

# CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

April – May 2023



## Workplace Health & Safety: Protecting Our Most Valuable Asset...You!

At VUMC, our priority is to keep our community healthy and safe, and it all starts with you, our employees. May 7 marks the start of Occupational Safety and Health Week. While this week may not be well-known, the importance of job safety and health is. That's why the Occupational Health Clinic (OHC) provides the health protection services our employees need to stay healthy and safe.

OHC is your first place to visit if you need an evaluation and treatment for any work-related, or even non-work-related, illnesses and injuries. As an on-campus clinic, it's easy for you to walk in and be treated the same day. We also provide vaccinations, injections, and screenings that may be necessary for you to start or continue working at VUMC.

Convenience and accessibility are important to us, and we know it's important to you. To better support you, we offer both in-person and telehealth visits. Also, OHC now offers two ways to schedule appointments — online through **My Health at Vanderbilt** or the **Health & Wellness Information Portal**, or by calling **615-936-0955**.

We also can't forget the importance of mental health support and healthy lifestyle coaching. As a VUMC employee, you have access to psychological support through **Work/Life Connections-EAP** and healthy lifestyle programs through **Health *Plus***.

Whether it's in the lab, in an office, or on the hospital floor, Occupational Health Clinic, Work/Life Connections-EAP, and Health *Plus* will help you stay safe in any work environment.



Ana Nobis, MD, MPH  
Director, Occupational  
Health Clinic

## Care Gaps Alert

### Mental Health Awareness



Terako Amison, MD  
Medical Director, Work/Life  
Connections-EAP

#### What is mental health and who can it affect?

Mental health refers to a sense of well-being that allows us to effectively manage our emotions, deal with stress, and maintain positive relationships with others. Everyone can benefit from considering ways to improve their mental health.

#### What are some warning signs that relate to poor mental health?

Warning signs that relate to poor mental health can be changes in sleep, appetite, energy, concentration, or less motivation to get things done. Some people may experience anxiety and irritability, while others might turn to alcohol or other substances to cope with what they are feeling. The most concerning warning signs are thoughts of self-harm or wanting to harm others, and I would encourage a person to seek immediate medical attention in that case.

#### How can we prioritize mental health in our busy schedules?

Try making a daily schedule, which includes time for self-care. Even if it's only 15

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## Care Gaps Alert

### Mental Health Awareness

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minutes per day, making time for self-care can bolster mental health. Consider filling your self-care slot with something that brings you contentment, such as engaging in a hobby, listening to music, or meditation.

**For faculty, staff, and spouses, what resources are available at VUMC to support and improve mental health?**

Work/Life Connections-EAP (WLC) offers support to all VUMC faculty, staff, and spouses through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and the Faculty and Physician Wellness Program (FPWP). WLC's clinicians provide individual counseling, as well as referrals for the individual who may benefit from specialized care. Services are free and confidential, and more information can be found at **Work/Life Connections-EAP** or by calling **615-936-1327**.

## COUNSELOR'S CORNER

### Self-Compassion: A Friendly Reminder to be Kind to Yourself



Natalie Dodds, LCSW  
Counselor, Work/Life  
Connections-EAP

It is that time of year again when the showers of spring turn to the heat of summer. During this time, we may find ourselves overwhelmed with juggling summer activities, which may make it difficult to prioritize our own needs and self-care. This is a friendly reminder that it's OK to carve out time to focus on yourself.

What is self-compassion? Think about the last time you were traveling and heard a flight attendant announce, "Put the oxygen mask on yourself before helping others." Taking compassionate care of yourself and being kind to yourself are forms of self-compassion. You may think of it as talking to yourself the way you might talk to a loved one, taking a mindful break, or offering yourself words of affirmation.

Research shows that self-compassion is a source for coping and resilience, and it improves our mental and physical well-being. So maybe this year, instead of waiting for that perfect vacation to reset, start practicing these self-compassion tips today:

- Practice positive affirmations. Write or say positive things about yourself each day.
- Begin talking to yourself the way you talk to a loved one.
- Challenge negative self-talk.
- Identify what you really want. This may be to feel loved, appreciated, or connected. Identifying what you need helps to shift your perspective and behaviors.
- Journal or write a letter to yourself from a place of acceptance and compassion.
- Allow time to nurture yourself as you would nurture others.

For more tips and tools on self-compassion, visit Health & Wellness's website to watch the **2021 Game Plan for Your Health - Making Our Comeback with Compassion** at [bit.ly/3jbHZyn](https://bit.ly/3jbHZyn).



# OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CLINIC

## Healthy Skin is In!

Spending time outdoors is important to our physical and mental health. Practicing good skin care while you work and play in the sun is essential.

Did you know? May is Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month. Each year more than 3.5 million new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed, and most skin cancers are caused by excessive exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light. UV rays come from the sun, tanning beds, and even from sunlamps.

Here are five sun safety tips for the entire family:

1. Stay in the shade or limit outdoor activities when UV rays are at their strongest (usually between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.).
2. Do not use tanning beds.
3. Wear protective clothing with skin coverage (e.g., a brimmed hat made of tightly woven fabric, such as canvas).
4. Wear sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB.
5. Generously apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30. Sunscreen should be applied 20 to 30 minutes before sun exposure and reapplied every 2 hours.

As a reminder, if you have a family history of melanoma, have many moles or atypical moles, or a personal history of skin cancer, you should see your healthcare provider for regular skin checks.



*Stephanie White, MSN,  
APRN, FNP-C  
Nurse Practitioner,  
Occupational Health Clinic*



## Passion at Work

From the time she was a young girl, Emily S. Brown, MD, knew she wanted to be in the medical field. Her path, however, was far from what she could have dreamed of. From her time in the Navy to her role as medical director for Health *Plus*, her career has helped develop her leadership and medical skills in more ways than one.

Growing up in Mobile, Alabama, Dr. Brown learned a strong work ethic from her parents. "I come from humble beginnings. My dad was a welder, and my mom was a teacher," she said. "The main thing my parents ensured was that I had the best opportunity to continue my education." She went on to obtain a medical degree at the University of Alabama School of Medicine on a Health Professions Scholarship with the United States Navy. Dr. Brown not only grew as a medical professional, but she flourished in her leadership skills. "There's a saying in the Navy that stuck with me, 'Be a deckplate leader.' This means be a leader who is visible, sets the tone, knows the mission, and helps develop the people they lead. I strive to be a deckplate leader every day," she states.

When she's not in the hospital, Dr. Brown decompresses by making a conscious effort to disconnect from work completely when she's at home. In addition, she makes intentional choices to keep mentally, emotionally, and physically fit by reading, eating healthy, and making her own health a priority.



*Emily Brown, MD  
Medical Director, Health Plus*



## Can't-Miss Health *Plus* Activities!

### Active in April

Get Active in April with Health *Plus*!

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



### Move in May

Keep active and improve well-being in May with Health *Plus*!

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



### Control is the Goal

A new cohort of the Health *Plus* blood pressure management program begins May 4.

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



### Healthier You Presents

View a new presentation each month.

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



### Mindful Stretch Breaks

Every Wednesday  
11:00 am to 11:30 am  
Virtual

Register to receive Teams link

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

# Share the Love

## *Self-care: Taking action to meet your own needs!*

Self-care remains an important part of a healthy lifestyle. **Reminder: Self-care is the ability to tend to your health and well-being needs.** We dedicated the previous issue to identifying your well-being needs through the annual Health Risk Assessment. **In this issue, we center on engaging in actions to meet those needs.**

Taking time to recharge through self-care can help you reduce stress and feel more energized. Spending time outside, laughing with loved ones, cooking a new recipe, and participating in hobbies are some of the simplest ways to care for yourself.

**To go one step further, complete the annual Wellness Actions Log.** This step of Go for the Gold involves participating in and learning about programs and services that can help boost your well-being. Reduce stress with a Mindful Stretch Break, get active with a Health *Plus* Step Challenge, and try a new recipe from Nutrition Corner. You'll also find resources to help reduce your risk of chronic disease through Control is the Goal and the Prediabetes Risk Test. You deserve the same level of care you give others. Begin today at [bit.ly/healthpluswal](https://bit.ly/healthpluswal).





# Ask a Lifestyle Coach

**Q** My exercise routine is getting stale, and I'm finding myself slipping back into old habits of being inactive. What are some ways to prevent boredom?

**A** Exercise often means doing the same movements on repeat. It may help you structure your workouts, but unfortunately, repetition can be boring, lonely, and feel like work. Your brain needs variety and new experiences.

Boredom doesn't have to stop you from regular exercise. Put some freshness in your fitness to stay engaged and motivated!

