

# Health Matters

Health and Wellness Information for Our Community



## Clinic Hours

Lopez Island Medical Clinic is located in Lopez Village at 103 Washburn Place.

Clinic hours:  
Monday–Friday,  
8:30 am- 5:00 pm

To schedule an appointment, call 468-2245 during regular hours.

Medical emergency?  
Dial 911.

[www.lopezislandmedical.org/](http://www.lopezislandmedical.org/)

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## New Team Leads Hamlet House

According to new Hamlet House manager Becky Smith, Hamlet House Adult Family Home is one of the best-kept secrets on Lopez. She wants to change that.

“Hamlet House is a terrific resource. It was built so island seniors who found themselves needing support wouldn’t be forced to move to the mainland; they could live out their lives right here in their own community. Since opening, the group we serve has actually expanded: parents of islanders now move from the mainland to Hamlet House to be closer to family.”

Hamlet House oversight is provided by an all-volunteer board led by chair Paula Walker. “We’re thrilled that Becky accepted the leadership role,” she says. “Her background as a nurse and all-around-amazing Lopez community member, Fire Commissioner, School Board member, President of the Chamber of Commerce are only a few of the hats she’s worn over the last 32 years make her uniquely qualified to lead the Hamlet House.”

One of Becky’s first actions was to hire Heather Arps as Administrative Assistant and lead caregiver. Heather is known for the care she has provided to those needing in-home support over the last 28 years. Heather joined the Lopez Clinic staff in 2007. She now divides her time between that position and Hamlet House.

“When Cathy Doherty retired as Nurse Practitioner from the Clinic, we immediately



Cathy Doherty, Heather Arps and Becky Smith at Hamlet House

invited her to join our Board of Directors as liaison to Hamlet House,” says Paula. As a volunteer, Cathy spends time supporting both staff and residents. “We couldn’t be more pleased. We call Becky, Cathy and Heather our dream team!”

Hamlet House provides round-the-clock staffing and services that include three home-cooked meals each day, housekeeping, laundry, medication supervision and assistance with daily needs which can be anything from helping residents stay in touch with family members on Facebook, to arranging a ride to Creaky Yoga, to help with bathing.

Becky adds: “We’ve got smart, caring, dedicated caregivers. They’re all from Lopez, which means often our caregivers have known residents before they come to Hamlet House. It’s basically friends looking after friends.” Residents have as much independence as they wish. “That means encouraging and extending independence where it exists and providing support where needed.”

While Hamlet House often has full occupancy, there are currently three openings. “If you know someone who needs 24-hour care, let them know we’re here,” says Becky. “Same with islanders who have parents living off island and want their parents nearby. Give us a call at 468-3800. We would like people to know what services are here before they have a crisis situation and are forced to make a quick decision.”

# Hamlet House

*continued from page 1*

Madrona Murphy, whose grandfather Six Lapham lived at Hamlet House for many years, had this to say: “Grandpa was a great guy and got the chance to live a full life into his 90’s at Hamlet House. He led a writing group, played cribbage with friends, basically enjoyed life to the fullest. The staff totally pampered him!”

Dr. Wilson underscores the importance of Hamlet House. “It is one of the crucial elements of the healthcare continuum out here. Hamlet House is the only source for full-time care on Lopez and the fact that their staff is mental health and dementia certified is a bonus. It’s also competitive in cost, less expensive in fact than some similar places on the mainland.”



# More Dental Health Pointers for Kids & Adults

*Editor's note: Part one of this series ran in the February 2016 issue of Health Matters*

**A**fter reading Dr. Christine Aufderhar's first interview, my friend Charlie, who crews on the interisland ferry Klahowya, smiled and flashed his little white dental floss container at me. "It's with me all day long," he laughed. "I've developed pockets between my teeth that collect food. Don't know if it's something we all go through as we age, but I've been carrying floss for about two years now. Every time I eat, I floss."

What a testimony!

In this interview, Christine gives pointers for children and seniors. But watch closely and you'll see that most of her advice applies to all of us.

For starters, she encourages parents to bring their little ones in early. Studies are clear on the benefits: children who establish a positive relationship with a dentist are far less likely to have major decay problems later on as well as less dental anxiety. The best time is six months after the first tooth pops through the gums, around age one. "In our office, we do free Happy Visits," says Dr. Aufderhar. "Children get to feel how the chair goes up and down, to see the 'squirt gun' and 'mouth vacuum.' Sometimes they let us look in their mouth or polish their teeth. Nothing is forced! The goal is that they see our dental office as a friendly place. My staff is fantastic with patients, young and old."

Christine says the most crucial steps to dental health take place at home. Some may surprise you. We all know about brushing and flossing but she stresses that eating habits are the biggies.

## 1. No sugar between meals

There's science behind this advice and it's all about bacteria. Studies show if you eat three meals a day, your body's systems will neutralize the acids created by bacteria. But if you eat sugary foods between meals, the body can't keep up: your saliva doesn't have time to neutralize the acid and that means more cavities.

