

# HEALTH

## HAMILTON COUNTY WEEKLY VACCINATION EVENTS

Health Department COVID-19 vaccination events are free and open to the public. No appointment is necessary. Multiple locations are available. Please call our hotline at 423-209-8383 or visit our online calendar at [vaccine.hamiltontn.gov](http://vaccine.hamiltontn.gov) to see where the Health Department is offering events throughout the week.

(CONTRIBUTED GRAPHIC: HamiltonTN.gov)

**PFIZER PRIMARY AND BOOSTER & MODERNA BOOSTER**  
NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY

<p><b>Sequoyah Health Center</b></p> <p>9527 W Ridge Trail Rd. Soddy-Daisy, TN 37379</p> <p>SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT</p> <p>8:00am - 4:00pm</p>	<p><b>Tennessee Riverpark</b></p> <p>4301 Amnicola Hwy. Chattanooga, TN 37402</p> <p>SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT</p> <p>9:00am - 4:00pm</p>	<p><b>Birchwood Clinic</b></p> <p>5625 TN-60, Birchwood, TN 37308</p> <p>SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT</p> <p>8:00am - 3:30pm</p>
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Hamilton County Health Department Questions? Call 423-209-8383

## 4 Signs of Lung Damage You May Be Ignoring

Ty McDuffey, BlackDoctor.org

A nagging cough or wheeze may not register much during the course of our daily lives, but it's very important to pay attention to even mild symptoms. Some people think that having trouble breathing is just a symptom of getting older, but these symptoms could be the first signs of lung damage, including asthma and lung cancer.

Knowing the early warning signs of lung damage can help you receive treatment and recover before the damage becomes severe or even life-threatening. If you experience any of the following warning signs, make an appointment with your healthcare provider as soon as possible because early detection could help save your life.

### Chronic Cough

A cough that you have had for eight weeks or longer is considered a chronic cough.

A persistent cough is an early symptom that should alert you that something is wrong with your respiratory system.

If you are coughing up blood, it may be coming from within your lungs or upper respiratory tract.

Wherever the blood is coming from, coughing up blood is a sign of a health problem.

### Trouble Breathing or Shortness of Breath

It's not normal to experience short-

ness of breath unless you are exercising. Labored or difficult breathing is a warning sign of lung damage.

Noisy breathing or wheezing is also a sign that something unusual is blocking your lungs' airways or making them too narrow.

### Chronic Chest Pain

Unexplained chest pains that last for more than a month are considered chronic.

If your chest pain worsens when you breathe in or cough, consider this a warning sign of lung damage.

### Chronic Mucus Production

Mucus, also called sputum or phlegm, is produced by your airways as a defense mechanism against infections or other irritants.

If you have produced an unusual amount of mucus for over a month or longer, this could indicate lung damage.

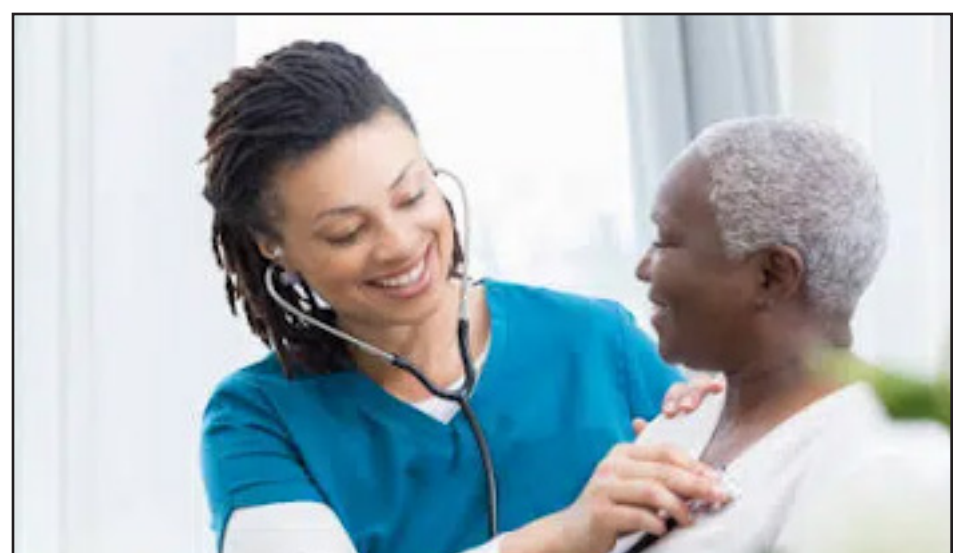
### What Causes Lung Damage?

Common causes of lung damage include:

**Smoking.** Inhaling smoke from cigarettes, cigars, and pipes is the number one cause of lung damage. If you live or work with a smoker, try to avoid secondhand smoke.

**Air pollution.** Recent studies have indicated that some air pollution, like car exhaust fumes, may contribute to asthma, COPD, lung cancer, lung disease, and other types of lung damage.

**Radon.** Radon, a colorless, odorless



gas, is present in many homes and is a recognized cause of lung damage. You can check for radon in your home with a kit available at many hardware stores.

### Asbestos

Asbestos is a natural mineral fiber that is commonly used in insulation, fireproofing materials, car brakes, and other products. Asbestos may give off small fibers that are too small to be seen but can easily be inhaled. Asbestos harms the lung cells by causing lung scarring and lung cancer. Asbestos can cause mesothelioma — a cancer that forms over the tissues covering the lungs and many other organs in the body.

Talking to Your Doctor

If you are experiencing one or more of the warning signs on this list, prepare a visit to your healthcare provider by:

Taking a copy of your medical records with you

Make a list of all the medications you are using now, including prescribed and over-the-counter medications.

