



Press Release
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Controlling Cholesterol Imperative to Heart Health

Castro County Healthcare to offer low-cost cholesterol screening on Feb. 13 at Plains Memorial Hospital.

DIMMITT, Texas (Feb. 5, 2024) – February kicks off American Heart Month, a time when all people—especially women—are encouraged to focus on their cardiovascular health. For Castro County Healthcare (CCH), now is an opportune time to discuss the everyday dangers of high cholesterol.

“Having high cholesterol puts anyone at a high risk of complications such as heart disease, making it a dangerous condition,” explains Kimberly Smith, MD in Dimmitt. “It is crucial to understand what cholesterol is, what causes it, and how to control your levels to maintain good health.”

An estimated 94 million Americans are with high cholesterol, according to statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Cholesterol is a waxy substance that your body produces and helps your cardiovascular system function. There are two types of cholesterol: high-density lipoprotein (HDL) and low-density lipoprotein (LDL). However, too much LDL cholesterol can build up in your arteries, forming plaque and raising the risk of serious cardiovascular issues, including heart attack and stroke.

Prescription medications ordered by a healthcare provider can help individuals with especially high cholesterol. Still, changes in nutrition and lifestyle are critical for anyone who has or is at high risk of experiencing high cholesterol.

“Prevention is crucial, and it is easier than you think to manage your cholesterol levels,” says Smith. “With just a few key changes in your life, each can greatly impact your overall wellness.”

Start with Diet and Nutrition

Regarding food and dieting, items high in saturated fats can contribute to high cholesterol and increase the risk of heart disease. Foods such as certain meats, cheese, and other dairy products can contain high levels of fats that can affect cholesterol, so limiting the amount you ingest is critical to reducing harmful cholesterol levels.

Foods high in fiber, such as whole grains and beans, and foods containing healthy fats, such as avocados and nuts, can help manage cholesterol levels while contributing to a healthy and balanced diet.

Find Time to Exercise

Exercise has been shown to reduce cholesterol levels while helping to control your weight. According to

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the CDC, adults should aim for at least two and a half hours of moderate intensity exercise each week. Forms of exercise can include cycling, running, or brisk walking.

Stop Smoking

Studies have shown a link between smoking and cholesterol levels. Smoking can also damage your arteries, increasing the risk of plaque buildup. It can also contribute to high blood pressure.

Understanding your cholesterol levels is important in managing your heart disease risk. It is recommended that adults ages 20 and older should have their cholesterol levels checked every five years.

According to Smith, cholesterol checks are a routine component of a yearly wellness exam at the Medical Center of Dimmitt, a local health clinic and a service of CCH.

Low-cost cholesterol testing is being held at Plains Memorial Hospital Clinical Laboratory on Feb. 13, 2024. Testing hours are 7 a.m. until 10 a.m. 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 in the low-cost cholesterol screening can sign up at the front desk of Plains Memorial Hospital (310 W. Halsell St.) before or on the testing date. For more information, you can call the hospital at 806-647-2191.

It is important to note that fasting is required at least eight to 12 hours before cholesterol screening.

The February cholesterol screening is part of the CCH Monthly Screening Program, which kicked off in January. The new program is designed to highlight essential health and wellness topics each month and offer either free or low-cost screening options 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 1963, 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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