



HealthCoach

Timely, trusted advice from Outer Banks Health



Turning Off the Cancer Gene

The concept of turning off a cancer gene might sound like science fiction, but recent advancements in medical research offer promise. Genes play a vital role in our bodies, influencing everything from our eye color to our risk for disease. Mutations in certain genes can increase the likelihood of developing cancer. Turning off a cancer gene involves targeting the mutations to prevent the abnormal growth of cells that can lead to cancer.

While that work is still developing, we also know that lifestyle choices can influence gene activity. Genes provide a blueprint for our bodies, and environmental factors and personal choices can affect how our

genes behave. Adopting a healthy lifestyle, including a balanced diet, regular exercise, and avoiding harmful habits like smoking and overconsumption of alcohol, can foster a protective environment against cancer development.

Here at Outer Banks Health, we've made strides in reducing the overall cancer rate in Dare County, focusing on risk assessment and lifestyle modification. "By capturing

a patient's family history and then utilizing genetic testing, we can determine who is at greater risk for cancer," said Charles Shelton, MD, Outer Banks Health radiation oncologist. "Once we know an individual is predisposed to the disease, we can recommend personalized medicine like increased screenings, preventive treatments, and lifestyle modification counseling."

"Most hospitals don't administer risk assessments like we do here at Outer Banks Health," said Christina Bowen, MD, ABOIM, DipACLM, ECU Health chief well-being officer and medical director of the Outer Banks Health Center for Healthy Living. "The combination of determining a person's predisposition to cancer, offering more screening and treatment options, and shifting them to a healthier lifestyle is a powerful tool because it's a proven way to decrease the chances of gene mutation. It's all part of the effort to turn off the cancer gene."

For more about the risk assessment work being conducted at Outer Banks Health, see the article published in the Annals of Surgical Oncology (pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37814187/)

"The combination of determining a person's predisposition to cancer, offering more screening and treatment options, and shifting them to a healthier lifestyle is a powerful tool because it's a proven way to decrease the chances of gene mutation."

– Christina Bowen, MD, ABOIM, DipACLM, ECU Health chief well-being officer and medical director of the Outer Banks Health Center for Healthy Living

Lung Cancer Screening

Outer Banks Health continually monitors our community's cancer rates. Through academic-community collaboration, we develop innovative ways to screen more people earlier for better outcomes.

That's exactly how our "Lung-o-Gram" program began. Because lung cancer is the number one cause of death from cancer, we applied for a grant in 2021 with UNC to help improve outreach in our community. That grant enabled us to connect with and encourage individuals at risk of lung cancer to get screened annually, much like we do with mammograms. It's through these efforts that we've been able to decrease the number of lung cancer deaths in our community on an annual basis.

(See reverse side for our November 16 Lung-o-Gram event.)



Help Build the Tribute Path



You can help build the Cowell Cancer Center tribute path by purchasing an engraved paver that honors or memorializes a loved one. To purchase a paver, use the QR code or visit give.ecuhealthfoundation.org/TOBHtributePath

For more information, contact our Development Office at 252-449-4529.

November/December 2023 Education, Support, and Community Events

The Blood Connection Blood Drives

The Blood Connection will be hosting community blood drives on the Outer Banks. All donors are asked to make an appointment. Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are highly recommended and take priority. To make an appointment, use the QR codes or visit thebloodconnection.org. All donors will receive an e-gift card. *Special thanks to the Blood Connection for giving a donation to the Cowell Cancer Center for every donor who attends.*

Wednesday, November 1 | 8:00am - 1:00pm | The Outer Banks Hospital | 4800 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head
Saturday, December 2 | 10:00am - 3:00pm | Outer Banks Family YMCA | 3000 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head



Nov. 1



Dec. 2

Community Flu Vaccines & Wellness Screenings

Outer Banks Health offers free wellness screenings, which include blood pressure, heart rate, cholesterol, blood sugar, and body mass index, as well as health coaching. Flu vaccines will also be available for participants 18-64 years of age. Anyone 65+ is encouraged to see their provider or local pharmacy for the higher-dose flu vaccines. Appointments are highly recommended and take priority but walk-ins are welcome; call 252-449-4529 to make an appointment. All screenings will take place on the Outer Banks Health Coach vehicle in each location parking lot.

