



Press Release
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KCHD Encourages Heart Health in Recognition Heart Month

Tips for Prevention and a Healthy Heart.

KNOX CITY, Texas (Jan 31, 2025) – February is American Heart Month, a time to highlight heart disease, the leading cause of death in the U.S. Knox County Hospital District (KCHD) is committed to raising awareness about cardiovascular health, emphasizing prevention, risk factors, and the importance of early intervention for those at risk of heart disease.

Heart disease claims approximately 700,000 lives annually, making proactive management essential. According to the Texas Department of State Health Services, heart disease accounts for nearly 23% of all deaths in Texas. "People often overlook their heart health until a major event occurs," said Chris Scott, FNP at the Munday Clinic, a service of Knox County Hospital District, offers valuable insights and practical advice on maintaining a healthy heart.

Maintaining heart health requires a proactive approach, and regular health screenings play a crucial role in early detection and prevention. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, obesity, and a sedentary lifestyle are all major risk factors for heart disease. Scott emphasizes the importance of scheduling routine check-ups with a healthcare provider. "Heart screenings, blood pressure checks, and cholesterol monitoring should be routine," Scott said. "Knowing your numbers helps you make informed decisions about your health and take control before problems arise."

A heart-healthy lifestyle includes balanced nutrition, regular physical activity, and stress management. Studies show that even moderate exercise, such as walking 30 minutes a day, can significantly reduce the risk of heart disease. Making small, sustainable changes to daily habits can lead to lasting improvements in heart health. Reducing sodium intake, avoiding processed foods, and incorporating heart-friendly foods like leafy greens, nuts, and fish can help lower cholesterol and blood pressure.

Stress, lack of sleep, and dehydration can also contribute to cardiovascular disease. Practicing mindfulness techniques such as yoga, meditation, or deep breathing exercises can improve heart health. "Reducing stress and maintaining mental well-being is just as important as physical fitness when it comes to heart health," said Scott. "Many people don't realize that chronic stress can raise blood pressure and lead to long-term complications."

KCHD provides heart health screenings, wellness classes, and educational workshops periodically. By engaging with the community, KCHD aims to create a culture of heart-conscious living and preventive care. Education and awareness are key in reducing heart disease rates, and community involvement is an essential part of this effort. "It's never too early to learn about your risks and make necessary changes in your lifestyle," Scott emphasized. "A thorough physical exam,

MORE

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Heart Month, Page 2

including an assessment of weight, blood pressure, and cardiovascular fitness, can help identify potential complications early."

If a patient is found to be at high risk for heart disease, their medical provider can supply them with the tools needed to fight back. This may include prescribed medication, a medically directed diet, and an exercise program designed to improve overall health. Lifestyle changes such as quitting smoking and reducing alcohol consumption can also have a significant impact on heart health.

Heart disease does not only affect older adults. It is becoming increasingly common in younger populations due to poor diet, lack of exercise, and high stress levels. "We encourage individuals of all ages to take charge of their heart health," Scott said. "Preventing heart disease starts with small, everyday choices that build up over time."

The importance of getting regular sleep cannot be overstated. Sleep deprivation has been linked to an increased risk of hypertension, obesity, and diabetes, all of which can contribute to heart disease. Practicing good sleep hygiene, such as maintaining a regular sleep schedule, avoiding screens before bed, and creating a relaxing bedtime routine, can help improve sleep quality and overall heart health.

For those who have a family history of heart disease, early intervention is even more critical. Genetic factors can increase an individual's risk, making it all the more important to maintain a heart-healthy lifestyle and undergo regular screenings. "If you have a family history of heart disease, it's essential to discuss it with your healthcare provider and take steps to mitigate your risk," Scott advised.

Knox County Hospital District recommends community members schedule their annual wellness exams at the Knox City Clinic or Munday Clinic. By proactively engaging in preventative healthcare measures, individuals can play an active role in preserving their heart health and overall wellness.

For more information on heart disease and to understand your risks, please speak with your primary care provider at Knox City Clinic at 940-657-3906 or the Munday Clinic 940-422-5271.

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.

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