



THE
OUTER BANKS HOSPITAL

Health Coach

Allow The Outer Banks Hospital to be your personal health coach.

Be Kind to Your Future Self with Healthy Choices Today



If we could speak to our future selves, what would we discover? Most likely that the lifestyle decisions we make today will impact our quality of life as we age.

The American College of Lifestyle Medicine reminds us that being mindful about food choices, managing stress, being physically active, avoiding risky substance use, getting plenty of sleep, and having a strong emotional support system greatly increase the odds of preventing, treating, and even reversing chronic disease and certain autoimmune diseases.

Perhaps you've made a New Year's resolution to improve your health with a promise to give up a vice, or exercise more, or even convert to a plant-based diet. That's excellent. Do you have a plan? Often these types

of resolutions are tough to achieve without considering the roadblocks to success.

"With the new year and resolutions, we tend to take an all-or-nothing approach," said Marielle Silk, FNP-BC, family nurse practitioner, ACLM-certified lifestyle medicine practitioner, and certified tobacco treatment specialist at The Outer Banks Hospital Center for Healthy Living. "What we try to do in our practice is to encourage patients to make small lifestyle changes that they can build on and sustain by incorporating them into a normal daily routine."

"If we know that a patient doesn't have time to go to the gym, we work with them to carve out any opportunity to engage in more natural movement, like parking farther away or doing squats

while brushing their teeth...even having family dance parties in the living room. It doesn't have to be going to a gym to make it count."

Silk adds, "If stress is impacting their health, we counsel them to take their lunch break and add a walk outside during that time, because sunlight helps to improve mood as well as the immune system."

The same goes for diet. While many believe eating healthy is too time consuming, Silk offers this perspective;

"It's important to be realistic about what's going to work in your life. Make sure your pantry and your freezer are stocked with things that are quick and easy. So instead of having to chop a melon, what about a banana or something you can just grab and rinse, like an apple or berries."

Silk recommends taking a nourish-and-nurture approach. "Be compassionate and don't deprive yourself. Instead, be mindful about your life and consider how your health habits are impacting you." *Your future self will be grateful.* ■

Six Lifestyle Choices That Make a Difference



Nutrition: Food is medicine. Choose predominantly whole, plant-based foods that are rich in fiber and nutrient dense, like vegetables, fruit, beans, lentils, whole grains, nuts and seeds.



Substance Abuse: Any addictive substance use can increase the risk for many cancers and heart disease. Choose positive behaviors that improve health, like quitting smoking and limiting alcohol intake.



Sleep: Lack of, or poor-quality sleep can lead to a strained immune system. Identify and improve dietary choices, environmental situations, and coping habits to achieve better sleep health.



Exercise: Regular and consistent physical activity that can be consistently incorporated into daily life, like walking, gardening, push-ups and squats, is essential to a healthy lifestyle.



Stress: Too much stress can lead to anxiety, depression, obesity, immune dysfunction, and more. Work to recognize your negative stress responses, identify your coping mechanisms, and practice stress-reduction techniques like breathing exercises for improved well-being.



Relationships: Connections with family and/or friends are essential to emotional resiliency. Studies show that forming and maintaining social connections improves overall health. (Not to mention that these individuals can be a support system for your health goals.)

Based on "6 Ways to Take Control of Your Health"/American College of Lifestyle Medicine

Tips from the Provider



Marielle M. Silk, FNP-BC
The Center for Healthy Living

The six lifestyle medicine pillars highlighted in the box above offer a great road map for the journey to healthy living. Here are a few tips that may help you with the effort.

Sleep: Quality of sleep is directly connected to our circadian rhythms — the body's internal clock that regulates sleep. The sun's light/dark cycle impacts these rhythms because the

circadian clock's response to light is staying awake, and its response to darkness is going to sleep. It is recommended that we access sunlight during the day to increase alertness. Sitting near a window and taking a walk outside are great options. Likewise, we should shut off ALL sources of light at night to maximize the darkness for a quality night's sleep (this includes cell phones!).

Nutrition: I have heard that some believe eating a whole-food, plant-based diet is expensive. If you simplify the approach, nothing could be further from the truth. For instance, dinner for a family of four at your favorite fast food drive-through is \$30 or more. But you can feed a family of four at home with pasta and white beans topped with homemade marinara sauce accompanied by a green salad, for under \$15. And truth be told, it can be faster to get dinner ready this way rather than waiting in the drive-through line. For recipe inspiration, visit forksoverknives.com/recipes/.

Substance Abuse: A topic many prefer not to discuss but one that is important is alcohol consumption. Whether you drink one or more glasses a night, the fact is that consistent alcohol use is linked to the risk of cancer and heart disease. Why not try a dry month? Just one month. Then, if you choose to return to consuming, maybe do so just on the weekends.



