

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/

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Are You Ready to Save a Life?



Dave Rucker teaches CPR

Every year, approximately 420,000 people in the United States experience cardiac arrest at home, on the street, or in public place. “On average, only 10.4% survive. Here in the islands, the story is different: San Juan County’s save rate is 50% and on Lopez, the survival rate from cardiac arrest is an amazing 62%.

When someone has cardiac arrest, the heart stops beating and they collapse. It is usually fatal if not treated within minutes. According to Dave Rucker, an EMT with Lopez Fire Department, the more people in a community who are trained in CPR (cardio pulmonary resuscitation), the better the chances are that someone can give CPR until 911 is called and professional

medical help arrives. In fact, the 10.4% national rate increases to 31.7% when bystanders give CPR.

It’s a simple equation: The more people who know CPR = the more lives may be saved.

Here’s another statistic for Lopez to be proud of: more Lopez Islanders took CPR classes than anywhere else in San Juan County last year. One hundred and nine people certified. Dave, one of the Fire Department’s CPR trainers, taught over half those folks. Last month he and paramedic Jen English provided information about this vital program.

Save a Life With CPR Training

continued from page 1

Who should know CPR?

“Basically everyone,” says Dave. “Even if they can’t give it, they can tell someone else how to do it. For example, an elderly person may not be able to quickly get down on her knees, but she can coach someone else on the scene.” Jen says her five-year-old niece knows CPR and practices compressions on her dolls. Jen thinks it would be great to start kids’ CPR classes on Lopez. CPR is required for everyone in the Lopez Fire Department including student interns and all volunteers on both the fire and EMS sides. It’s also a high school graduation requirement now in Washington state, so all Lopez seniors are certified, too.

Dave: “The neighbor, friend, family member, even bystander who has the training and is on site to initiate CPR before emergency responders can get there, is the one who gives the person a chance to survive. Every minute a person *doesn’t* get CPR, they have 10% less chance of full recovery.”

What will you learn at CPR class?

1. *How to identify when CPR is necessary.*
2. *How to keep yourself safe during the emergency.* “How to respond if the house is burning or if the person in distress is in the water,” says Dave. “If you get hurt, there’s no one to help the person in need, so this is a crucial step.”
3. *The chain of survival.* This is a 5-step process. It begins with calling 911. Basically it shows you where you fit into the lifesaving process and how the CPR event will unfold.
4. *What to do while you wait for the Emergency Responders to get to the scene.*
5. *The Heimlich maneuver:* the emergency technique for preventing suffocation when a person’s airway is blocked.

The course takes about 2.5 to 3 hours. “We’ll watch a video by the American Heart Association (AHA), then practice, role play with mannequins, experience what it’s like,” says Dave. “There’s plenty of time for Q & A and discussion. When people complete the course, they are ready to pitch in when there’s a problem.”

Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, once a key part of CPR, is no longer a focus.

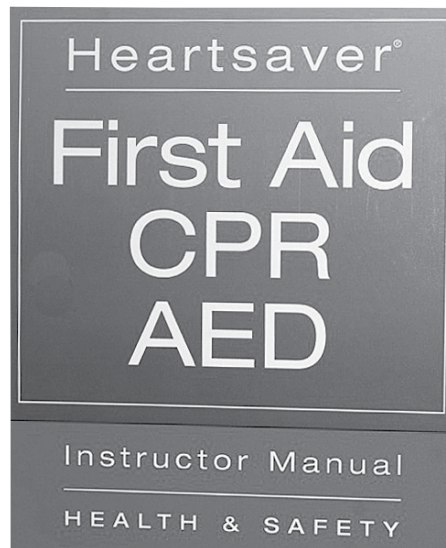
“The American Heart Association realized that people weren’t doing CPR because they didn’t want to do mouth-to-mouth,” explains Dave. “Now compressions, pushing on the chest to make the heart beat, are the cornerstone of the training.”

Location / Cost of the class / Sign up

Classes are taught in the Fire Hall, across from Lopez Library in the village. Cost is \$20 per person. If someone can’t afford it, they will be sponsored. No one is turned away. Typically classes are held on Saturdays, but it depends on when the instructor and students want to meet. Call the Lopez Fire Department at 468-2991 to sign up.

Dave’s Own Lifesaving Experience

“My best takeaway from teaching CPR is the value of practice. When I was faced with doing CPR in an emergency, I knew exactly what to do without thinking about it.”



The emergency happened here last year when Dave responded to a 911 call. “I was the first EMT to arrive on the scene. A bystander was doing CPR, a friend of the family.” As soon as Dave arrived, he took over, starting compressions. Sarah Reeve, the second EMT on the scene, assisted.

