



**Press Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Education and Wellness Help Prevent Stroke and Cardiovascular Disease**

*September is National Cholesterol Education Month.*

KNOX CITY, Texas (Sept. 4, 2020) – While COVID-19 continues to remain top of mind for us all, and with good reason, we must not forget about other health dangers that pose a threat to millions of Americans. September is National Cholesterol Education Month and Knox County Hospital District urges the community to take a moment to learn more about how controlling your cholesterol level can prevent the onset of dangerous health conditions and diseases.

Increased cholesterol levels contribute to various cardiovascular conditions, including heart disease and stroke – two of the top five causes death in the United States. Although the number of Americans who die from these conditions has fallen over the past five decades, much work remains to educate each other of the dangers of high cholesterol.

“Like many health topics, we must always talk about the dangers of cholesterol and how small lifestyle changes can have a big impact on your health,” says Laura Hart, MD, Board Certified in Family Practice Medicine, at the Knox City and Munday Clinics. “A great starting point is talking with your medical provider about cholesterol screening.”

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance that your body needs to function. It circulates through your arteries. There are two types of cholesterol: high-density lipoprotein (HDL) and low-density lipoprotein (LDL).

HDL is a “good type” that circulates through the bloodstream, helping to remove bad cholesterol. LDL is the “bad type,” which physicians typically refer to when discussing cholesterol levels. When LDL levels increase, this fat-like substance builds along the walls of the arteries. When large mounds build, blood clots can occur, causing several health conditions, including stroke.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 55 percent of adults in the U.S. who need medication to lower their cholesterol are taking it. That means the other 45 percent of Adults with high cholesterol could be in danger of cardiovascular illnesses.

The clinical laboratory at Knox County Hospital can provide cholesterol screening. A lipid/cholesterol test panel, which is commonly ordered by physicians, measures levels of total cholesterol, HDL and LDL, along with triglycerides.

For cholesterol screenings to be effective, patients should fast for up to 12 hours before having blood drawn for the lipid test panel.



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“Fasting helps the body regulate any foods previously consumed, thus providing a more accurate reading of the body’s normal cholesterol levels,” Dr. Hart explains. “Failure to fast before this screening could skew the data.”

Individuals age 20 and older have their cholesterol levels checked every four to six years as part of a cardiovascular risk assessment, according to the American Heart Association. Those with elevated risks may be asked by their medical providers to be screened more often.

Individuals with high cholesterol levels should make important lifestyle changes to lower their risks of developing cardiovascular complications. Lifestyle changes typically recommended by physicians include a change in diet and increased physical activity.

The good news is cholesterol levels can be controlled with well-balanced diets that exclude saturated and trans fats. Diets that include “good fats,” such as polyunsaturated fats, can help lower blood cholesterol levels.

According to Dr. Hart, increasing daily exercise can help lower cholesterol levels. Adults who engage in moderate-intensity exercise for at least 2.5 hours each week are shown to have a greater likelihood of lowering their cholesterol levels.

For individuals with severe cases of high cholesterol, a medical provider may order additional tests and recommend medication to help lower cholesterol levels. The clinical laboratory at Knox County Hospital is equipped to perform comprehensive medical screenings.

“We are fortunate to have a clinical laboratory right here in Knox County capable of performing comprehensive screenings,” Dr. Hart says. “With the capability to perform many screenings in-house, the hospital’s lab is very convenient. Plus, since insurance policies cover most of the fees, your medical provider might also recommend other lab work as part of an overall health exam.”

Education about cholesterol is key. Individuals are encouraged to do their research and talk with their primary medical providers about cholesterol and their risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

If you or a loved one is concerned about cholesterol and cardiovascular conditions, please call Knox City Clinic at 940-657-3906 or the Munday Clinic at 940-422-5271.

**MORE**



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#### **About Knox County Hospital District**

Founded in 1926, Knox County Hospital District provides healthcare for residents of Knox County and surrounding areas. The district offers a wealth of medical services, including 24-hour emergency care, advanced radiology services, a clinical laboratory, home health, physical therapy, long-term care, patient education, and more. For additional information, please call 940-657-3535 or visit [www.knoxhospital.org](http://www.knoxhospital.org).

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