



200 St. Clair Street  
 St. Marys, Ohio 45885  
 Phone 419-394-3335  
 Toll Free 1-877-564-6897  
 GrandLakeHealth.org

Joint Township District  
 Memorial Hospital

Grand Lake  
 Family Practice & Pediatrics  
 at the Celina Medical Center

Wapakoneta Primary Care  
 at the Wapakoneta Medical Center

Grand Lake Home Health

Grand Lake Hospice

Grand Lake OB/GYN

Grand Lake Occupational Medicine

Grand Lake Primary Care  
 at St. Marys

Grand Lake Sleep Center

Miami & Erie  
 Family Practice & Pediatrics

Urgent Care at JTD MH

James Reichert, D.O.

**INFORMATION CONTACT**

**Carrie Widman**  
 Marketing

Joint Township District Memorial Hospital  
 200 St. Clair Street  
 St. Marys, Ohio 45885 2400  
 Phone: 419-394-3387 ext. 3568  
 Fax: 419-394-8485  
 Email: cwidman@jtdmh.org  
 Website: GrandLakeHealth.org

**MEDIA CONTACT**

**Molly Osmon**  
 Public Relations & Media Specialist

Hafenbrack Marketing  
 Phone: 614-905-6548  
 Email: MOsmon@Hafenbrack.com

# PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## THE GRAND LAKE WOUND CARE CENTER HELPS CANCER SURVIVORS WITH LEADING EDGE TREATMENT FOR RADIATION INJURIES TO THE JAWBONE

(St. Marys, OH) – You would think that after surviving cancer, having a tooth extracted would be as easy as a walk in the park. Yet people who undergo radiation therapy of the head or neck are more likely to be at risk for osteoradionecrosis (ORN), which is delayed bone damage caused by radiation therapy.

"The extraction of teeth in a previously radiated jaw accounts for nearly nine out of 10 cases of trauma induced mandibular radionecrosis," explains Scott Covington, MD, FACS, CHWS, Executive Vice President, Medical Affairs for Healogics™, the network of Wound Care Centers around the nation that treat the condition. "It seems counterintuitive when cancer survivors gauge success in the passage of time, yet there is greater risk of ORN years after radiation since the degenerative process is progressing beneath the surface without any outward sign."

The Grand Lake Wound Care Center, a member of the Healogics network, uses leading edge hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBO) to treat ORN. Unlike the tedium of sitting in a dentist's chair, patients watch movies during treatment while relaxing on a bed incased in a large see-through plastic shell as they are surrounded by 100 percent oxygen at higher-than-normal atmospheric pressure. The therapy enables oxygen molecules to pass through the plasma to the tissue more easily and speed healing.

"Microorganisms begin to impact the surface of irradiated bone in the mouth placing patients at risk," Covington says. "This makes ORN a matter of wound healing rather than infection and these problematic wounds do not require the same type of topical management."

Patients with ORN can experience pain, difficulty opening the mouth, exposed and or damaged bone, drainage and swelling.

The local experts at The Grand Lake Wound Care Center recommend the following for preventing, identifying and treating ORN:

- Patients considering radiation therapy of the head or neck should consider a pre-radiation dental consultation with a specialist to optimize oral health.
- ORN risk factors include inadequate healing time between undergoing oral surgery and starting radiation therapy, extractions within irradiated bone, alcohol and tobacco use and nutritional factors.
- Quit smoking. The risk of ORN increases in patients who smoke at the time of radiation treatment.
- The most common symptom of ORN is bone pain. Hyperbaric oxygen therapy can help in pain management if the pain is due to ORN and not recurring cancer or other causes.
- Because organisms thrive in a compromised oral environment leading to infections, oral hygiene is imperative and thus a prescribed mouthwash should be used regularly.
- As with any medical condition, patients with ORN should see their physician and dentist on a regular basis.

For more information about ORN and treating and preventing chronic wounds, contact the Grand Lake Wound Center located at Joint Township District Memorial Hospital, an affiliate of Grand Lake Health System or call Holly Jacomet at (419)-394-9512.