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| **Press Release****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | Tim Jones | tim.jones@heartoftexashealthcare.org325-597-2901 |

**Lifestyle Choices Help Prevent High Cholesterol**

*Controlling cholesterol is key to managing heart health.*

BRADY, Texas (Sept. 08, 2020) – High cholesterol raises the risk of heart disease, heart attack and stroke. The good news is that everyday steps can help lower your cholesterol. Doing so can is a key part of managing your cardiovascular health.

“Changing your behavior can often have a big effect on your cholesterol level,” Dr. Stephen Douglas Bell, Family Medicine physician at Brady Medical Clinic, a service of Heart of Texas Healthcare System. “Your healthcare provider can help guide you as you take steps to take control of your heart’s health.”

Cholesterol is a waxy substance that your body produces and helps your cardiovascular system to function. There are two types of cholesterol: high-density lipoprotein (HDL) and low-density lipoprotein (LDL). However, too much LDL cholesterol can build up in your arteries, forming plaque and raising the risk of serious cardiovascular issues, including heart attack and stroke.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an estimated 95 million Americans are with high cholesterol. Consulting with your healthcare provider and making certain lifestyle changes can help you lower yours.

Dr. Bell added that certain prescription medications ordered by a physician can also help individuals with especially high cholesterol, but changes in nutrition and lifestyle can go a long way.

**Choose Nutrition**

Eating foods that are high in saturated fats can contribute to high cholesterol and increase the risk of heart disease. Foods such certain meats, cheese and other dairy products can contain high levels of fats that can affect cholesterol.

Choosing foods that are high in fiber, such as whole grains, beans, and foods that contain healthy fats such as avocados and nuts can help manage cholesterol levels.

**Try More Physical Exercise**

Physical activity can help you manage your cholesterol level and control your weight. The CDC recommends 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise each week. Exercise can take the form of cycling, running, or brisk walking.

**MORE**

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**Page 2**

Excess weight can increase levels of LDL cholesterol. The excess weight can affect how your body regulates cholesterol in your body.

**Quit Smoking**

Studies have shown a link between smoking and cholesterol levels. Smoking can also damage your arteries, increasing the risk of a buildup of plaque. It can also contribute to high blood pressure.

“Quitting smoking is one of the most important ways that you can reduce your risk of heart disease,” Dr. Bell said. “Smoking greatly increases your risk of heart attack and stroke. Kicking the habit can greatly improve your health.”

Finding out your cholesterol level is an important step in managing your risk of heart disease. It is recommended that adults ages 20 and older should have their cholesterol levels checked every five years. According to Dr. Bell, cholesterol checks are a routine component of a yearly wellness exam at Brady Medical Clinic. However, many people have chosen to delay routine healthcare services due to fear of COVID-19. Doing so can put your health at risk.

“Don’t delay the healthcare services you need to take charge of your heart’s health,” Dr. Bell said. “Now is an important time to focus on your health and wellness.”

In Brady, Brady Medical Clinic is a convenient choice for primary healthcare services, including wellness exams, cholesterol checks and much more.

To learn more about healthcare services or to schedule an appointment at Brady Medical Clinic, call 325-597-2114.

**About Heart of Texas Healthcare System**Heart of Texas Healthcare System provides healthcare for residents of McCulloch County and the surrounding area. Founded in 2011, the system offers a wealth of medical services, including 24-hour emergency care, advanced radiology services, a clinical laboratory, dialysis services, physical therapy, surgical services, patient education, sleep studies, and more. The system also owns and operates Brady Medical Clinic, which provides family medicine, preventive care, and acute care for minor emergencies. For additional information, please visit www.heartoftexashealthcare.org.

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