Try a few of these tips:

- **Do something new:** Try new movements at different times of the day or week.
- **Do the same activity in a new place:** Walk a different path or in a different neighborhood.
- **Be active while being social:** Connect with others through group exercise classes, walking groups, intramural teams or clubs, meet-up groups, or a race event.
- **Make being active fun:** Listen to music, an audiobook, or put on an exercise video.
- **Challenge yourself:** Activity challenges through fitness apps not only motivate you but may also engage friends and family.

Want accountability for reaching your goals? Register for Lifestyle Coaching at [bit.ly/healthpluscoach](https://bit.ly/healthpluscoach).



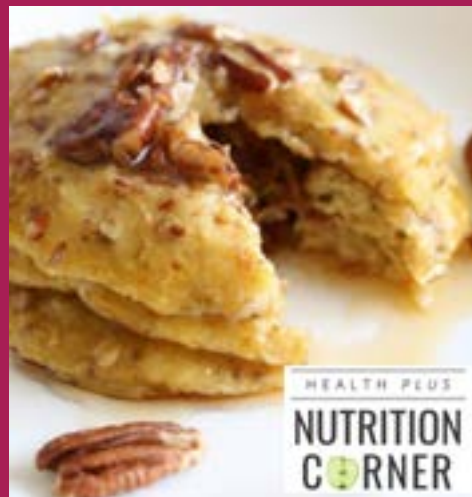
Bethlyn Bertram, BSN, RN  
Case Manager, Health Plus

## Nutrition Corner

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

**April — Benefits of Breakfast**  
**May — Fueling Your Workout**

Log in to Nutrition Corner in April and May for these great topics and more delicious recipes. Go to [bit.ly/healthplusnutritioncorner](https://bit.ly/healthplusnutritioncorner).



### Flourless Banana Nut Pancakes

Serves 1

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium ripe banana (the riper, the better)
- 2 tablespoons quick oats
- 1 large beaten egg
- 2 tablespoons chopped pecans

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Mash banana with a fork in a medium bowl until smooth. Add egg and oats and mix well.
2. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-low heat, pour the batter to make 3 pancakes. Top with pecans, and cook about 3 to 4 minutes. Turn and cook 3 to 4 minutes, until golden.
3. Top with 1 teaspoon of your favorite syrup or honey if desired.

#### NUTRITION INFORMATION

per serving (1 batch)

Calories: 318 | Total Fat: 16.5g  
Saturated Fat: 2.5g | Cholesterol: 186mg  
Sodium: 72.5mg | Carbohydrate: 36g  
Fiber: 5.5g | Total Sugar: 15.5g  
Protein: 10g

Adapted From: [skinnytaste.com/4-ingredient-flourless-banana-nut-pancakes](https://skinnytaste.com/4-ingredient-flourless-banana-nut-pancakes)

# SCREEN FOR GOOD HEALTH!

Medical screenings are tests your providers use to check for disease. The sooner disease is discovered, the sooner it can be treated. Women of color are more likely to be affected by certain diseases and conditions, so it is especially important that you get scheduled health screenings. Most of these tests are free for VUMC Health Plan members.

### Age 20 and Older

Annual wellness exam, which includes a physical exam, updated vaccinations and screenings for diseases, such as diabetes. *Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are more likely than non-Hispanic whites to develop diabetes.*

Blood pressure check every two years and cholesterol check every 4-6 years. *One in three Hispanic women and 59 percent of Black women ages 20 and older have a form of cardiovascular disease.*

Screening for cervical cancer every three years, beginning at age 21. This test includes a Pap smear and a check for HPV (Human papillomavirus).



### Age 40 and Older

Get an annual breast check, beginning at age 40. *Black women younger than 50 diagnosed with breast cancer are twice as likely to die from breast cancer than white women the same age.*

Every 10 years screen for colorectal cancer, beginning at age 45. *Blacks are 20 percent more likely to be diagnosed with colorectal cancer and about 40 percent more likely to die from it than most other groups.*

All women should see a dentist every 6 months for a routine cleaning. They are also encouraged to talk with their provider about a hearing test if they are having hearing issues. *Blacks are at higher risk for certain forms of eye disease, including glaucoma, cataract, and diabetic retinopathy.*



### Age 60 and Older

As women age, they lose bone density. Women over the age of 65 and women younger than 65 with a risk of osteoporosis should have a bone mineral density test at least once in their lifetime. *20 percent of Asian and non-Hispanic white women above the age of 50 are estimated to have osteoporosis, compared to only 5 percent and 10 percent of Black women and Hispanic women.*