Wednesday, November 1 | 10:30am - 1:30pm

Town of Duck, Town Hall Parking Lot | 12000 Duck Road, Duck

Monday, November 6 | 10:00am - 1:00pm

The Outer Banks Hospital | 4800 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head

Wednesday, November 15 | 10:30am - 1:30pm

Community Care Clinic of Dare | 425 Health Center Drive, Nags Head

Tuesday, November 28 | 9:00am - noon

Manteo Library | 700 US-64, Manteo

Wednesday, November 29 | 9:00am - noon

Kill Devil Hills Library | 400 Mustian Street, Kill Devil Hills

Wednesday, December 6 | 5:00pm - 7:30pm

The Outer Banks Hospital | 4800 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head

Wednesday, December 13 | 10:30am - 1:30pm

Children & Youth Partnership | 534 Ananias Dare Street, Manteo

Monday, December 18 | 10:00am - 1:00pm

The Outer Banks Hospital | 4800 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head

Flu Vaccines & FIT Colon Cancer Screening

During this unique event, individuals aged 50-75 will be offered a fecal immunochemical test (FIT) kit used to screen for colon cancer from the comfort of home. Kits can be picked up, but individuals must attend the Monday event to receive individual results. Flu vaccines will also be available for ages 18-64. All screenings will take place on the Outer Banks Health Coach vehicle located in the parking lot. For more information, call 252-449-4529.

FIT Pickup: Friday, November 10 | 12:30pm - 3:30pm

FIT Drop-off/Screening: Monday, November 13 | 12:30pm - 3:30pm

Walgreens | 1200 S Croatan Hwy, Kill Devil Hills

Lunch and Learn: Continuous Glucose Monitoring

In celebration of World Diabetes Day, Robin South, RN, BSN, CMSRN, diabetes educator at the Center for Healthy Living; Sarah Godwin, RN, BSN, CDCES, from Dexcom; and Samantha Combs, CSST lead DMPP lifestyle coach will discuss the benefits of continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) and if it is right for your diabetes management plan. Discover who qualifies for CGM with insurance or the out-of-pocket costs without insurance. To register for this free lunch event, call 252-449-4529.

Tuesday, November 14 | noon - 1:00pm

Outer Banks Family YMCA | 3000 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head



Lung-o-Gram Screening Event

In recognition of the **American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout on Thursday, November 16**, Outer Banks Health is offering Lung-o-Grams for qualified patients. This annual low-dose CT scan is recommended for people at high risk of developing lung cancer. To learn if you qualify, call 252-449-7338 or visit outerbankshealth.org/loveyourlungs. *Appointments are required.*

Thursday, November 16 | 4:00pm - 7:00pm

TOBH Radiation Therapy Center | 4927 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head

Namaste with the Sharks

Join us for a **FREE** yoga class in the Graveyard of the Atlantic exhibit area. Designed for all skill levels, the gate opens at 5:15pm. While the Aquarium will not be open, restrooms will be available. Please bring a yoga mat and water. Secure your spot by calling 252-449-4529.

Wednesdays: November 29 & December 13 | 5:30pm - 6:30pm

NC Aquarium on Roanoke Island | 374 Airport Road, Manteo



Medicine Drop & Community Health Fair

Join us for this free event that offers flu vaccines (18-64-year-olds); wellness screenings (blood pressure, heart rate, cholesterol, and blood sugar); a **FREE** mobile grocery store by Beach Food Pantry; and an over-the-counter human and animal medication drop collected by the Dare County Sheriff's Office.

Thursday, November 30 | 10:00am - 1:00pm

Fessenden Center | 46830 NC-12, Buxton

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, February 10, 2024

For our annual gourmet experience to go

Support the Cowell Cancer Center with the purchase of a gourmet dinner to go, designed by Chef Wes Stepp of Red Sky and NC Coast Bar & Grill.

Stroke Risk Assessment

Outer Banks Health will be offering free stroke risk assessments that include blood pressure, heart rate, cholesterol, and blood sugar testing as well as health coaching. To register, call 252-449-4529.

Wednesday, November 8 | 9:00am - 11:30am

Virginia Tillett Center | 950 Marshall C Collins Drive, Manteo

Power of Art: Expressions Workshops

Thanks to a Community Benefit Grant from Outer Banks Health, Dare Arts provides **FREE** workshops (including supplies) for cancer patients, caregivers, and survivors. Space is limited and registration is required. Email DareArtsPrograms@gmail.com or call Dare Arts at 252-473-5558 to reserve your spot.

Workshop 1: Wednesday, November 8 | 2:00pm - 4:30pm

OBH Cancer Resource Center | 4800 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head

Join artist Kathy Cawthon for a workshop in which participants will create their own "Healing Art Journals" that combine words and art to process experiences.

Workshop 2: Wednesday, December 13 | 2:00pm - 4:30pm

Dare Arts | 300 Queen Elizabeth Avenue, Manteo

Join artist Mary Ann Remer for a workshop in which participants will be inspired to create their own mixed-media pieces.

A1C Screenings

Outer Banks Health will be offering free A1C screenings, which measure a person's blood glucose level over the past three months. Appointments are recommended and take priority; call 252-449-4529. Screenings will take place on the Outer Banks Health Coach vehicle in the parking lot.

Tuesday, November 14 | 9:00am - noon

Outer Banks Family YMCA | 3000 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head

