

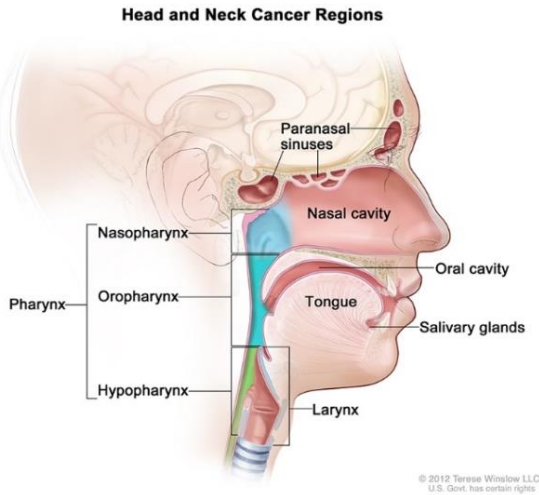


Prairie Faith Parish Nurse News~~April 2025

"Walking alongside individuals to meet physical, emotional and spiritual needs, by connecting and/or creating healthy resources for their lives."

April health observances include "Oral, Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Week"

Oral, head and neck cancer accounts for about 6% of all cancers in the United States. The incidence of this type of cancer is increasing--this year, an estimated 110,000 people will develop oral, head and neck cancer in the U.S. While younger people can develop the disease, most people are older than 50 when they are diagnosed. **Most head and neck cancers can be prevented.**



What causes cancers of the head and neck? Tobacco use, including smokeless tobacco (chewing tobacco and snuff) is the most important risk factor for head and neck cancers, especially cancers of the oral cavity, oropharynx, hypopharynx, and larynx. Alcohol use is another risk factor--people who use both tobacco and alcohol are at greater risk of developing these cancers than people who use either tobacco or alcohol alone. At least 75% of head and neck cancers are caused by tobacco and alcohol use. Infection with cancer-causing types of **human papillomavirus (HPV)**, especially HPV types 16 and 18, is a risk factor for some types of head and neck cancers, particularly oropharyngeal cancers that involve the tonsils or the base of the tongue. And **sunlight**--long-term exposure to ultraviolet light from sunlight or tanning beds increases the risk of skin cancer, including the scalp, face, and lips.

Symptoms of concern that may affect specific areas of the head and neck include the following:

- **Oral cavity.** A white or red patch on the gums, the tongue, or the lining of the mouth; a swelling of the jaw that causes dentures to fit poorly or become uncomfortable; and unusual bleeding or pain in the mouth.
- **Pharynx.** Trouble breathing or speaking; pain when swallowing; pain in the neck or the throat that does not go away; frequent headaches, ear pain, or ringing in the ears; or trouble hearing.
- **Larynx.** Pain when swallowing or ear pain. Hoarseness or a change in the voice that doesn't go away.
- **Paranasal sinuses and nasal cavity.** Sinuses that are blocked and do not clear; chronic sinus infections that do not respond to treatment with antibiotics; bleeding through the nose; frequent headaches, swelling or other trouble with the eyes; pain in the upper teeth; or problems with dentures.
- **Salivary glands.** Swelling under the chin or around the jawbone, numbness or paralysis of the muscles in the face, or pain in the face, the chin, or the neck that does not go away.
- **Thyroid.** Lump or swelling in the neck, voice changes and difficulty swallowing.
- **Skin.** A sore on the lip, face, or ear that does not heal, or a mole or spot that changes size or color or begins to bleed.

(Because some of these symptoms may also be associated with other conditions, it is important to see your physician if you experience these symptoms to determine the cause.)

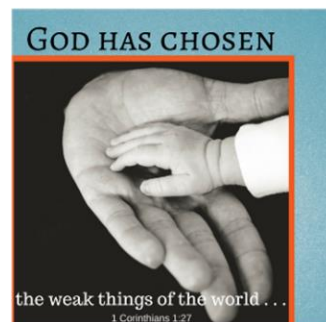
Early diagnosis is key to successful treatment of these types of cancers.

Sources used and for more information: Head and Neck Cancer Alliance <https://www.headandneck.org>
and American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery
https://www.enthealth.org/be_ent_smart/50-facts-about-oral-head-and-neck-cancer/

For information and support to stop smoking or using smokeless tobacco, consider utilizing the free resources through www.kanquit.org

***But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise;
God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. - 1 Corinthians 1:27***

All of us have weaknesses and limitations—emotional, spiritual or physical. These characteristics are there for a reason. God’s best work is accomplished using weak, broken, and wounded people to transform communities into forces that can accomplish great things. The core of our Christian life is not what we can offer God but what God can accomplish through us. Regardless of how imperfect we may be, God does not call the qualified; God qualifies those who are called. When Jesus calls his disciples, some cannot stay awake as Jesus prays, and others argue over who will be the greatest. With this band of misfit disciples, Christ builds his church. As we continue this work as Jesus’ disciples, we too can be used—even with all of our flaws and limitations—to the glory of God and for the love of God’s people. Thanks be to God!



MOVING FORWARD: What weakness in your life has God used for good?

(Source: *Forward Day by Day*, author The Reverend Glenice Robinson-Como)



I hope that you are benefitting from using the calendar, “**Lent 2025: 40 Days of Living Well**”, found in the March Prairie Faith Parish Nurse News. I find that our calendar helps me remember to *see God in all places and situations—not just in worship or in prayer—but everywhere, every day*, and it serves as a daily reminder to take good care of myself and others—body, mind and spirit. *(There are still copies available if you have not yet picked up a Lenten calendar.)* As we take care of God’s creation on a daily basis as stewards of the earth, we remember that we ourselves are also created by God, and if we nurture our own whole-person wellness, we are better able to serve God as we help others.

Feel free to call, text or email me to: schedule a confidential appointment to discuss health/wellness questions, schedule transportation to a medical/dental/counseling appointment if you need a ride, request a prayer shawl or a comfort meal for someone in the community going through a difficult time, locate community resources, request other parish nurse work, or discuss your ideas for the health ministry.

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785-743-2005 (leave a message, please)



Little Things

Lord, help me with little things that I forget.

Remind me of the compliment that I should give,
the letter to the friend I miss,
the love I meant to express.

And when there are little things I want to do but shouldn’t,
hold me back.

Help me to stop the cutting word, the boast, the scorn,
the unkind laugh.

In all these things, O Lord, help me to remember always
how the other person feels
and to act in love towards them. Amen.



(From Plain Prayers in a Complicated World by Avery Brooke, art by Robert Pinart)