



Press Release
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Media Contact
Venetta Seals | rchcares@rchd.care
432-447-3551 ext. 2243

Fuel Your Heart: Reeves Regional Health Highlights Nutrition and Exercise for Heart Month

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Can Support Long-Term Heart Health

PECOS, Texas (Feb 17, 2025) – February is Heart Month, and Reeves Regional Health is encouraging the community to take a proactive approach to cardiovascular wellness through nutrition and exercise. What we eat and how we move play a crucial role in heart health, and by making mindful dietary choices and incorporating regular physical activity, individuals can support their heart and overall well-being.

Dr. Abigail Darnell, Family Medicine/OB at Reeves Regional Rural Health Clinic, emphasizes the importance of a heart-conscious diet and an active lifestyle. “The food we consume and the way we move each day directly impact our heart’s ability to function efficiently. A diet rich in whole, unprocessed foods combined with regular exercise can significantly lower the risk of heart disease and improve overall health,” said Dr. Darnell. “Making small, sustainable changes to daily eating and activity habits can have a lasting positive effect.”

Building a Heart-Healthy Plate

Eating for heart health doesn’t have to be complicated. Reeves Regional Health encourages individuals to focus on incorporating a variety of nutrient-rich foods into their diet. Some key food groups include:

- **Fruits and Vegetables:** Colorful produce like berries, oranges, spinach, and bell peppers are loaded with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that support heart function.
- **Whole Grains:** Brown rice, quinoa, oats, and whole-wheat bread provide fiber, which can help lower cholesterol levels.
- **Lean Proteins:** Skinless poultry, fish, beans, and nuts offer protein without the saturated fats found in red meats. Fatty fish like salmon and trout are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which promote heart health.
- **Healthy Fats:** Avocados, nuts, seeds, and olive oil contain unsaturated fats that can help reduce bad cholesterol.
- **Low-Fat Dairy:** Opt for low-fat or fat-free yogurt and milk to maintain calcium intake without added saturated fat.

Conversely, limiting processed foods, sugary beverages, and excessive sodium can help maintain a strong heart. “Reducing the intake of added sugars, fried foods, and high-sodium snacks can decrease the risk of high blood pressure and heart disease,” Dr. Darnell added.

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The Role of Exercise in Heart Health

Physical activity is just as important as diet when it comes to heart health. Regular exercise strengthens the heart muscle, improves circulation, and helps manage weight. Reeves Regional Health recommends a combination of aerobic and strength-training exercises:

- **Aerobic Exercise:** Activities such as walking, running, swimming, and cycling get the heart pumping and improve cardiovascular endurance.
- **Strength Training:** Lifting weights, using resistance bands, or performing bodyweight exercises like squats and push-ups help build muscle, which in turn supports heart health.
- **Flexibility and Balance:** Yoga and stretching exercises enhance mobility, reduce stress, and support overall fitness.

Dr. Darnell encourages individuals to find an activity they enjoy and make it a regular part of their routine. “Even small amounts of movement throughout the day can make a big difference. Taking the stairs, parking farther from the store, or incorporating short walks into your daily schedule all contribute to a healthier heart,” said Dr. Darnell.

Prevention is Key

Heart disease remains one of the leading causes of death, but many risk factors can be controlled with lifestyle changes. In addition to eating well and staying active, other preventive measures include:

- **Managing Stress:** Chronic stress can negatively impact heart health. Practicing relaxation techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, or spending time in nature can help reduce stress levels.
- **Getting Enough Sleep:** Poor sleep is linked to an increased risk of high blood pressure and heart disease. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night.
- **Avoiding Smoking and Excessive Alcohol Consumption:** Smoking and heavy drinking can harm heart health. Quitting smoking and moderating alcohol intake can lower heart disease risk.

Take Charge of Your Heart Health

In addition to dietary changes and exercise, regular medical check-ups are key to heart disease prevention. Reeves Regional Health encourages individuals to schedule an annual wellness exam at Reeves Regional Rural Health Clinic. “By working with a healthcare provider, you can identify risk factors and create a personalized plan for heart health,” Dr. Darnell stated.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call Reeves Regional Rural Health Clinic at 432-447-0565.



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About Reeves Regional Health

Reeves Regional Health (RRH), formally known as Reeves County Hospital District, provides healthcare services for Reeves County and neighboring West Texas communities. Founded in 1954, RRH, a Level IV Trauma Center, offers various medical services, including emergency care, diagnostic imaging, physical therapy, general surgery, a clinical laboratory, and more. RRH also operates Reeves Regional Home Health and Hospice, and Reeves Regional Rural Health Clinic. In November 2022, RRH began serving patients from a new \$115 million, 140,000-square-foot campus. For more information, please visit www.reevesregional.com.

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2349 Medical Drive. | Pecos, TX 79772 | 432-447-3551 | www.reevesregional.com