

CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

December 2022 – January 2023



Understanding the Mind-Body Connection

Making a resolution to improve an area in your life has been around since the 17th century. Whether it's saving more money or becoming physically fit, many of us start thinking about what we would like to achieve in the coming year. Instead of focusing on January 1st, however, I challenge you to look two days ahead to January 3rd, known as International Mind-Body Wellness Day.

Our mental, emotional, and physical well-being are all interconnected so when one area lacks, it directly affects the others. For example, think of a time where you didn't get enough sleep. Did you have a difficult time concentrating? Did you feel more irritable and less patient? While perfect harmony is hard to achieve, there are ways and programs to help you improve in all three areas for an overall healthier lifestyle.

Work/Life Connections-EAP provides counseling services to faculty and staff. Our certified counselors help you heal, build skills, and improve resilience for the future. Health Plus gets you up and moving with physical activity programs while also providing nutrition programs that improve your eating habits without breaking the bank. Occupational Health Clinic focuses on your physical well-being. From telehealth appointments to vaccinations, our clinicians are ready to help you stay healthy and safe. To learn more about Health and Wellness' services, visit bit.ly/3nbqBLv.



*Kelli Mitchuson
Communications Specialist,
Health & Wellness*

Care Gaps Alert

Alcohol Use During the Holidays



*David Marcovitz, MD
Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and
Behavioral Sciences; Director, Division
of Addiction Psychiatry*

Statistically, December is one of the deadliest months of the year. As the holidays approach, what are some tips on how to stay safe while enjoying festive celebrations?

The joys and the pressures of the holidays sneak up on many people. We may find ourselves at a holiday party feeling surprised that we want to drink more due to social anxiety or a simple desire to let loose. One overarching tip would be to mentally prepare and have a plan. Ask yourself, what is my safe drinking limit? How am I getting home? How will I behave after a few drinks?

How should someone approach the topic of drinking and driving?

Though the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) defines binge drinking as more than 4-5 drinks in one sitting depending on your sex, I would advise everyone to consider using a rideshare or appointing a designated driver if you plan to have more than one drink, regardless of your gender.

(continued on page 2)

Care Gaps Alert

Alcohol Use During the Holidays

(continued from page 1)

What are some warning signs that someone may have problematic alcohol use?

NIAAA considers more than 7 drinks per week for a woman and 14 for a man as harmful to one's health. In the field of addiction, we also talk about the **three Cs**: craving, compulsion (or loss of control), and consequences. These can be a useful shorthand for considering whether alcohol use has become problematic.

If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction to alcohol, what are some helpful resources?

It's always a good idea to speak with your primary care provider as a starting point. As a VUMC employee, Work/Life Connections-EAP offers free confidential counseling that can help with your recovery journey. In addition, beginning January 2023, VUMC's health plan will offer a **MyRecoveryHealth bundle** for those who want to access professional evaluation and treatment. Visit bit.ly/3ThUjbt to learn more about the bundle.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Preparing for The Holidays

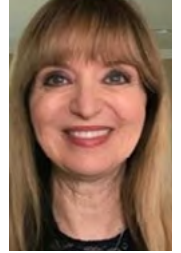
The holiday season is upon us. While the holidays seem like a joyous time for everyone, many feel overwhelmed and stressed. If the holidays tend to be a time of stress for you, you aren't alone. A study from health marketplace, **Sesame**, shows 3 in 5 Americans experience a negative effect on their mental health during the holidays.

Here are a few ways to reduce your level of stress, and still have a *happy holiday* to remember:

- 1. Have Realistic Expectations:** Even though time with family may be something you're looking forward to, every family has its challenges. Remember, a holiday gathering may not be the time to sort out concerns, such as blended family conflicts or political differences. There is no such thing as a perfect family. Try to table any tense discussions for another time.
- 2. Have A Plan:** Make a list of your priorities for the season and try not to deviate from this plan. Too often, we become stressed because we don't make time for the things that matter most and become caught up in trying to make it *all* happen.
- 3. Keep Your Finances On-Track:** The joy of giving isn't about the amount of money we spend, but the sentiment and intention behind the gift. Instead of shopping, consider making hot chocolate and taking a walk to look at holiday lights around the neighborhood with loved ones. The gift of togetherness is worth more than any gift we might purchase.
- 4. Remember Self-Care:** You matter. Take a mindful walk, a long shower, or listen to music. And don't forget how important it is to get a good night's sleep!

If the holiday season becomes too overwhelming, Work-Life Connections is here for you. Don't go it alone! Call Work-Life Connections EAP to schedule an appointment at 615.936.1327.

