



CHCHD News

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department

<http://health.hamiltontn.org>

For more information, contact:
Public Information
(423) 209-8238 or (423) 315-3987

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May is High Blood Pressure Education and Stroke Awareness Month

Chattanooga, TN- Could you fall victim to the silent killer? High blood pressure typically has no signs or symptoms. In Hamilton County, more than one in every three adults (37%) has high blood pressure, and stroke is the 4th leading cause of death.

“It’s important for residents to know that high blood pressure is preventable and treatable if you are aware that it is above normal,” states Jill Heine, Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Educator at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department. “Getting your blood pressure checked regularly is one of the most important preventive health measures we can do as adults.”

High blood pressure is classified as a blood pressure reading of 140/90 mmHg and higher. Having high blood pressure increases the risk for heart disease, which could cause heart failure or heart attack. High blood pressure can also lead to bursting or blocking of blood vessels to the brain causing a stroke. With May being National High Blood Pressure Education Month, it is important to emphasize regular preventive health check-ups as well as to promote lifestyle behaviors that encourage good health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that because blood pressure tends to rise as people get older, everyone’s risk for high blood pressure increases with age. With preventive measures such as decreasing the amount of sodium or salt consumed and increasing the amount of potassium consumed, blood pressure can be regulated. Shedding excess weight by being physically active can also aid in decreasing blood pressure, as well as stopping smoking and limiting alcohol intake.

“Many people are unaware that some of the same lifestyle risk factors that lead to high blood pressure can also lead to a stroke,” says Jill Heine.

May is also recognized as Stroke Awareness Month. According to the CDC, anyone can have a stroke, but certain behaviors and medical conditions can increase your chances. Fortunately, anyone can take steps to lower their risk.

If you think that someone may be having a stroke you can use this simple test from the National Stroke Association, called ACT FAST to determine signs and symptoms:

F= Face. Ask the person to smile. Does one side of their face droop?

A=Arm. Ask them to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S=Speech. Ask them to repeat a simple sentence. Are the words slurred? Can they repeat the sentence?

T=Time. If the person shows any of these symptoms, time is important. Call 911 or get to the hospital fast!

The Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Program at the Health Department strives to improve the cardiovascular health and quality of life for Hamilton County residents through education/awareness activities, screening and referrals, and prevention of recurrent cardiovascular events. For more information on High Blood Pressure Education Month or Stroke Awareness Month, please contact Jill Heine at the Health Department at 209-8246.

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