



Press Release
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Castro County Healthcare Kicks Off New Monthly Screening Program with a Focus on Thyroid Health

The local healthcare system is offering low-cost thyroid screenings on Jan. 17 and 24 at Plains Memorial Hospital.

DIMMITT, Texas (Jan. 8, 2024) – Castro County Healthcare (CCH) is kicking off the New Year with a monthly screening program to raise awareness of important health issues while offering the community a low-cost screening option. For January, thyroid disorders are the focus, and the local healthcare system will be offering low-cost screenings on Jan. 17 and Jan. 24.

“The thyroid gland is indispensable for maintaining a balance in various physiological processes,” explains Kimberly Smith, MD at CCH. “While small, its significance in overall health and well-being cannot be understated.”

The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland situated at the front of the neck. This essential component of the endocrine system produces hormones, primarily triiodothyronine (T3) and thyroxine (T4), that play a crucial role in regulating the body's metabolism, growth, and development.

These hormones influence various physiological functions, including how cells convert nutrients into energy, heart rate, body temperature, and energy levels. The proper functioning of the thyroid is integral to overall health.

Hypothyroidism, characterized by an underactive thyroid, can lead to symptoms such as fatigue and weight gain, while hyperthyroidism, an overactive thyroid, may cause weight loss and increased heart rate. Other potential thyroid-related issues are Goiter, an enlargement of the thyroid gland, and thyroid nodules.

Beyond metabolic regulation, the thyroid's hormones are vital for the proper development of the brain and nervous system, particularly in infants and children.

Testing your thyroid gland is crucial for evaluating its function and detecting potential issues. Commonly performed through blood tests, it is prompted by symptoms like unexplained weight changes, fatigue, unexplained aches and pains in muscles and joints, changes in hair texture, difficulty in concentrating or feeling cold all the time or unable to tolerate heat.

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Routine screening, especially for high-risk groups, aids in early detection before symptoms appear. Regular testing is essential for individuals with known thyroid disorders or undergoing treatment to monitor hormone levels.

Pregnant women, individuals with known thyroid conditions, and those with thyroid nodules or unexplained cholesterol changes should also undergo thyroid testing.

“Screening for thyroid irregularities is vital for timely intervention and management, preventing potential health complications associated with untreated thyroid disorders,” Dr. Smith adds. “Like other health-related conditions, staying on top of your health with your primary medical provider is critical.”

Low-cost thyroid testing is being held at Plains Memorial Hospital Clinical Laboratory on Jan. 17 and Jan. 24, 2024. Testing hours are 7 a.m. until 10 a.m. each day. A \$35 fee applies and covers the lab work. Results will be sent to your primary care provider for reading and follow-up.

Individuals interested in participating can sign up at the front desk of Plains Memorial Hospital (310 W. Halsell St.) before or on testing dates. For more information, you can call the hospital at 806-647-2191.

The January testing program is part of the CCH Monthly Screening Program, which highlights essential health and wellness topics throughout the month and offers either a free or low-cost screening option based on the topic.

For more information about local healthcare programs and services or to find a local medical provider, please visit www.plainsmemorial.com.

About Castro County Healthcare

Founded in 1953, Castro County Healthcare provides healthcare for residents of Castro County, Texas, and the surrounding region. Anchored by Plains Memorial Hospital, the healthcare system offers many medical services, including 24-hour emergency care, advanced radiology services, including CT scanning and MRIs, outpatient lab, physical and occupational therapy, surgical services, swing bed services, patient education, and more. For additional information, please visit www.plainsmemorial.com.

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