If you, or someone you know, is having overwhelming thoughts of sadness or anxiety, or is thinking about suicide, call the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988 or the Middle TN Crisis Center 615.244.7444.



Janet McCutchen, LPC, CEAP
Assistant Manager, Work/Life
Connections-EAP



OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CLINIC

The Best Gift is a Boost

The holidays give us the chance to gather with family and friends! We look forward to sharing good food and cheer, but what we don't want to share is COVID-19.

The best way to protect yourself and your loved ones is by being fully vaccinated and boosted. Boosters reduce a person's chance of infection, severe illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19.

Pfizer and Moderna released an updated *bivalent* booster shot in September. Dr. Tom Talbot, chief hospital epidemiologist for VUMC reminds us, "With over 40,000 COVID infections and over 300 COVID-19 deaths still occurring daily in the U.S., we must stay vigilant to keep everyone protected. The new bivalent boosters target the variants that are circulating widely right now and can reduce the risk of infection and the complication of COVID-19."



Ana E. Nobis, MD, MPH
Assistant Medical Director,
Occupational Health Clinic



You are eligible for the updated booster if it has been at least 2 months since the final dose of your primary series or last booster. In addition, it's safe to get the updated booster at the same time as other vaccines, such as the flu shot.

COVID-19 vaccines are available for employees at the Occupational Health Clinic as well as regional hospitals. For other locations and more information, please visit bit.ly/35KByy8.

Happy Holidays!

Passion at Work

In her 33 years of nursing, Robin Elmore, BSN, RN, PMH-BC, clinical staff leader at Vanderbilt Psychiatric Hospital, has dedicated her life to helping people and leading by example. Her passion has always been around caring for others, so nursing was a natural fit for her. She spent almost 12 years working in the medical side of nursing before a friend told her about the psychiatric hospital.

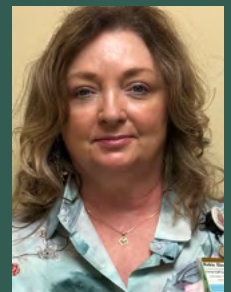
"At the time, the community was just starting to get comfortable talking about mental health. It was a step in the right direction, especially for the nursing field," stated Robin. "As a nurse, we started putting communication before medication, which improved their healthcare plan and their mental health."

She took this skill, with an emphasis on mental health, and intertwined it in how she leads and mentors other nurses. For one, Robin encourages nurses to have a voice and advocate for themselves as well as their fellow nurses. She provides them with different resources, such as Work/Life Connections-EAP, as a safe outlet to express what and how they're feeling. She also

urges them to attend unit boards and shared governance sessions so their opinions can be heard by leadership teams.

"Nursing is a challenging but rewarding profession. Early in my career, I suffered from burnout, so I know how it feels. I tell my staff to set boundaries and value your time. Prioritize rest and let your loved ones help you when you need it. There will always be extra shifts you can pick up but it's important to understand when your body and mind need rest and knowing it's ok to say no."

A few ways Robin practices what she preaches is by gardening year-round and carving out time to see her 4 children and 14 grandchildren. She also enjoys volunteering with Meals on Wheels in her community and working with animal rescue.



Robin Elmore,
BSN, RN, PMH-BC
Clinical Staff Leader,
Vanderbilt Psychiatric
Hospital

Can't Miss Health Plus Activities!

Hold the Stuffing

Did you celebrate health & wellness this holiday season with Health Plus? Don't forget these dates: Step Challenge steps due Friday, January 6. Wellness Bingo card due Friday, January 6. Final Weigh-in in January 2-13. View full details at bit.ly/healthplushts.



Wellness Commodores

Are you enthusiastic about health and wellness? Become a **Wellness Commodore** and allow your enthusiasm to positively impact your workplace! **Wellness Commodores** play an important and fun role in creating a culture of wellness at Vanderbilt. bit.ly/healthpluswc



Control is the Goal

A blood pressure management program promoting and encouraging healthy choices to help with blood pressure control and regular blood pressure monitoring. New cohorts begin in February! For details and enrollment visit bit.ly/healthpluscontrolgoal.



HEALTHIER YOU
HEALTHIER YOU
HEALTHIER YOU
PRESENTS

Healthier You Presents — A year to celebrate

Healthier You Presents had a big year in 2022! Thousands of Vanderbilt employees attended monthly webinars, which provide expert information on a variety of timely topics including nutrition, physical activity, and the psychosocial components of health and well-being.

There were 3 topics in particular that scored the most views of 2022. Without further ado, the award for the top three webinars goes to...



