

April is Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Month

Head and neck cancers are a group of cancers that usually begin in the squamous cells that line the mucosal surfaces inside the mouth, nose, throat, and occasionally the salivary glands. These squamous cell cancers are often referred to as squamous cell carcinomas of the head and neck. Head and neck cancers account for nearly 3 percent of all cancers in the United States, the National Cancer Institute reported. Alcohol and tobacco use are major risk factors for head and neck cancers. Infection with cancer-causing types of the human papillomavirus (HPV) also increases a person's risk of certain head and neck cancers. Other risk factors for these cancers include:



- * Eating preserved or salted foods.
- * Poor oral hygiene and missing teeth.
- * Occupational exposure to wood dust, asbestos, and synthetic fibers.
- * Radiation exposure.
- * Epstein-Barr virus infection.
- * Asian ancestry, particularly Chinese ancestry.

Head and neck cancers are more common among men than women. Moreover, these cancers are also diagnosed more often among people over age 50 than among younger people. The symptoms of head and neck cancers may include a lump or a sore that does not heal, a sore throat that does not go away, difficulty in swallowing, and a change or hoarseness in the voice.

Attend Half-Day Head and Neck Cancer Survivorship Conference

A free half-day conference focused on providing the most relevant information to head and neck cancer patients, families, and caregivers will be held Saturday, April 8 from 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at the Fawcett Center, 2400 Olentangy River Road. The conference, which will include a physician panel and resource tables, will address concerns related to long-term effects of treatment and others. Topics will include updates on treatment and research (clinical trials), symptom management, surveillance for recurrence, coping and support resources and nutritional information. A keynote presentation by an inspirational head and neck cancer survivor will be featured. Lunch will be provided, and free parking is available.

Free Head and Neck Cancer Screenings Offered April 7

The James will offer free head and neck cancer screenings on Friday, April 7 from 8 AM - 4 PM at the head and neck clinic located on the fifth floor of The James. If you smoke or use alcohol regularly, you may be at a higher risk for head and neck cancers. Call The James Line at 614-293-5066 to schedule an appointment to get screened. Appointments are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis.