



Press Release
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March is National Kidney Awareness Month

Castro County Healthcare stresses the importance of screening, treatment, and prevention.

DIMMITT, Texas (March 18, 2024) – March is National Kidney Awareness Month, and Castro County Healthcare (CCH) is leveraging the occasion to shed light on a condition that silently affects millions of Americans. The local healthcare system emphasizes recognizing early signs, preventative measures, and timely treatment to safeguard kidney health.

According to the National Kidney Foundation, more than 37 million American adults are living with kidney disease. Often, many individuals are unaware of their condition until the disease has advanced to late stages.

"Kidneys play a pivotal role in maintaining overall health, filtering blood, balancing essential components, and eliminating waste," says Dr. Michael Ruggiero, DO, at the Medical Center of Dimmitt, a service of Castro County Health. "It's concerning that many individuals overlook symptoms or attribute them to other conditions, risking irreversible damage."

Kidneys are responsible for critical body functions like regulating blood pressure, producing red blood cells, and maintaining electrolyte balance. However, kidney disease can silently progress, often unnoticed until significant damage has occurred.

"This is why awareness and proactive management are key," Dr. Mike affirms. "Education is paramount when it comes to kidney health. We must empower individuals with knowledge about risk factors, signs of kidney disease, and the importance of routine screenings."

Early detection can significantly impact outcomes, slowing disease progression and preserving kidney function. However, many individuals may not recognize the signs of kidney disease until it's too late.

Common symptoms of kidney issues often include fatigue, difficulty sleeping, dry and itchy skin, increased urination frequency, blood or foamy appearance in urine, persistent puffiness around eyes, swelling in ankles and feet, poor appetite, and muscle cramping.

When a person's kidneys fail, or their kidney function significantly declines, they may experience fatigue, nausea, swelling, and imbalances in waste products or electrolytes. Dialysis is a treatment option that helps in such cases. The decision to start dialysis is based on several factors, including laboratory results, overall health, and symptoms.

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Dr. Mike says that certain risk factors heighten the likelihood of developing kidney disease. Age over 60, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, and a family history of kidney disease are among the primary risk factors. However, proactive lifestyle modifications can mitigate these risks.

"It's important to maintain a healthy lifestyle," says Dr. Mike. "That means exercising regularly, eating a balanced diet low in sodium and processed foods, managing blood pressure and blood sugar levels, avoiding smoking, and staying hydrated."

Routine screenings are also essential in identifying kidney disease early. Tests such as glomerular filtration rate (GFR) and albumin-to-creatinine ratio (ACR) are simple blood tests that can provide valuable insights into kidney function. Individuals, especially those at higher risk, should prioritize regular screenings.

"Taking control of your health begins with you," says Dr. Mike. "That means taking proactive measures like scheduling regular check-ups and screenings, particularly if you are at risk for certain conditions like kidney disease."

The Medical Center of Dimmitt offers various services promoting kidney health, including screenings, consultations, and personalized treatment plans. Individuals are urged to reach out to schedule an appointment or seek further information.

For additional information or to schedule an appointment, please get in touch with the Medical Center of Dimmitt at 806-647-2194.

About Castro County Healthcare

Founded in 1963, Castro County Healthcare provides healthcare for Castro County, Texas residents 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, swing bed services, patient education, and more. For additional information, please visit www.plainsmemorial.com.

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