



HealthCoach

Timely, trusted advice from Outer Banks Health



Smart Choices Around Risky Substances

Healthy behaviors are key when it comes to well-being, so it's wise to be informed about the use of risky substances like tobacco and alcohol. By understanding how they affect us, we can make smarter decisions about their use and be mindful about how we feel when we reduce or quit them.

The effects of tobacco use on our health, whether through smoking, chewing or vaping are no secret. The list of cancers caused by this risky substance is significant, as are the ways it damages our lungs and airways. It's also a major risk factor in cardiovascular disease, reproductive health issues, dental and oral health problems, vision challenges, and more. Why do those who use tobacco continue to do so? Denise De Pedro, NBC-NHC, a certified wellness coach and tobacco treatment specialist at the Outer Banks Health Center for Healthy Living, asks patients that very question. "Often the answer is that it brings them pleasure. I like to follow up with a question about why their health is important to them. It's interesting to note that most times the answer conflicts with the tobacco use." She adds, "When someone realizes that their tobacco use is at direct odds with their desire to improve their health, there's more incentive to reduce or avoid it."

Likewise, alcohol consumption, while socially acceptable, carries health risks. Family Nurse Practitioner Marielle Silk, FNP-BC, also with the Center for Health Living, notes, "There needs to be more awareness about how alcohol can lead to things like liver damage, cancer, a weakened immune system, neurological effects, gastrointestinal issues and more."

Silk, a certified tobacco treatment specialist and gray-area drinking coach (see article below) counsels those who consume alcohol that even moderate drinking can disrupt sleep and raise blood pressure, which leads to fatigue and increases the risk of cardiovascular issues.

Understanding the impact of risky substances is essential for making informed decisions and prioritizing long-term health and quality of life. If you would like to connect with a certified tobacco treatment specialist or gray-area drinking coach to make a customized plan for reducing or eliminating risky substances from your life, call the Outer Banks Health Center for Health Living at 252-449-5978.

"When someone realizes that their tobacco use is at direct odds with their desire to improve their health, there's more incentive to reduce or avoid it."

– Denise De Pedro, NBC-NHC

What Is Gray-Area Drinking?

Gray-area drinking is a term used for a pattern of consuming alcohol that falls between moderate drinking and an alcohol use disorder (commonly known as alcoholism). Those who find themselves in the gray area may not exhibit the obvious signs of alcohol abuse, but they may experience occasional negative consequences related to their drinking, such as impaired judgment, regrettable actions or hangovers.

Marielle Silk, FNP-BC, a certified gray-area drinking coach, points out that gray-area drinking involves a degree of introspection

and self-awareness. "When I first meet a patient who is interested in reducing or eliminating alcohol, it's because they are questioning their relationship with alcohol and recognizing the need for change. They realize that regular alcohol use does not align with their values or a healthy lifestyle."

Among other health impacts, alcohol dulls the senses. Silk notes, "It's a joy to watch someone who reduces or eliminates alcohol from their life because they have so much more clarity, they're happier and their relationships are better."

March/April 2024

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.*

Friday, March 1 | 8:00am – 1:00pm | The Outer Banks Hospital | 4800 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head
Saturday, April 13 | 10:00am – 3:00pm | Outer Banks Family YMCA | 3000 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head



Mar. 1



Apr. 13

Advance Care Planning

Do you know who would get to make medical decisions for you if you have not completed a healthcare power of attorney and advance directive? Join us for a free, informative session about advance care planning. If you require only a witness or notary assistance, please arrive 10 minutes before the close of the session. Questions? Call 252-475-0905.

Thursday, March 14 | 9:00am – 10:00am
Wednesday, April 24 | 1:00pm – 2:00pm
Baum Senior Center | 300 Mustian Street, Kill Devil Hills
Thursday, March 14 | noon – 1:00pm
Wednesday, April 24 | 9:00am – 10:00am
Virginia Tillett Center | 950 Marshall C Collins Drive, Manteo

FIT Colon Cancer Screening

In recognition of Colon Cancer Awareness Month in March, Outer Banks Health will be offering colon cancer screenings. 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. 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, March 8 | 9:00am – noon
FIT Drop-off/Screening: Monday, March 11 | 9:00am – noon
Kill Devil Hills Library | 400 Mustian Street, Kill Devil Hills

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: March 13 & April 17 | 5:30pm – 6:30pm
NC Aquarium on Roanoke Island | 374 Airport Road, Manteo

Build the Tribute Path with the Purchase of a Paver

You can help build the Cowell Cancer Center tribute paths with a purchase of 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.



Painting

the Outer Banks

BLUE

Saturday, March 23

Duck Woods Country Club

6:00pm – midnight

A *black-tie gala* with live music to benefit various Outer Banks Health wellness efforts and programs. The event will focus on the five Blue Zones, while incorporating local flavor and raising awareness about ways to live a healthier lifestyle right here on the Outer Banks.

For more information, call 252-449-5933.

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.

Wednesday, March 27 | 9:00am – noon
Manteo Library | 700 US-64, Manteo

Medicine Drop

In partnership with the Saving Lives Task Force and Dare County Health and Human Services, unused and unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medications will be collected by the Dare County Sheriff’s Office for proper disposal. Animal medications are also accepted. For more information, call 252-449-4529.

Thursday, March 28 | 10:00am – 1:00pm
Outer Banks Family YMCA | 3000 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head

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. Appointments are highly recommended and take priority. 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 the parking lot.

Wednesday, April 10 | 9:00am – noon
Baum Senior Center | 300 Mustian Street, Kill Devil Hills
Wednesday, April 24 | 9:00am – noon
Virginia Tillett Center | 950 Marshall C Collins Drive, Manteo

Lunch and Learn: Avoiding Risky Substances

It is well known that tobacco use and drinking too much alcohol increase the risk of many chronic diseases, and even death. Avoidance of risky substances is crucial for sustained health. Setting SMART goals for avoiding or quitting substances like cigarettes and alcohol is a great way to begin making positive changes to your lifestyle. Join Marielle Silk, FNP, and Denise DePedro, NBHWC, from the Center for Healthy Living for this free lunch event. To secure a spot, call 252-449-4529.

Tuesday, April 16 | noon – 1:00pm
Baum Senior Center | 300 Mustian Street, Kill Devil Hills

The 36th Annual Outer Banks Senior Games



Are you 50 years old or older? Are you competitive? Do you like to have fun and stay healthy? Join Outer Banks Health and the Dare County Older Adult Services for the 36th Annual Outer Banks Senior Games, held on April 15, 2024 through April 27, 2024.

The Outer Banks Senior Games’ goal is to promote health and wellness to Dare County’s older adult population. The games are sanctioned by the North Carolina Senior Games, and Dare County hosts one of 54 local games in the state with over 60,000 total participants across North Carolina. Events include pickleball, track and field events, cornhole and bocce tournaments, swimming events, and non-athletic competitions like painting, woodworking and crocheting. Registration is open through March 15, 2024. For more information or to register, visit DareNC.gov/SeniorGames.