

## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Why to Check Your Cholesterol Levels**

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) would like to remind residents of the importance of checking your cholesterol levels. Cholesterol is a waxy fat-like substance that flows through your bloodstream and is needed by your body. However, when there is too much cholesterol it can begin to build up on your artery walls. This build up can lead to heart disease which is one of the leading causes of death in southwest Nebraska, along with cancer.

### **Cholesterol Facts**

- One in six adults have high cholesterol.
- High cholesterol itself does not show symptoms so many people are unaware that they have high cholesterol.
- Risk factors for high cholesterol include age, gender, and heredity (risks you cannot control).
- Other risk factors include unhealthy diet, being overweight, and not enough physical activity (risk factors you can control).
- Diagnosing high cholesterol is a simple blood test and most adults should have their cholesterol checked at least every 5 years.

“It’s important to have regular visits with your doctor and ask about cholesterol testing and your risks for high cholesterol and heart disease,” states Maria Beasley, Program Manager with SWNPHD. “Along with preventive testing, there are several steps you can take to prevent or lower high cholesterol.”

### **Prevent Heart Disease from High Cholesterol**

- Eat a healthy diet low in saturated fat.
- Maintain a healthy weight. Losing weight can help lower your overall cholesterol numbers and reduce your risk of heart disease and other chronic illnesses.
- Exercise regularly. Try to be active for 150 minutes (2 ½ hours) each week.
- Don’t smoke. Talk to your doctor if you need help to stop smoking.

Cholesterol testing is available at SWNPHD in McCook and most local medical providers. SWNPHD also has a program called Target Your Health that will conduct cholesterol and glucose checks at businesses and worksites, along with education about preventing chronic disease. To learn more about preventive testing at your workplace, contact Maria Beasley at 308-345-4223.

Visit [swhealth.ne.gov](http://swhealth.ne.gov) for information. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th St (1 block north of Arby’s) in McCook and can be reached by calling 308-345-4223.

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