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- 2 tablespoons diced bell pepper
- 1 large egg
- 1 egg white
- 2 tablespoons reduced-fat shredded cheese
- Salt and pepper, to taste

**Instructions**
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Nutrition Information

| Serving size: 1 recipe | Calories: 159 | Fat: 8 grams | Saturated fat: 3.6 grams | Carbohydrates: 6 grams | Sodium: 285 milligrams |

Recipe from Health Plus, the wellness program supporting Vanderbilt University Medical Center employees.

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**Southern Community Cohort Study**

*Annual publication for study participants*

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**The SCCS COVID-19 Survey**

Last fall and again this past summer, we asked you to answer surveys to find out how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected you. We received over 4,000 responses – thank you! Here are some things you told us about your experiences during the pandemic:

**Mental Health during COVID-19**

Mental health wellness is an important part of our daily lives. About 28% of SCCS participants reported depression, and 45% reported anxiety. These were more common among people who lived alone, had poor health, had low exercise levels, or who had a diet low in fruits and vegetables. High social support, such as having friends or family who could help out, protected people living alone from feeling depressed and anxious. If you are in crisis or are feeling unsafe, please use the Crisis Text Line by texting “HOME” to 741741 or call the SAMHSA National Hotline 1-800-622-4357 which is operated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You may find additional information about well-being at the Mental Health America website https://mhanational.org/covid19.

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It wasn’t only health care appointments that people missed. 5% of participants reported avoiding emergency medical care during the COVID-19 pandemic, primarily due to fear and visitor restrictions. For those people who had to miss or skip health care appointments, it is important to get back on track with routine health care.

“We also encourage those in need of emergency care to get it because avoidance may make the condition worse,” says Deepak K. Gupta, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.


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**Mental Health Awareness**

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**Please remember to get your yearly check-up and recommended health screenings.**
New Lung Cancer Screening Guidelines

Lung cancer is the most common cause of cancer deaths in the United States. This is because lung cancer is often detected when the cancer has already spread, which makes it difficult to treat. If lung cancer is found at an earlier stage, there is a greater likelihood it can be successfully treated. The good news is that screening tests are now available to find lung cancer early when it is still small and has not spread. The benefit of screening is that it lowers the chance of dying from lung cancer. These screening tests are recommended for certain people who smoke or used to smoke but don’t have any signs or symptoms. Your participation in the SCCS helped lead to the current national lung cancer screening guidelines.

In 2013, screening for lung cancer was recommended by the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), the organization which establishes our national cancer screening guidelines. The lung cancer screening guidelines in 2013 were based on age and smoking history or how much and how long a person had smoked. At that time, persons eligible for lung cancer screening could be between the ages of 55-80, currently smoke or used to smoke within the last 15 years and have a 30 pack-year smoking history. Smoking history is calculated as the number of cigarette packs smoked per day multiplied times the number of years smoked. We recently looked at who was eligible for lung cancer screening under these national guidelines. We found that among persons diagnosed with lung cancer, the percentage of persons eligible for lung screening differed by race. Specifically, we found that a larger percentage of Whites were eligible for lung cancer screening than African Americans. We also found that a smaller percentage of African Americans diagnosed with lung cancer met the 30 pack-year smoking history requirement, making them not eligible for screening. We also found African Americans were diagnosed with lung cancer at an earlier age than Whites. These statistics meant that many African Americans were not eligible for lung cancer screening even though they had a high chance of developing lung cancer. As a result of these findings and your SCCS participation, the USPSTF lowered the smoking history requirement and the minimum eligible age. The current guidelines for lung cancer screening are for persons who have smoked for at least 20 pack-years, age 50-80 years, and either currently smoke or used to smoke within the past 15 years. This change in policy by the USPSTF means that the new screening guidelines are more racially equitable. Our goal is to improve the lives of persons diagnosed with lung cancer and to narrow the gap in health disparities. We thank you for your participation which led to these important national screening guidelines.

Talk to your licensed healthcare professional if you think you may be interested in lung screening or stopping smoking.


COVID-19 VACCINATION

In Fall of 2020, 54% of SCCS participants were planning to have the COVID-19 vaccine when it became available. By Summer of 2021, 82% of participants reported they had already had at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Among participants who initially said that they did not want to have the vaccine, 65% had changed their minds and had at least one dose. Nearly all (97%) of these individuals chose to have the vaccine to protect themselves or their families. Many also found the recommendation of medical professionals (57%), friends or family (57%), political leaders (23%) or religious leaders (20%) to be important in their decision to become vaccinated. If you have not yet chosen to have the COVID-19 vaccine, learn more information about the vaccine and its safety at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or your local health department.


It’s important the Southern Community Cohort Study has your most current contact information. Please help us stay in touch with you! If your email, address or telephone number have changed, call us toll free at 1-800-734-5057 or visit our website at www.southerncommunitystudy.org

LUNG CANCER SCREENING

DO YOU KNOW?
Lung cancer is responsible for the most cancer deaths in the U.S. of all types of cancers.

Lung cancer symptoms usually do not appear until the cancer is already at an advanced stage.

THE GOOD NEWS!
Catching lung cancer early decreases the risk of death by 20%.

WHAT TO CHECK:

1. ARE YOU BETWEEN 50-80 YEARS OLD?

2. DO YOU CURRENTLY SMOK?

OR

3. HAVE YOU QUIT IN THE LAST 15 YEARS?

For additional resources: visit this link: https://www.cancer.org/cancer/lung-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging.html

Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Made in collaboration with the Arthur-Vanderbilt-Tennessee State University Cancer Partnership. Funded by a grant from the Lung Cancer Research Foundation. Designed by Aima Beck.
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