A mother of two, Christine acknowledges that it's hard not to let hungry, growing kids snack. "If kids need a snack, nuts and cheese are best because bacteria don't convert them to sugar." How about raisins and fruit? "Raisins are wicked

between meals," she says. "Have them in oatmeal at meal time, that's great!" Dried fruit sticks to the teeth and feeds the bacteria for hours. Fresh fruit is a better alternative "but it's still sugar and bacteria say YUM. I'm not saying don't eat fruits or give up desserts. Just eat sweet things during meals as much as possible to allow saliva the time to neutralize the acids."

## 2. What about drinks?

The best between-meal drinks are water and milk including soy, almond, cow or goat milk (unsweetened is the key). "Fruit juices have a high concentration of sugar so again, not between meals. Soda is really hard on the teeth. It's got acid in addition to sugars," she says. "We think giving kids 100% fruit juice, or fruit leather is so good and natural, right? No added preservatives, no added sugars, but in fact, offering them between meals increases cavities. I went to dental school after my kids already had cavities. I wish I'd known this earlier myself."



**Penelope and Beau Spreine at Bayview Dental with Dr. Aufderhar**

## Tips for Seniors (and all of us)

Cutting down on sugar between meals is even more important for seniors.

If you're using fluoride toothpaste, spit out the excess foamy saliva after brushing but don't rinse! The micro amount of fluoride left in the mouth helps stabilize and strengthen the teeth.

Some older patients suffer from dry mouth, a condition usually caused by specific medications.

The problem develops when saliva, which is so important to cavity control, declines. What to do? Talk with your physician and see if a different medication is available. Christine highly recommends enjoying Xylitol candies and gum such as Ice Chips or Trident gums. They stimulate saliva and create an environment that cavity-causing bacteria don't like. One caution: Xylitol is deadly to dogs, even in small quantities.

High fructose corn syrup is serious trouble for us at any age: if you can knock it out of your diet, you'll do your teeth a huge favor. Why? "While sugar (sucrose) is bad," Christine states, "it's manageable. Its evil twin dextrose (high fructose corn syrup) has the ability to seep back into the mouth through the salivary glands, a trick that sugar can't perform. So if you eat foods with dextrose, the salivary glands see to it that the sugar doesn't leave; they continue to bathe your teeth with sugar all day long." How to identify dextrose? It's found in more foods than you'd suspect. Christine's recommendation: Read labels!

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## Paperwork That Can Save a Life

**L**opez paramedic Jen English says a lot of what she is called upon to do is actually "detective" work.

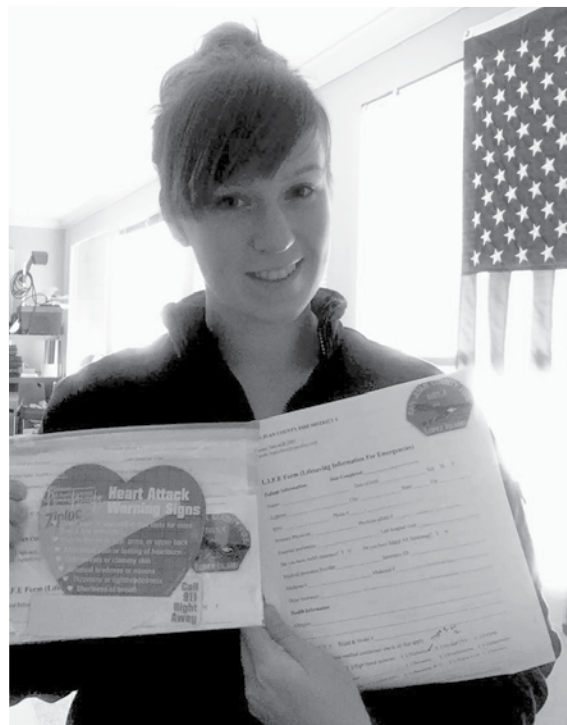
When Jen, or any member of the emergency response team, responds to a 911 aid call, crucial questions need to be answered. If the patient is unconscious or confused, finding those answers can consume precious time. "If you're unable to tell us your medical history or provide information about your allergies or medications, that can be a huge problem for us," says Jen.

Fortunately, she has a simple solution: it's a few sheets of paper that fit into a plastic baggie with a magnet that attaches to the refrigerator. It's a L.I.F.E. packet which is shorthand for Lifesaving Information For Emergencies.

"If I enter the home of an unresponsive patient and see this on the fridge, I check the forms for information about what might be causing the episode. This cuts down on speculation. For example, if the person is diabetic, one of the first things we check is blood sugar. Especially if someone has a lot of risk factors, it's extremely helpful. Having it right off the bat, reduces the time playing detective."

There's space on the form for information about previous surgeries, baseline vital signs (if you don't know yours, you can come by the fire department and have them taken), your blood type, physician information and much more. "Basically it's a great snapshot for us," says Jen. There's even space to give instructions to the medical team in case you are flown off the island. "Sure," Jen smiles. "Like 'call my neighbor to look after the dog' or 'send my hearing aid with me to the hospital'."

The L.I.F.E. packets are available for free at the fire station, library and Lopez Clinic. Vial of Life, a similar packet, is also available at the pharmacy.



**Paramedic Jen English with L.I.F.E. packet. The information is easy to fill out and will help responders help you if there's an emergency at home.**