Healthier You Presents

Setting Boundaries for Better Self-Care, with Makenzie Parks, LCSW

Leveraging Your Internal Drive to Change, with Dr. Ruth Wolever

Increasing Your Joy Today, with Jill Stratton, the Dean of Joy

Don't miss out! View a quick and engaging *Healthier You Presents* today! Go to bit.ly/healthplushealthieryou for this month's presentation and for a link to past presentations, such as the award-winners highlighted here!

Who will win in 2023? Let us know what topics you want covered next year at redcap.link/HYPFeedback!

ASK A LIFESTYLE COACH



Q The holidays bring on a lot of extra stress. How can I be mindful of holiday pressures?

A Holiday seasons are a great time to relax, plan fun activities, and spend time with loved ones. However, even positive events like this can cause stress. Setting realistic goals during holiday seasons can help you minimize extra stress and make room for more enjoyment.

Before setting a goal, consider these questions first:

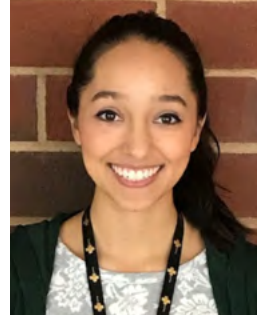
- Why do I want to make this goal right now?
- What do I hope to accomplish by making this goal?

Once you understand why a goal is important to you, you're ready for the next step— making it SMART! A SMART goal is designed, by you, to be simple and straightforward so you can feel confident.

- **Specific:** Answer what, where, when, and how.
- **Measurable:** How will you track your progress?
- **Action-based:** What action will you take to set yourself up for success?
- **Realistic:** Make your goal challenging but reachable.
- **Time-bound:** When will your goal be completed?

Remember, the holiday season is meant to be enjoyed! Using a SMART goal can help you decrease unrealistic pressure on yourself. If a goal doesn't go as planned, consider that a learning opportunity. The more you tweak your response, you will build a stronger and healthier habit.

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



Rachel Bowman, CHES
Health Educator, Health Plus

Nutrition Corner

Learn about a different nutrition topic each month to support your health without breaking the bank! With tips and delicious recipes, Nutrition Corner makes healthy eating simple and affordable.

December — Satisfy Your Sweet Tooth

January — Cheers to the New Year

Log in to Nutrition Corner in December and January for these great topics and more delicious recipes.

bit.ly/healthplustritioncorner

Enjoy this recipe from December's Nutrition Corner!



Honey Vanilla Cottage Cheese Fruit Dip

Serves 2

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese
- 2 Tbsp honey
- ½ tsp vanilla
- 1 tsp lemon juice (optional)*
- 1 Tbsp water

DIRECTIONS

1. Add all the ingredients to a blender and purée until smooth.
2. Serve immediately with fresh cut fruit for dipping or refrigerate until ready to eat.

NOTES

*With lemon juice the dip has a slightly tangier flavor, like cheesecake.

NUTRITION INFORMATION per serving (1/4 cup): Calories: 102 | Total Fat: 2g | Saturated Fat: 1g | Sodium: 136mg | Carbohydrate: 13g | Fiber: 0g | Sugar: 12g | Added Sugar: 12g | Protein: 10g

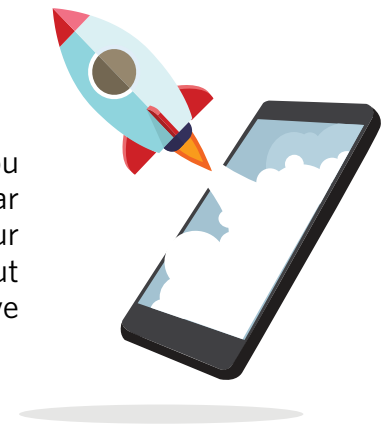


New Year New Opportunities

Now is a good time to review your retirement savings and learn how increasing your contribution to the Vanderbilt University Medical Center 403(b) retirement plan — even a little — can go a long way.

➔ Give Your Future Self a Financial Boost

Saving just 1 percent more can help your savings soar, especially if you make it a habit to increase your savings rate regularly. Increases every year — whether you enroll in the automatic increase program or increase your savings on your own — can add up over time. If you get a pay increase, put some of it toward retirement or increase your savings gradually until you've reached your goal.



➔ Meet Your Match

VUMC matches 3 percent of your mandatory contributions and 2 percent of voluntary contributions dollar for dollar, as long as you contribute at least 2 percent voluntary. Your mandatory 3 percent plus your voluntary 2 percent plus VUMC's 5 percent match equals a total contribution of 10 percent of your base pay toward your retirement.

➔ Tools of the Trade

The **Power of Small Amounts** interactive tool allows you to gauge how much more you can save by increasing your contribution by a small amount. Visit <https://communications.fidelity.com/wi/powerofsmallamounts/#/name> or text POWER to 343-898.

