

What You Need To Know About Oral Cancer

Each year in the United States 29,000 people learn they have cancer of the oral cavity or the oropharynx (the part of the throat at the back of the mouth).

It is important to detect oral cancer as early as possible for successful treatment.

An oral cancer examination can detect early signs of oral cancer. These exams are painless and quick! Your regular dental check up is an excellent time for your dentist or dental hygienist to do your exam. Your face, neck, lips, and entire mouth should be checked.

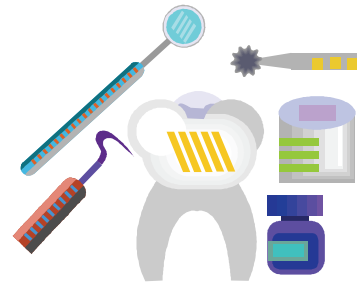


Risk Factors

- **Tobacco user:** Tobacco use accounts for most oral cancers.
- **Alcohol User:** People who drink alcohol are more likely to develop oral cancer than people who do not drink.
- **Frequent Sun Exposure:** Cancer of the lip can be caused by exposure to the sun; remember to use lip balm with a SPF of 15 or higher.
- **Personal history of head and neck cancer:** Previous history can increase your risk.

Signs and Symptoms

- Patches inside of your mouth or on your lips that are white, mixture of red and white, or red:
 - ~ White patches (leukoplakia) are most common. White patches sometimes become malignant.
 - ~ Mixed red and white patches (erythroleukoplakia) are more likely than white patches to become malignant.
 - ~ Red patches (erythroplakia) are brightly colored, smooth areas that often become malignant.
- A sore on your lip or mouth that will not heal
- Bleeding in your mouth
- Loose teeth
- Difficulty or pain when swallowing
- Difficulty when wearing dentures
- A lump in your neck
- An earache



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

The Logan County Health Department at 217-735-2317 or www.logancountyhealth.org
The National Cancer Institute at 1-800-4-CANCER or www.cancer.gov.

Public Health Preparedness

AfterSHOCK!

Although it is the state of California that we often think about when we discuss earthquakes, there are other fault zones in other areas of the United States. On April 18, Illinois was shook with a small scale earthquake in the early morning hours. Between now and 2035, geologists predict a 97 percent chance of the occurrence of a major earthquake in the New Madrid seismic zone of the central United States. The key of surviving a major earthquake is like that of any other emergency: plan, prepare, and practice what you and your family will do if it happens. Here are a few tips in preparing:

- Write down important information, such as telephone numbers, medication, allergies
- Gather and store documents in fire proof safe
- Develop a family shelter-in-place, evacuation, and communication plan and inspect your home for hazards
- Stock up on supplies that can be used after an earthquake
- Understand food and drinking water safety when a power outage results

For more information, please visit the Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov/disasters/earthquakes.



Get READY, Get SET!

Because you may have to leave your home during an emergency, it is important to think about what activities you can do with your children. Put together a Kid's Survival Kit in a backpack or duffel bag. Some items that you may want to include are: favorite books, crayons, coloring books, favorite toys, travel board games, favorite blanket or stuffed animal, pictures of family members and pets, and may be a few treats such as a candy bar or new toy.

Have you often wondered how you can lend a helping hand in your community? Call the Health Department today to learn more about the Medical Reserve Corps and how you can volunteer!



In March, the Pandemic Influenza Community Coalition and the Logan County Health Department released its first message to the public regarding influenza preparedness. During 2008, the coalition will be developing messages for you to better understand seasonal and pandemic influenza and distributing the message to you through local businesses and organizations. The Coalition and the Health Department challenges you keep a watch the next *U and the Flu* message to be released in June. It is an opportunity for you to gather correct facts, learn something new, and share the information with others.

Public Health Prepares

Public health prepares for any emergency event that would cause harm to the health of the community. More specifically, the Logan County Health Department concentrates in planning for any infectious disease outbreak. In a situation where the entire Logan County population may be exposed to the disease, the Health Department is responsible for making sure everyone in the community receives medications to prevent infection.

Recently, the Health Department simulated a medical dispensing site in its tire collection on April 5. The purpose of the simulation was to better understand how many people can receive medication in a one-hour time period. During the simulation, we asked each person how many were in his or her household. In planning, we have established that one person may be dispensed enough medication for 5 people in their household. Not only is it important for you to know this, but also for you to better understand what information you need to know in preparing for any emergency.

Gather the following important information about you and your family now:

- If the community has been exposed to an infectious disease resulting in an emergency event, the Health Department will announce where to get the medication, who should go to the location, and how to get there through all media sources (radio, local cable station, newspapers, website, Health Department phone system).
- You will need photo identification and a knowledge of you and your family's medical records, including previous immunizations, current medications, and allergies. If you have children in your household, you will also need to know the current age and weight of your children.
- All persons who are well and/or have been exposed will receive medication at the site. If you have any signs or symptoms of the disease, then you will be directed to the hospital to seek medical treatment.

For the community to be prepared, we must make sure that each individual household is getting ready. Collecting important information about you and your family is just one step that you can do now.

Do you have any questions or comments? If yes, please contact the Emergency Response Coordinator at the Logan County Health Department at (217) 735-2317 or mlamb@logancountyhealth.org. Thank you!