January 2023

Health Coach



Education, Support, and Community Events

■ Support for Cancer Patients and Their Caregivers

The Outer Banks Hospital offers several free programs and support groups for people affected by cancer. For more information or to reserve your spot, please contact Janet Creef, LCSW, at 252-449-2314 or by email at Janet.Creef@theobh.com.

Support Groups

[Coping with Cancer Support Group](#)

Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month 11:00am-Noon

[Breast Cancer Support Group](#)

Meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month 11:00am-Noon

[Caring for the Caregiver](#)

Meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month 11:00am-Noon

■ Look Good, Feel Better

The Outer Banks Hospital Cancer Services offers the Look Good, Feel Better Program for local cancer patients. Trained beauty professionals demonstrate the use of makeup techniques, wigs, and scarves to help women with cancer cope and adjust to the side effects of treatment. Provided free of charge to all female cancer patients, it is also offered virtually. Please call 252-449-5935 or email Marie.Neilson@theobh.com.

■ TOBH Stroke Support Network

Tuesday, January 3 | 11:00am-Noon via Zoom

A stroke can be an overwhelming diagnosis. The Outer Banks Hospital offers free virtual stroke support on the first Tuesday of every month for stroke survivors and their caregivers. For more details and information on registration, contact Robin South, RN, at 252-449-4554 or Robin.South@theobh.com.

■ FREE Wellness Screenings

Tuesday, January 10 | 9:00am-Noon

Baum Senior Center | 300 Mustian Street, Kill Devil Hills

Tuesday, January 24 | 10:30am-1:00pm

Virginia S. Tillett Center | 950 Marshall C. Collins Drive, Manteo

The Outer Banks Hospital offers free wellness screens, which include blood pressure, heart rate, cholesterol, blood sugar, body mass index, and health coaching. Appointments are highly recommended and take priority; call 252-449-4529. Walk-ins are welcome.

■ Advance Care Planning

Tuesday, January 17 | 10:00am-11:00am

Baum Senior Center | 300 Mustian Street, Kill Devil Hills

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 witness/notary assistance, please arrive 10 minutes before the close of the session. Questions? Call 252-475-0905.

■ Skin Checks

(New Date!) Wednesday, February 7 | 2:00pm-4:30pm

Family Medicine – Nags Head East

4917 S. Croatan Hwy., Suite 1A, Nags Head

The Outer Banks Hospital is offering FREE skin checks by appointment. Protecting your skin from the sun and having regular skin checks are essential to staying one step ahead of skin cancer. To reserve an appointment, call 252-449-4529.

■ Namaste with the Sharks

Wednesday, January 18 | 5:45pm-6:45pm

NC Aquarium on Roanoke Island | 374 Airport Road, Manteo

Join us for a FREE yoga class in the Graveyard of the Atlantic Gallery exhibit. The class is designed for both men and women of all skill levels. Gate opens at 5:15pm. The Aquarium will not be open during this event, but restrooms will be available. This is a family-friendly class; children may join with adult supervision. Please bring your own yoga mat and water. *RSVP no later than Tuesday, January 17 to secure your spot by calling 252-449-4529.*

■ The Blood Connection Blood Drive

Wednesday, January 25 | 8:00am-1:00pm

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



The Blood Connection will host a community blood drive on the Outer Banks. All donors will receive a \$20 e-gift card and are asked to make an appointment. Walk-ins are welcome, although appointments are highly recommended and take priority. To make an appointment, use the QR code, or for more information, call 252-449-4529.

■ Lunch and Learn: Nutrition Tips and Resources

Tuesday, January 31 | Noon-1:30pm

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

Are you ready to move toward a healthier lifestyle in the new year? Join Jaclyn Hall, RD, and Denise dePedro, NBHWC, from The Center for Healthy Living, who will provide tips, resources, and guidance for healthy nutrition. This is a free lunch event. To secure a spot, call 252-449-4529.

The Tribute Path



Help build The Cowell Cancer Center tribute paths with an engraved paver that honors or memorializes a loved one. For more information, please contact our Outreach & Development Office at **252-449-4529**.

6-Week Class

Healthy Living Jump Start

The Outer Banks Hospital's Center for Healthy Living offers a 6-week group class designed to jump-start the journey to a healthier life. The next session begins in January 2023.

Call The Center for Healthy Living to discuss eligibility for this unique opportunity.

252-449-7390



gala to go



Saturday, February 11, 2023

Presented by The Outer Banks Hospital
Development Council

Dinner for two prepared by Chef Wes Stepp of
Red Sky Café and NC Coast Grill & Bar

\$175 per Gala to Go dinner (feeds two people and includes
dinner, dessert, flowers, and wine)

Proceeds from the Gala to Go support The Outer
Banks Hospital Cancer Center. For more details, visit
TheOBH.com/GalatoGo2023 or call 252-449-5933.