@mybenefitexpress.com**.

### NEED HELP OR HAVE QUESTIONS?

- For help with your Benefit Express account or claims, contact Benefit Express at **claims@mybenefitexpress.com** or **877.837.5017**.
- If you have general questions about the flexible spending account program, contact Human Resources at **615.343.4788** or **benefits@vanderbilt.edu**.



# upcoming events

**NOTE: All events are subject to change. Please check details on event webpage prior to attendance.**



## Mindful Stretch Breaks

[bit.ly/healthplushmindful](https://bit.ly/healthplushmindful)

Every Wednesday in February and March from 11:00 to 11:30 a.m., Virtual (Register to receive Zoom link).



## Know Your Numbers

[bit.ly/healthpluskyn](https://bit.ly/healthpluskyn)

With in-person and virtual options available, it's easy to participate and track your progress!



## Babies & You

[bit.ly/healthplusbabies](https://bit.ly/healthplusbabies)

Thursday, February 17, Noon to 1:00 p.m., Virtual (Register to receive Zoom link)

Thursday, March 17, Noon to 1:00 p.m., Virtual (Register to receive Zoom link)



## Healthier You Presents

[bit.ly/healthplushealthieryou](https://bit.ly/healthplushealthieryou)

View a new presentation each month!

## How to Reduce Your Risk of Developing Cancer

As many continue their New Year's resolutions, this is a perfect time to take a step back and examine your physical health. February holds an important day on the 4th, known as World Cancer Day. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 40% of people in the U.S. will develop cancer during their life. While this statistic is daunting, there are steps you and your family can take to reduce the risk of certain cancers.

- 1. Quit smoking.** Tobacco use can result in more than just lung cancer, specifically cancer of the bladder, cervix, stomach, and kidney. To help you quit smoking and reduce your risk, Occupational Health Clinic (OHC) provides counseling and treatment services for Vanderbilt employees through their program, Quit Rx. To get started, visit the Occupational Health Clinic website or call **615.936.0955**.
- 2. Exercise and maintain a healthy weight.** While we know maintaining a healthy weight and moving our bodies is important for our overall health, it is also vital in preventing 13 types of cancer. To help you start or continue towards a healthier lifestyle, Health *Plus* offers a variety of services to help you stay on track. Check out our eat healthy, get active, and manage weight programs.
- 3. Get screened.** Scheduling a screening can be one of the most effective ways to combat cancer. Before symptoms appear, your doctor can detect early signs of breast, cervical, colon, and even lung cancer. Whether you are at high risk, have a family history, or want more information about screenings, consult your primary care physician.

You don't have to wait until February 4 to observe World Cancer Day and the importance of prevention. By quitting smoking, exercising, maintaining a healthy weight, and getting screened regularly, you are becoming the best advocate for your overall health. For more information about Health and Wellness programs, visit our website at [bit.ly/2whTn5U](https://bit.ly/2whTn5U).



*Kelli Mitchuson*  
Communications Specialist,  
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**In This Issue:**

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*Eleven Tips on Improving Relationships with Ellen Clark, LCSW, CEAP*

*The Importance of Skin Care with Tania Washington Haynes, MSN, APRN, AGPCNP-BC*

*Ask a Lifestyle Coach with Rachel Bowman, CHES*

Have a topic you want to see covered? Email us at [health.wellness@vumc.org](mailto:health.wellness@vumc.org).

Follow us on Twitter @twitter.com/WellVanderbilt



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Newsletter Editor:

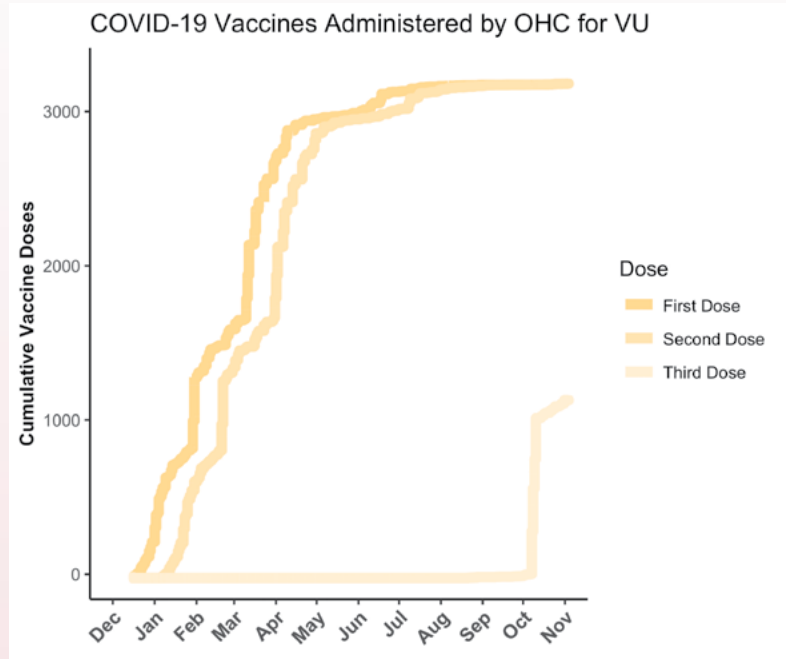
Amy R. Thomas, BA, Health & Wellness Administration  
**Contact** [amy.r.thomas@vumc.org](mailto:amy.r.thomas@vumc.org) or **615.936.1806**.

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# The Healthy Pulse

FOR FACULTY AND STAFF AT VANDERBILT



Occupational Health Clinic continues to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to the VU community, including over 10,000 boosters through the end of October and starting with the successful Boost-a-palooza event! All three brands of boosters are available at OHC, and mixing-and-matching of brands is approved for the booster dose as well. Everyone who is eligible is encouraged to receive their booster. Eligibility includes adults who have completed a Pfizer or Moderna primary series at least six months ago, and those who have completed their primary Johnson & Johnson vaccination at least two months ago. For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine and how to obtain your primary series or booster through Occupational Health, visit [vumc.org/health-wellness/covid-19](http://vumc.org/health-wellness/covid-19).