



Harris County Hospital District

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MEDIA RELEASE

Hospital District Offers Free Cholesterol Screenings

HOUSTON (Sept. 5, 2006) –Ignoring your cholesterol levels could put you at risk for heart disease later in life.

September is National Cholesterol Education Month, and experts at the Harris County Hospital District want to remind the public to have their levels checked.

“High blood cholesterol is a major risk factor for coronary heart disease and stroke,” said Latecia Murphy, senior health educator. “That’s why it’s important for all people to know their cholesterol levels.”

The hospital district will be offering free cholesterol screenings to the first 25 people at the following locations:

- Thursday, Sept. 7, Settegast Health Center, 9105 North Wayside, 10 a.m. – 11 a.m.
- Wednesday, Sept. 13, Gulfgate Health Center, 7550 Office City Drive, 10 a.m. – 11 a.m.
- Friday, Sept. 15, Baytown Health Center, 1602 Garth Rd., 10 a.m. – 11 a.m.
- Monday, Sept. 18, Northwest Health Center, 1100 W. 34th St., 11 a.m. – noon
- Tuesday, Sept. 19, Martin Luther King Health Center, 3601 North MacGregor, 11 a.m. – noon
- Tuesday, Sept. 19, People’s Health Center, 6630 De Moss, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- Thursday, Sept. 28, Aldine Health Center, 4755 Aldine Mail Route, 11 a.m. – noon

Cholesterol is a waxy substance that can be found in all parts of the body. We need cholesterol to function properly, but only a small amount of cholesterol meets our bodies’ needs. When the body has too much cholesterol, health problems such as coronary heart disease may develop.

There are two types of cholesterol – LDL and HDL. LDL (low-density lipoprotein) is the “bad” cholesterol. If there is too much LDL, it can slowly build up in the walls of the arteries. A high level of LDL (160 mg/dL and above) can increase the risk of heart disease. Ideally, LDL is 100 mg/dL or less.

HDL (high-density lipoprotein) is the “good” cholesterol. This type of cholesterol protects against heart disease. Ideal HDL is 60 mg/dL and above. A low HDL level, less than 40 mg/dL in men and less than 50 mg/dL in women, is a risk factor of heart disease.

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According to the American Heart Association, nearly 100 million American adults have total blood cholesterol values of 200 mg/dL and higher, which is borderline high. Another 34.5 million American adults have levels of 240 or above, which is considered high.

“Cholesterol can be reduced through lifestyle changes such as diet, physical activity and weight control, and some people may require cholesterol-reducing drugs, as well,” Murphy said. “Prevention is key.”

The Harris County Hospital District is the public health care system for the nation’s third most populous county. It provides more than 1.1 million health care visits each year to uninsured, underinsured and medically needy residents of Harris County. The Hospital District operates Ben Taub General Hospital, Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital, Quentin Mease Community Hospital, 12 community health centers, a dental center, eight school-based clinics, 13 homeless shelter clinics and four mobile health units.

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