Jen picks up the story: “I arrived 12 minutes after the 911 call came in and proceeded with advanced interventions. I was proud and impressed when I arrived on scene. The team was getting it done.”

The patient was flown off but got discharged from the hospital a few days later. “He was totally fine,” reports Dave with a shy smile. “He walked out the front door of the hospital with his wife and kids.”

“It was an exceptionally positive outcome!” says Jen.

“Being part of the save was a big deal,” Dave says quietly. The huge smile on his face tells the story much better than his humble words.

If you’re willing to learn how to save a life, call the Lopez Fire Department today at 468-2991 and sign up. It may be one of the best calls you ever make.

Empowering People to be Healthy

- **73% of Americans would rather go grocery shopping than floss.**
- **If you floss once a day, you use about 122 yards of floss per year...most people use 18 yards.**
- **While dentists recommend brushing 2-3 minutes twice each day, most of us spend only 48 seconds with a toothbrush in hand.**

Lopez dentist Christine Aufderhar likes to make her patients laugh at least once every visit. She's quoting funny dental statistics today. Here's another:

Only brush and floss the teeth you want to keep.

"That's an old favorite," she smiles. "But it's absolutely true!"

Putting humor aside, we turn to the topic at hand: the serious connection between dental health and overall health. The linkage is direct. Medical studies show that poor oral health can contribute to stroke, diabetes and heart disease. It's also connected to premature birth and low birth weight in babies. Some studies are beginning to find a link to Alzheimer disease and dementia, too.

It's a topic Dr. Aufderhar is passionate about. "I want to empower people. There are many ways to stay healthy, and many of them start with simply brushing and flossing. The goal is to get rid of plaque, that very sticky, highly acidic substance on the teeth which results in cavities, inflammation and gum disease.

It's all about bacteria," she emphasizes. "There are over 500 species of bacteria in your mouth at any time. Kinda scary, huh? We can never get rid of them all, but we keep them under control with regular brushing and flossing." Brushing removes about 65% of plaque, flossing does the rest of the job. When people don't brush or floss, all those bacteria stay put, leading to gum disease and cavities. Uncontrolled bacteria can enter the blood stream and cause serious problems.

"The thing is, the mouth is not separate from the body. It's all one system. You find signs of 90% of the body's diseases in the mouth. That's why when you go to the clinic, Dr. Wilson, Christine and Cathy always look in your mouth as part of your clinical exam. Lopez Clinic is very comprehensive and holistic in their approach, making them ahead of the curve."

Going to the dentist is important, but more important is what happens at home, she says.

Brushing for two to three minutes, twice a day is the goal. That may not sound like much, but statistics say most of us aren't there yet. To improve our performance, Dr. Aufderhar

has some tips. First, she recommends brushing to a favorite song. "Put on something peppy like the Beach Boys! It plays just the right amount of time."

She offers pointers about technique:

- Focus on the gum line
- Brush all sides of the teeth
- Use a soft brush (hard bristles are not better)
- Brush in a circular motion
- Hold the toothbrush at a slight angle, not perpendicular to the teeth
- Don't be aggressive: brush gently but longer
- Don't forget to brush the tongue

Flossing is next.

When is it too late to start flossing? "When you no longer have teeth. If you have them, floss them!" she encourages, then adds a warning: Expect to have sore gums for a few weeks. The gums may bleed. "It's natural, just keep going, don't stop!" she urges. "It's like a child taking her shoes off in the first days of summer. Her feet are tender, but pretty soon they toughen up and she's running barefoot all over the island. It's the same idea."



**Christine Aufderhar,
Lopez Island Dentist**

Christine comes from a family of dentists. Her dad came to America from Norway to become a dentist "but never made it that far." Both of her brothers became dentists. Her own route to dentistry is surprising. Christine's first degree was in Biology. She got her teaching credential and became an elementary school teacher, then principal, at a rural school in Oregon with just 34 children. As time went on, she and husband Kenn had two children, she became a stay-at-home mom, then returned to the classroom as a substitute, babysitting on the side.

In her early 30s, she began thinking of a new career. Kenn, a commercial contractor, was completely supportive. They switched roles: Kenn stayed home with the children while she went to four years of dental school. She smiles talking about how positive it has been for the whole family. Kenn remains the primary stay-at-home parent, although he did pull out his tool belt to remodel their beautiful new offices next to Lopez Clinic.

They have been on Lopez for six and a half years. "We both always wanted a small town. We were so tickled when the dental practice came up for sale here. Lopez is a great match for us."

Stay tuned for part two of this story in the next issue: dental health for children and seniors.

Health Matters

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P.O. Box 309 • Lopez, WA 98261



Vol. 18 No. 1

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