

**Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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March is Colon Cancer Awareness Month*Get Screened and Protect Your Health*

KNOX CITY, Texas (Feb 28, 2025) – Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States, yet it is one of the most preventable and treatable forms of cancer when detected early. During March, recognized as Colon Cancer Awareness Month, Knox County Hospital District urges residents to take charge of their health by scheduling a colon cancer screening with their local healthcare provider at Knox City Clinic or Munday Clinic.

“Early detection saves lives,” said Christ Scott-FNP of the Munday Clinic, a service of Knox County Hospital District. “When colon cancer is found at an early stage, the survival rate is significantly higher. Routine screenings can catch precancerous polyps before they develop into cancer, allowing for early treatment and better outcomes.”

Why Colon Cancer Screenings Matter

Colon cancer affects both men and women, and the risk increases with age. The American Cancer Society recommends that adults begin regular screenings at age 45, though those with a family history of colon cancer or other risk factors may need to start earlier.

Screening options include:

- Stool-based tests – Less invasive options that detect hidden blood or abnormal DNA in a sample.
- Colonoscopy – The gold standard for detection, allowing doctors to find and remove precancerous polyps. Local providers will refer to gastroenterologist for this screening as well as the following two tests.
- CT colonography (virtual colonoscopy) – A non-invasive imaging test to look for abnormalities.
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy – A test that examines the lower part of the colon and rectum.

“Many people put off screenings because they feel fine, but colon cancer often doesn’t present symptoms until it’s in a more advanced stage,” Scott added. “That’s why proactive screening is so critical—it can save lives.”

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Know the Risk Factors and Symptoms

While anyone can develop colon cancer, certain factors may increase the risk, including a personal or family history of colorectal cancer or polyps, a diet high in red or processed meats and low in fiber, lack of physical activity, smoking, heavy alcohol use, obesity, type 2 diabetes, and chronic inflammatory conditions such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis. Aging is also a factor, as most cases occur in individuals over 50, though rates are rising in younger populations.

In addition to these risk factors, individuals should be aware of potential warning signs. Some of the most common symptoms include persistent changes in bowel habits, such as diarrhea or constipation, rectal bleeding or blood in the stool, abdominal discomfort, cramps, bloating, unexplained weight loss, fatigue, and weakness. Because these symptoms can sometimes be mistaken for less serious conditions, it is essential to consult a healthcare provider if they persist.

"Understanding your risk factors and knowing the symptoms of colon cancer are important, but the best way to protect yourself is through regular screenings," said Scott. "Even if you don't have symptoms, getting screened could catch cancer early when treatment is most effective."

Where to Get Screened

Knox County Hospital District encourages residents to schedule an appointment with their healthcare practitioner at either Knox City Clinic or Munday Clinic. Providers will assess individual risk factors and recommend the most appropriate screening method.

Many insurance providers cover colon cancer screenings as part of preventive care, making it easier for patients to access these life-saving tests. For those without insurance, financial assistance programs may be available to ensure screenings remain accessible to all.

"Taking the step to schedule a screening is one of the best decisions you can make for your long-term health," said Scott. "Our team is here to provide guidance, answer questions, and ensure you receive the care you need."

Take Action This March

Colon Cancer Awareness Month is a time to raise awareness and encourage preventive care. If you're 45 or older, or have risk factors for colon cancer, don't delay—schedule your screening today. By taking proactive steps, you can protect your health and ensure early detection if needed.

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Beyond scheduling a screening, residents can take additional steps to reduce their risk of colon cancer. Maintaining a diet rich in fiber, fruits, and vegetables, exercising regularly, avoiding tobacco and excessive alcohol use, and maintaining a healthy weight all contribute to overall colon health.

For more information or to make an appointment, contact Knox City Clinic at 940-657-3906 or Munday Clinic at 940-422-5271. Together, we can reduce the impact of colon cancer in our community.

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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