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SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS
COMMUNICATIONS

NEWS

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THE IMPORTANCE OF A HEALTHY BLOOD PRESSURE LEVEL

(Sedgwick County, Kansas) – Thirty-three percent of American adults have high blood pressure (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)). High blood pressure increases the chance for developing heart disease, stroke and other serious conditions. According to the National Vital Statistics Reports, heart disease was the leading cause of death in Sedgwick County and stroke was the fourth leading cause in 2007.

High blood pressure can develop at any age, even in children. Therefore, it is important for all persons to know his/her blood pressure level and check it regularly.

So what is blood pressure? It is the force of blood against the artery walls, often referred to as two numbers. The first number is the pressure when the heart contracts (systolic pressure), and the second number represents the pressure when the heart rests between beats (diastolic pressure).

- High blood pressure for adults occurs when the systolic blood pressure measures 140 or higher or the diastolic blood pressure is 90 or higher.
- Normal blood pressure occurs when systolic blood pressure is less than 120 and the diastolic blood pressure is less than 80.

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- Individuals with a blood pressure between 120 and 140 systolic and 80 and 90 diastolic are exhibiting Prehypertension. These individuals are at increased risk for developing high blood pressure.

The following suggestions can reduce your chances for high blood pressure or control existing blood pressure issues:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Be physically active
- Keep a healthy diet
- Control diabetes
- Avoid tobacco and excessive alcohol

Occasionally, high blood pressure must be controlled through medication. Consult your primary care provider to determine what actions are needed for you to maintain a healthy blood pressure level.

You should get your blood pressure checked at least once a year. If you do not have a medical home or way to get your blood pressure checked, the Sedgwick County Health Department can help. Blood pressure screenings can be done at the Health Department's West Central Clinic (2716 W Central) without an appointment for \$12. The mobile clinic also offers this service. Call 660-7300 for details regarding the mobile clinic schedule or visit www.sedgwickcounty.org/healthdept/healthaccess.asp.

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