

Health Coach

Timely, trusted advice from Outer Banks Health



Socialize to Shield Against Alzheimer's

Staying socially connected is one of the most effective and most commonly overlooked tools for slowing cognitive decline. Research increasingly points to regular human interaction as a meaningful factor in reducing the risk of Alzheimer's disease. As the Alzheimer's Association notes, "Maintaining strong social connections and keeping mentally active as we age might lower the risk of cognitive decline and Alzheimer's."

Think of socialization as exercise for the brain. Staying immersed in a community keeps your mind sharp, engaged and grounded in the world around you. Regular conversation, shared memory and group participation support the ability to maintain normal function despite damage from aging or disease. Social interaction also triggers the release of dopamine and oxytocin, reinforcing positive feelings and motivating continued engagement. The more you engage, the more mentally sharp you can feel, and that cycle is genuinely protective over time.

Small communities, like the Outer Banks, can offer a natural edge here. Dianne Denny, executive director of the Outer Banks Dementia Friendly Coalition, emphasizes this importance: "When someone living with dementia still has places to go, people who recognize them and

routines that connect them to community, the difference in their quality of life is remarkable and their families see it too." Communities where many people know many people create an environment of support and belonging, giving purpose to daily life.

Dianne adds, "Everybody wants to be included and successful. For someone living with dementia, or in the early stages, staying socially active is crucial. Isolation can be a challenge as people age, so having an involved community, like we experience on the Outer Banks, is necessary to maintain a feeling of connectedness, familiarity and purpose in their life. Socialization matters just as much for their caregiver, too, because without community, isolation can reach them as well."

Ultimately, human beings are wired for connection and the brain responds accordingly. Prioritizing relationships, community involvement and regular social engagement is one of the most evidence-based steps a person can take to protect their cognitive health as they age, and shield against Alzheimer's.

"Everybody wants to be included and successful."

-Dianne Denny

Picking Up the Phone Still Matters

Engage, one of the Thrive5 pillars of well-being, emphasizes the importance of socialization and meaningful connections—and phone calls are a part of that. Picking up the phone and calling someone you care about does more for your brain than most people realize. Regular, organic voice conversation reduces stress, lifts mood and stimulates in-person cognitive engagement. Phone calls also let both know they are thought of, cared for, and that time is willing to be spent on them—that they are important. Reaching out to someone, or them reaching out to you, is the kind of interaction that can do wonders for your overall well-being and relationship. Next time you go to connect with someone, skip the text and make a call!



July/August 2026

Education, Support and Community Events

Prenatal Yoga Class

Led by certified prenatal yoga teacher Anna Oprea, PA-C, this is an all-levels class, free for any gestational age. Mats and props will be provided. If you have a high-risk pregnancy, please have approval from your prenatal provider before attending. To register, scan the QR code.

Mondays: July 6, 13, 20, 27 & August 3, 17, 24, 31 | 5:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.
OBH Medical Office Building, Seahorse Room | 4810 S Croatan Hwy, Nags



Stroke Support Network

Outer Banks Health offers a free support group for stroke survivors and caregivers. For more details and to register, contact Robin South, RN, at 252-449-4554 or by email at robin.south@outerbankshealth.org.

Tuesdays: July 7 and August 4 | 11 a.m. – noon
OBH Medical Office Building, Port Room or Virtual | 4810 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head

Childbirth Education Classes

OBH offers a two-part series of classes covering topics related to pregnancy, birth, postpartum, newborn care and breastfeeding. Registration is required. For more information, scan the QR code or email Emma.McClain@outerbankshealth.org.

Wednesdays: July 1 & 15 and August 12 & 26 | 5 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
OBH Medical Office Building, Port Room | 4810 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head



Wellness Screenings

OBH offers free wellness screenings, including blood pressure, heart rate, cholesterol, blood sugar, BMI and A1C testing, along with health coaching. Walk-ins are available; appointments are recommended. Screenings will take place on the Health Coach vehicle in the parking lot. To register, scan the QR code. Questions? Call 252-449-9183.

Saturday, August 15 during Operation Backpack | 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Manteo Faith Baptist Church | 1037 Burnside Rd, Manteo
Wednesday, August 19 | 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Room in the Inn | 111 W Carlton Ave, Kill Devil Hills



Advance Care Planning

Join us for a free, informative session on advance care planning. If you only need witness or notary assistance, please arrive 10 minutes before the session ends. Questions? Call 252-475-0905.

Wednesday, August 5 | 10 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Virginia Tillett Community Center | 950 Marshall C Collins Dr, Manteo
Wednesday, August 5 | noon – 1 p.m.
Baum Senior Center | 300 Mustian St, Kill Devil Hills

Power of Art Expression Workshop

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. Visit DareArts.org/workshops, email DareArtsInfo@gmail.com or call Dare Arts at 252-473-5558 to reserve your spot.