# Upcoming Events



## SHARE Webinar

**What Can You Do? Stepping up to stop workplace violence and sexual harassment**

April 11 | 5:30 pm to 6:00 pm | Register at [bit.ly/SHAREApr11](https://bit.ly/SHAREApr11)

April 21 | Noon to 12:30 pm | Register at [bit.ly/SHAREApr21](https://bit.ly/SHAREApr21)



## Babies & You

Thursday, April 20 | Noon to 1:00 pm | Virtual

Thursday, May 18 | Noon to 1:00 pm | Virtual

*Register to receive Teams link*

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



## Know Your Numbers

### ONE HUNDRED OAKS

One Hundred Oaks, Room 26114 | 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

April 13 | April 24 | May 11 | May 22

### VUMC NASHVILLE CAMPUS

MCJCHV, Room 2104 | 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

April 6 | May 4

Light Hall, North Lobby

April 5 | 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

May 10 | 9:00 am to 11:00 am

### VUMC REGIONAL HOSPITALS

#### Vanderbilt Wilson County Hospital

McFarland Campus, Classroom | 9:00 am to 10:00 am

VWCH, Cafeteria Conference Room | 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

April 4 | May 2

#### Vanderbilt Tullahoma-Harton Hospital

VTHH, Private Dining Room | 10:00 am to Noon

April 18 | May 16

#### Vanderbilt Bedford Hospital

VBH, Classroom 1101 | 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

April 18 | May 16

For additional dates, times, and locations visit

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

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



**Workplace Violence Awareness**  
**We're all in this together.**

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If you experience or witness workplace violence at VUMC, we are here to support you.

Care for physical injury: Contact Occupational Health Clinic at 615-936-0935  
Care for psychological impact: Contact Work/Life Connections/SAP at 615-936-1327  
Contact SHARE Center (sexual harassment support) at 615-936-1327

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For complete VUMC Prevention, Response, & Support Resources scan the code or visit: [https://bit.ly/vumc\\_vwa](https://bit.ly/vumc_vwa)

**Say Something**



Vanderbilt Health & Wellness  
1211 21st Ave. S.  
Medical Arts Building, Suite 640  
Nashville, TN 37212

Non-Profit Organ.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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BIRMINGHAM, AL  
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## In This Issue:

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

Follow us on Twitter & Instagram  
@WellVanderbilt



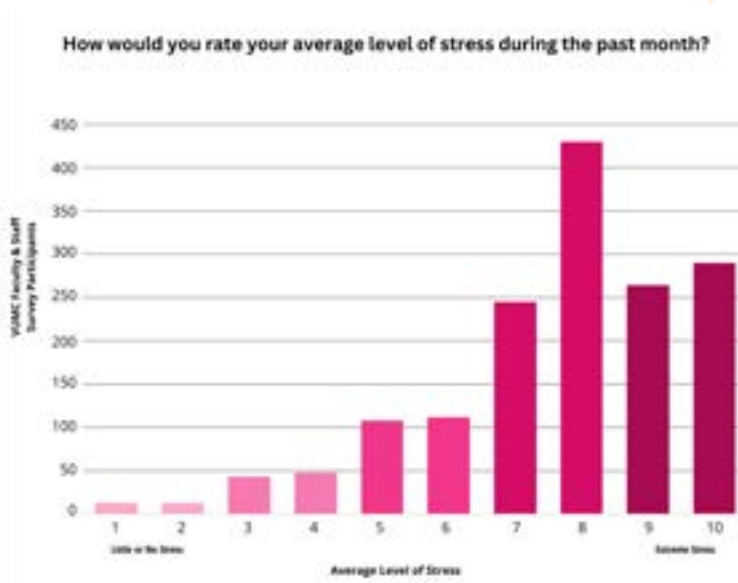
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## The Healthy Pulse

FOR FACULTY AND STAFF AT VANDERBILT



It's often helpful to do a well-being check-in with yourself. On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means you have little or no stress and 10 means you have a great deal of stress, how would you rate your average level of stress during the past month?

When it comes to coping with stress, 80% of the faculty and staff seeking assistance through Work/Life Connections-EAP reported improvement in their well-being. If you are struggling with stress, the counselors at Work/Life Connections-EAP are here for you. Call **615-936-1327** to schedule a confidential appointment.