The **1Up Savings Challenge** provides more information on incremental savings, and a take-home pay calculator allows you to see how your pre-tax contribution might affect your take-home pay.

Fidelity's **NetBenefits website** offers a host of free services to help you make wiser financial decisions, including live and on-demand web workshops and articles in English and Spanish.



Remember, you can change your voluntary contribution at any time by logging into your Fidelity account at www.netbenefits.com/vumc.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MONTH

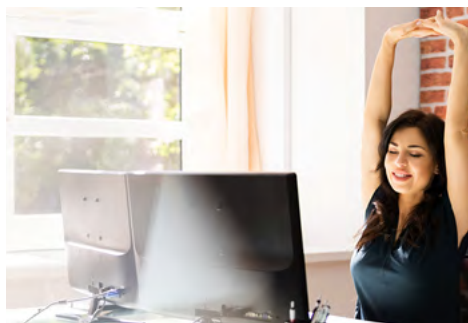
monday

tuesday

wednesday

REMINDERS

Mindful Stretch Breaks



Every Wednesday in December and January from 11:00 am to 11:30 am, Virtual (*Register to receive Teams link*)

bit.ly/healthplusmindful

Know Your Numbers



For times and specific locations visit bit.ly/healthpluskyn

One Hundred Oaks, Room 26103
11:00 am to 1:00 pm

December 8 and 20 and January 5 and 10

Light Hall, North Lobby
9:00 to 11:00 am

December 7 and January 4

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

December 1 and January 5

Babies & You



Thursday, December 15 Noon to 1:00 pm, Virtual (*Register to receive Zoom link*)

Thursday, January 19 Noon to 1:00 pm, Virtual (*Register to receive Teams link*)

bit.ly/healthplusbabies

Healthier You Presents



View a new webinar each month!

bit.ly/healthplushealthieryou

COVID 19 Booster



VUMC asks everyone who is eligible for a bivalent booster to please take action by January 15, 2023.

bit.ly/35KByy8

Give Yourself
**The Gift
of Hearing**
This Holiday Season

20% off

Hear for the Holidays

Don't miss out on communicating with your friends *and* family this holiday season.

Vanderbilt Audiology is offering Vanderbilt employees a **20% discount** on high quality hearing aids.

Nov. 1 - Jan. 31

Schedule your hearing test today.
Visit VanderbiltHealth.com/HearingAids
or call 615-322-HEAR

VANDERBILT  HEALTH

Low-interest payment plans and payroll deduction loans are available through the Vanderbilt University Credit Union.

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

In This Issue:

Understanding the Mind-Body Connection with Kelli Mitchuson, Communications Specialist at Health & Wellness

Care Gap Alerts: Alcohol Use During the Holidays with David Marcovitz, MD, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Director of Division of Addiction Psychiatry

Preparing for The Holidays with Janet McCutchen, LPC, CEAP, Assistant Manager of Work/Life Connections-EAP

The Best Gift is a Boost with Ana E. Nobis, MD, MPH, Assistant Medical Director of Occupational Health Clinic

Ask a Lifestyle Coach with Rachel Bowman, CHES, Health Educator with Health Plus

Have a topic you want to see covered? Email us at health.wellness@vumc.org.

Follow us on Twitter & Instagram
@WellVanderbilt



Health & Wellness Connection Newsletter Editor:
Amy R. Thomas, BA, Health & Wellness Administration
Contact amy.r.thomas@vumc.org or 615.936.1806.

Health & Wellness Executive Director:
Mary Yarbrough, MD, MPH

Department Managers:
Lori Rolando, MD, MPH, Occupational Health Clinic
Brad Awalt, MS, ACSM, Health Plus
Jim Kendall, LCSW, ACSW, CEAP, Work/Life Connections-EAP
Paula McGown, MSN, MAcc, CPA, Health & Wellness Administration

The Healthy Pulse

FOR FACULTY AND STAFF AT VANDERBILT



Overall Wellness Score



VUMC

Other Vendor Clients
with Hospital Employees

All Vendor Clients

Step One of Go for the Gold is the Health Risk Assessment (HRA), which is a tool to identify personal health risks and provides a personalized report highlighting one's health. Some health risks assessed are heart health, physical activity, mental health, and risk for developing diabetes. In 2021, VUMC had an overall wellness score of 69 which is 3 points higher than other hospital employers that completed the same HRA, and 2 points higher than all employers that completed the same HRA.

Health Plus provides programs and services to address one's health, motivate positive health actions, provide targeted skill building interventions to reduce health risks, and offer opportunities to put those skills into action. Learn more about Health Plus programs at bit.ly/2SX92z3.