Wednesdays: July 15 and August 19 | 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
Cowell Cancer Center Education Room | 4927 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head



The Blood Connection Blood Drives

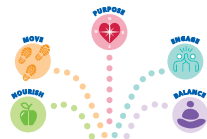
Walk-ins are welcome; appointments are recommended and take priority. To make an appointment, scan the QR codes or go to thebloodconnection.org. All donors will receive an e-gift card. Outer Banks Health team members, please present your badge upon arrival.

Friday, July 17 | 8 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Outer Banks Health | 4800 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head
Saturday, August 15 | 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Outer Banks Family YMCA | 3000 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head



Explore the Thrive5 Pillars at the Summer Markets

Join us this summer at your favorite local markets for ways to embrace your well-being! Each event will focus on one of the Thrive5 pillars: nourish, move, purpose, engage, and balance.



Wednesday, July 1 | 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Summer Concert Series at Dowdy Park | 3005 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head
Thursdays, July 9 and 30 | 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Dowdy Park Farmers Market | 3005 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head
Tuesdays, July 14 and August 4 | 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
First Flight Market | 103 Veteran's Dr, Kill Devil Hills
Wednesdays, July 22 and August 12 | 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Soundside Market | 3005 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head
Saturday, August 1 | 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Manteo Downtown Market | 104 Fernando St, Manteo



Learn more at ThriveOBX.com



Lunch and Learn: Congestive Heart Failure

Join Outer Banks Health's Michael Reddy-Miller, MD, Thomas Crabtree, Jr., MD and Krista Hess, NP for a free lunch and learn on congestive heart failure. Dr. Reddy-Miller is an Internal Medicine Hospitalist and Hatteras Island resident. Ms. Hess is a Cardiology Nurse Practitioner and Outer Banks native. Dr. Crabtree is a Family Medicine physician serving patients in Avon and Hatteras Island resident. We hope you'll join us for an interactive presentation in Buxton. To register, scan the QR code.



Questions? Call 252-449-4529.

Wednesday, August 19 | 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Fessenden Center | 46830 NC Hwy 12, Buxton

Support for Cancer Patients and Their Caregivers

A cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming for everyone. That's why OBH offers free support groups for those affected. For more information and to register, please contact Janet Creef, LCSW, at 252-449-2314 or by email at janet.creef@outerbankshealth.org.

Coping with Cancer Support Group
Wednesdays: July 8 and August 12 | 11 a.m. – noon

Breast Cancer Support Group
Wednesdays: July 15 and August 19 | 11 a.m. – noon

Caring for the Caregiver
Wednesdays: July 22 and August 26 | 11 a.m. – noon

Stuff the Bus—School Supply Drive

In partnership with Dominion Energy, Outer Banks Health is hosting a School Supply Drive to help support Dare County teachers and students. Come out and help "Stuff the School Bus" with supplies! For a list of supplies most needed, scan the QR code.



Tuesday, August 18 | 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Staples parking lot | 2210 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head

FIT Colon Cancer & A1C Screening

Individuals aged 50-75 will be offered an at-home fecal immunochemical test (FIT) kit used to screen for colon cancer. Kits can be picked up; individuals must attend the Monday event to receive individual results. A1C screenings, which measure a person's blood glucose level over the past three months, will also be available. Screenings will take place on the Health Coach vehicle. Scan the QR code to reserve your spot. Questions? Call 252-449-9183.



FIT Pickup: Friday, August 7 | 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Drop-off/Screening: Monday, August 10 | 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Outer Banks Family YMCA | 3000 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head

Namaste at the Beach

Join us on Thursday mornings for free yoga classes on the tranquil beach at Jennette's Pier in Nags Head. Weather permitting, this offering is designed for men and women of all skill levels. Wear sunscreen and bring a yoga mat or towel and your water bottle. No RSVP needed. Questions? Call 252-449-4529.



Thursdays: July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 | 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.
Thursdays: August 6, 13, 20, 27 | 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.
Jennette's Pier, Nags Head

Sponsorship Opportunities Available for Cancer Shucks!

OBH Development Council Presents
4th Annual Cancer Shucks!

Enjoy an evening of seafood and music by the Blue Crab Boys, while supporting local cancer services and programs for patients in our community! All attendees will receive food, beverages (including beer and wine), and a commemorative event giveaway! For more information, please call 252-449-4529 or email Lea.Campbell@outerbankshealth.org.

Friday, October 23, 2026 | 5:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Pirate's Cove Pavilion | Manteo, NC



Scan QR Code to Learn More & Purchase Tickets

