



**Reeves County**  
Hospital District

**Press Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Staying on Top of Cholesterol Is Even More Important During Covid Pandemic**

*RCHD urges regular cholesterol checks to take control of cardiovascular health.*

PECOS, Texas (**Sept 13, 2021**) – Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in Texas and across the nation. And, important to note during these days of increasing numbers of Covid cases in Texas and nationally due to the Delta variant, infection with the Covid-19 virus heightens the possibility of having a heart attack or stroke.

‘Controlling your cholesterol is one of the most important ways to stay on top of your heart’s health and reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease, heart attack or stroke, said Orville Cerna, MD, Internal Medicine physician at Pecos Valley Rural Health Clinic, a service of Reeves County Hospital District. . “Getting the Covid-19 vaccination is another important step to protecting yourself, your health and the health of those around you!”

September is National Cholesterol Education Month. Reeves County Hospital District (RCHD) is urging the community to learn more about how to manage cholesterol and to consider regular cholesterol checks with a primary care provider.

“If you know your cholesterol levels, it can help you make important decisions about your diet and lifestyle to either maintain your good health or change habits that are more conducive to lowering cholesterol levels,” said Dr. Cerna. “Prevention continues to be the best medication.” In the wake of rising Covid-19 infections caused by the Delta variant, He points out that the virus is more likely to cause an inflammatory reaction that could lead to injured blood vessels, massive blood-clotting throughout the body leading to a greater likelihood of experiencing a heart attack or stroke. People with comorbidities like heart disease have always been more at risk for the Covid-19 virus. That concern has increased with the onset of the Delta-variant.

According to the American Heart Association, about one in three American adults, or about 92 million people, are living with some form of cardiovascular disease or the after-effects of stroke. Heart disease is responsible for the deaths of approximately 800,000 people across the nation each year. Two important indicators of your risk of heart disease are blood pressure and cholesterol levels. In order to function properly, the body needs the fat-like substance called cholesterol. It circulates through your arteries. However, an excess of “the bad” type of cholesterol can significantly raise your risk of heart-related illness.



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The two diet and types of cholesterol are: high-density lipoprotein (HDL) and low-density lipoprotein (LDL). HDL is often referred to as the “good type” that circulates through the bloodstream, helping to remove bad cholesterol. LDL is known as the “bad type,” which physicians typically refer to when discussing cholesterol levels. This fat-like substance can build along the walls of the arteries, forming plaque that can cause blood clots and lead to a number of life-threatening events such as stroke.

High cholesterol affects more than 100 million Americans, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Moreover, an estimated one in three adults has high blood pressure. Controlling these conditions can help reduce the risk of heart disease, heart attack and stroke.

Important lifestyle changes can help bring cholesterol under control. Lifestyle changes typically recommended by physicians include a change in diet and increased physical activity. Well-balanced diets that include more fresh fruits, colorful vegetables and leafy greens and exclude saturated and trans fats like red meats and fast food can help lower blood cholesterol levels. In addition to important lifestyle changes, healthcare providers can recommend certain medications for those with especially high cholesterol levels.

“Lifestyle changes are key to managing cholesterol,” Dr. Cerna said. “While medications can also make a difference, talking with your primary care provider about your cholesterol level and goals can help you make the choices you need to stay heart healthy.”

Cholesterol levels can be measured through a simple blood test, which is available in the community through Reeves County Hospital District. These tests are often recommended as part of a routine wellness exam. To learn more about local healthcare services or to schedule an appointment at the Pecos Valley Rural Health Clinic, please call 432-447-0565.

### **About Reeves County Hospital District**

Reeves County Hospital District (RCHD) provides healthcare services for people in Reeves County and neighboring communities in West Texas. Founded in 1954, RCHD, a Level IV Trauma Center, offers a wide variety of medical services, including emergency care, diagnostic radiology, physical therapy, general surgery, a clinical laboratory and more services. For more information, please visit [www.reevescountyhospital.com](http://www.reevescountyhospital.com).

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