

Happy New Year!

WE at the **Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados** would like to wish all the readers of **HSFB Pulse** a very happy new year.

We do hope that you have enjoyed reading the articles we have produced for you over the last 30 months courtesy of the very generous sponsorship of BHL.

This month we reproduce an article on stress which previously appeared in our

quarterly magazine, **Heartline**, back in 2007.

If you would like to receive copies of **Heartline** on a regular basis, please call: 437-3312 and ask to be added to the circulation list or email us at: enquiries@hsfbarbados.org with your name and address.

We are also happy to promote a campaign to be launched in Britain early next month:

National Salt Awareness Week.

We in **HSFB** will be participating in this campaign as it is becoming a worldwide event.

Please write to us at 3 Railway View, Ladymeade Gardens, Jemmotts Lane, St Michael, BB11156, or email us at enquiries@hsfbarbados.org with your comments on **HSFB Pulse**.

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WHEN YOU'RE LIVING with a coronary heart disease, keeping stress at bay is important for a healthy body and mind.

Work, relationships, family matters and finances are common causes of stress, and these aspects of our hectic lives rarely run smoothly all at the same time.

A certain level of stress is necessary to keep us motivated, but when faced with too much of it at once or for too long, stress can play havoc with our health.

We all experience stress in different ways, but common symptoms include: feeling tired and irritable; loss of appetite for food, fun and sex; eating too much or too little; disturbed sleep patterns and a loss of interest in other people and your own personal appearance.

Although stress is not one of the main risk factors for coronary heart disease, research evidence is beginning to recognise the fact that stress levels may contribute towards coronary heart disease in some people. Illness, such as coronary heart disease, can be stressful in itself, causing worry and anxiety about the future.

Get the balance right

You can take steps to break the cycle of stress. First, you need to identify your priorities and work out what really matters to you. It's important to identify the areas of your life that are causing you stress, then think about how to tackle each source of stress.

For example, if work is putting you under unreasonable strain, talk to your manager about how to manage your workload. Ask to go on a time management course or ask if someone could assist you in tackling a backlog of problems.

Or perhaps you need a break from work and it's time to book that long-overdue holiday. If you're having problems with a relationship or your family, don't ignore them – it will only make matters worse.

Focus on spending more time together on things that you really enjoy, talk about issues that worry you or you may want to consider counselling to work through more testy problems.

Change your ways

You may not always be able to change the source of stress, but you can change the way you respond to it. For example, if you commute to work and face traffic jams, there is nothing you can do. You can, however, manage your response to avoid rising stress levels. Remind yourself that you can't resolve the roadworks. Relaxation techniques and deep breathing exercises can work wonders, helping you to avoid feeling tense and angry.

Ways to beat the stress

Start to think positively, too. Try to break negative thought patterns – instead of thinking, "I'm useless" or, "I can't cope" when facing a stressful situation, tell yourself, "OK, so I can't do this today, but I can do that. . ." or, "I'll be able to cope better tomorrow if I have an early night and a good night's sleep." Change your lifestyle

How you live your life can help to reduce the effects of stress on your body. It's important to eat healthily, take regular exercise, and make time for rest and relaxation. You'll start to feel better about yourself, feel more in control and be better able to cope with stressful situations.

Stress busters

- **TAKE EXERCISE.**
30 minutes of moderate intensity activity five times a week will give you more energy and stamina, and a stronger, healthier body.
- **EAT HEALTHILY**
Avoid high calorie snacks and sweets. Eat regular meals, and at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.
- **STOP SMOKING**
If you smoke, commit to quit, and follow the steps faithfully to make it happen.
- **CUT DOWN ON ALCOHOL**
Limit alcohol to 21 units a week for men and 14 units for women.
- **JUST SAY NO**
Know your limitations, and avoid taking on too much.
- **SEEK SUPPORT**
Ask friends, colleagues or professional counsellors or support groups to help you with your problems.
- **RELAX**
Enjoy "you" time to destress and unwind.

• Adapted from *Coping With Stress*, by Lucy Ryan. British Heart Foundation

Salt and eating out

WORLD ACTION ON SALT AND HEALTH (WASH) will be holding its second annual **World Salt Awareness Week**, from February 2 to 8. Overall, the campaign is focusing on salt in food eaten out of the home. The aim is to raise awareness that foods in restaurants, canteens, takeaways, fast foods, street food, and so on can contain a lot of hidden salt.

It is planned to highlight to the catering industry and to chefs and others involved, the importance of adding less salt to food and the long-term health implications of eating a high salt diet. Consumers will be made aware that they must also take action in choosing lower salt foods and asking for much less salt to be added to their meals.

Consensus Action on Salt and Health (British division of World Action on Salt and Health) will be holding its 10th annual **Salt Awareness Week** shortly.

Last year, WASH launched its first **World Salt Awareness Week** from Monday, January 28 to Sunday, February 3, focusing on **Salt and Children**. Participation was good with at least 21 countries taking part in the event, a huge achievement for the first year. Activities ranged

from involvement with hypertension experts, representatives from the health and education ministries, consumers, the media and the food industry. **World Salt Awareness Week** received wide-ranging local, national and international media coverage.

NURSES WANTED

THE HEART & STROKE FOUNDATION of Barbados is presently looking to recruit suitably qualified persons for the position of part-time Rehab Nurse in its Cardiovascular Disease Prevention and Rehabilitation Department – "The Gym with a difference".

Applicants should be registered nurses with at least two years experience and training in Basic Life Support (BLS).

A formal letter of application along with curriculum vitae may be sent to:

THE ADMINISTRATION MANAGER

Heart & Stroke Foundation
#3 Railway View
Ladymeade Gardens
Jemmotts Lane
St Michael
BB 11156
Or by email to: enquiries@hsfbarbados.org