Make a list of all the healthcare providers you currently see and why you see them

Make a list of the symptoms you are having and note which ones are bothering you the most. Be sure to write down when they started, if they have worsened, or what you have done (if anything) to improve or make them better.

## 7 Superfoods to Eat to Live Longer

By Kimberly Goad, AARP

There's a reason the Mediterranean diet has been dubbed the longevity diet. Research shows that people who follow the eating plan — which favors fresh foods over processed — tend to live not just long lives, but long, healthy lives. Not coincidentally, it's also the one most followed by people who live in the Blue Zones, those five regions of the world with the highest concentration of healthy centenarians.

"People who live in the Blue Zones aren't looking for the latest fad diet or magical elixir to wellness," says Kristin Kirkpatrick, a registered dietitian nutritionist at Cleveland Clinic. "They're eating real food," meaning fresh, minimally processed whole foods. "They also eat to 80 percent fullness," she adds. "So instead of measuring their food, they are tapping into their hunger and fullness cues." These seven Blue Zone-worthy superfoods may help you stave off all the biggies — cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, dementia, obesity — and live well into the triple digits.

### 1. Nuts

It's easy to see why nuts land on every list of superfoods. "They're a dense source of nutrients that can support our immune system and metabolism, balance inflammation and gut health, promote brain and heart health, as well as offer cancer preventive properties," says Stacy Kennedy, a registered dietitian in Wellesley, Massachusetts. No wonder they promote longevity.

In a study published in BMC Medicine, researchers enlisted more than 7,000 adults between the ages of 55 and 80 who were at high risk for cardiovascular disease and asked them to follow one of three diets: a Mediterranean diet supplemented with extra nuts, the same diet but with additional extra virgin olive oil instead of nuts, or a low-fat diet. After five years, those who consumed more than three one-ounce servings of nuts per week had a 39 percent lower overall mortality risk than the non-nut eaters. In fact, over the course of the study, the nut eaters had the lowest total death risk. "Nuts give us fiber, protein, healthy fats and key

vitamins and minerals like omega-3s, vitamin E, calcium and selenium," Kennedy says.

### 2. Olive oil

Wondering why olive oil gets star billing on the Mediterranean diet? Researchers think the heart-healthy monounsaturated fats in olive oil — particularly the virgin and extra virgin variety — are a major factor. Olive oil is also loaded with polyphenols, potent antioxidants that may help protect against several age-associated ailments, including Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Obviously, both olive oil and nuts are calorie dense. How can you reap the benefits of these superfoods without gaining weight? "You don't need to eat large portions of nuts or olive oil to get the benefits," Kennedy says. She suggests adding a tablespoon of olive oil to sauces or as a dressing, or reaching for a small handful of nuts as a snack with fruit or to sprinkle over a salad or into oatmeal.

### 3. Dark leafy greens

Not that you need another reason to fill your plate with leafy green vegetables, but here it is: Eating spinach, kale, chard, collards, lettuce and the like on a regular basis may slow age-related cognitive decline, according to a study in the journal Neurology. Researchers compared study participants who ate around 1½ servings of greens a day with those who ate less than a serving a day and found that the rate of cognitive decline among those who consumed the most was the equivalent of being 11 years younger (in terms of brain health).

### 4. Whole grains

Eating more whole grains — think brown rice, bran, oatmeal, popcorn, couscous, quinoa — may reduce the risk of early death, according to a large review of studies published in Circulation. The researchers found that people who ate about four servings of whole grains per day had a lower risk of dying during the 40-year study period, compared with those who ate little or none at all. The health benefits are believed to be a result of the high fiber found in whole grain foods, which may lower cholesterol production. In addition, says Kirkpatrick, "whole grains can



These superfoods can help you stave off disease and remain healthier as you age

replace white, refined grains, which have a negative impact on insulin, blood sugar and satiation."

### 5. Fruits

There's no such thing as a bad fruit (unless, of course, it's bathed in syrup and comes from a can). They all offer a variety of immune-supportive, anti-inflammatory and anti-aging properties like vitamin C, potassium and phytochemicals, those good-for-you compounds found in plants, Kennedy says. But "berries are particularly beneficial, as they are low in sugars, high in fiber and rich in nutrients," she adds. "The vibrant color is one way you can tell they are good for you. The blue-purple family of nutrients, like in many berries, have unique properties for immunity, brain health and cardiovascular health." In a study published in Applied Psychology, Nutrition and Metabolism, healthy people between the ages of 66 and 70 who drank concentrated blueberry juice every day showed improvements in brain activity. The study suggests their memory also improved.

### 6. Legumes

People who live in the Blue Zones — whether it's Okinawa, Japan; Sardinia, Italy; Nicoya, Costa Rica; Ikaria, Greece; or Loma Linda, California — have a thing for plant-based foods, especially the many peas, beans and lentils that are part of the legume family. These centenarians eat at least four times as many

beans as Americans do on average.

"Legumes are low in fat and high in protein, folate, iron, potassium and magnesium," Kirkpatrick says. That's not all. A review published in the journal Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition found that beans are closely linked to a reduced risk of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes.

### 7. Green tea

If you didn't know better, you might think the secret to turning back the clock on aging can be found in a pot of green tea. You wouldn't be far off. Research has linked green tea to a lower risk of heart disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer's and obesity. No surprise, then, that one study of older Japanese adults found that those who drank the most green tea — five or more cups a day — were 26 percent less likely to die during the seven-year study period than those who drank one cup a day. What is it about green tea? Nutrient-rich foods that are high in antioxidants — like green tea — have been linked with longer telomeres. Like the plastic tips of a shoelace, telomeres can be found at the end of chromosomes and protect DNA. They naturally shorten as we age, but the process can be accelerated by things like smoking, stress and poor diet.