

Take Steps to Lower Cholesterol



Alexis Hill, D.O.

Many people may not know they have high cholesterol, putting them at greater risk for heart attacks and strokes.

During National Cholesterol Education Month in September, Salem Regional Medical Center (SRMC) is encouraging people to learn their cholesterol levels and take steps to prevent or reduce high cholesterol.

“Cholesterol is a fat-like substance found in the blood and certain foods like meat, eggs and dairy products,” explained Alexis Hill, D.O., an Internal Medicine physician affiliated with Salem Regional Medical Center and SRMC Primary Care-Lisbon. “Your body needs some cholesterol to function normally, but too much cholesterol can clog blood vessels and lead to serious health problems such as heart disease.”

Risk factors for high cholesterol include:

- Unhealthy diet
- Lack of physical activity
- Smoking
- Excess weight
- Family history of high cholesterol

“Since a person can have high cholesterol without symptoms, it’s important to have cholesterol levels checked regularly with a simple blood test,” Dr. Hill noted.

A cholesterol test checks levels of:

- **Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) or “bad” cholesterol**, which can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- **High-density lipoprotein (HDL) or “good” cholesterol**, which can reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- **Triglycerides**, a type of fat that stores energy. High triglycerides combined with elevated LDL or low HDL can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- **Total cholesterol**, the total amount of cholesterol in the blood.

The American Heart Association recommends that most adults get their cholesterol checked at least every 4-6 years. Those at greater risk for high cholesterol may need to have screenings more often.

“Depending on your cholesterol numbers, your doctor may advise that you make lifestyle changes or take cholesterol-lowering medication to help keep your cholesterol in a healthy range,” Dr. Hill said.

Tips for lowering cholesterol:

- Eat a healthy diet, limiting foods that are high in saturated or trans fats
- Stay physically active
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Don’t smoke

Alexis Hill, D.O., Internal Medicine, sees patients ages 18 and older at SRMC Primary Care – Lisbon, located at 38506 Saltwell Road in Lisbon. Appointments with Dr. Hill can be scheduled by calling 330- 424-1404. She is affiliated with Salem Regional Medical Center’s medical staff.