

This page compliments

**BHL**

Banks Holdings Limited

# Obesity, the heart and diabetes

"HEART DISEASE is the leading cause of death across the population in Barbados.

"Almost 29 per cent of all deaths in Barbados are from heart disease, the contributing factors being lack of exercise, **obesity**, personality traits and stress".

Two very relevant quotes from Dr Richard Ishmael when he was delivering the 2004 **World Heart Day** lecture sponsored by the then Heart Foundation of Barbados.

Let us now look at **obesity and the heart** in more detail, particularly in relation to diabetes.

A balanced, better diet can have a big impact on your health – now and in the years to come. It can help reduce your risk of coronary heart disease as well as some cancers.

It can also stop you gaining weight, which is great news because being obese means a much higher risk of diabetes, arthritis and high blood pressure.

Along with stopping smoking and being more active, eating healthily really is one of the best opportunities you have to help keep disease at bay.

Eating a low-saturated-fat, low-cholesterol diet can help reduce your risk of diabetes, **obesity and heart** attack. Eating saturated fats and cholesterol raises the level of cholesterol in the blood, which speeds the development of atherosclerosis – the build-up of fatty deposits in the inner wall of your arteries.

Therefore if your arteries become narrow because of fatty deposits, they may become blocked by a blood clot, resulting in a heart attack.

Diabetes has been called "a disorder of the very engine of life" and for very good reasons. Diabetes is fast becoming a disease of the young. Forty years ago non-insulin diabetes was rarely seen in people under 40. Now it is being encountered in children. What's causing this increase in the number of diabetic youths?

This type of diabetes has a strong genetic component

and normally became apparent as individuals matured/grew older with increasing weight – "middle-age-spread".

Now it is estimated that five per cent of school children have this type of diabetes. Lack of exercise and unhealthy eating leading to **obesity** have certainly been factors in this growth in the spread of diabetes.

Perhaps, however, we should be looking closer to home, at parents' responsibilities for lifestyle choices of their children.

Parents, rather than the

purveyors of junk food, must take responsibility for the lifestyle choices of their children.

The World Health Organisation estimates that worldwide more than 140 million people have diabetes, and that number could double by the year 2025. The disease presents one of the most challenging health problems of the 21st century.

In Barbados, it is believed that about ten per cent of the population suffer from being "obese".

The **Heart & Stroke Foundation** is very

concerned about the increasing risk of **obesity** leading to a higher risk of the individual's propensity to a heart attack.

Therefore, in 2005, the Foundation carried out a survey of attitudes to risk and then launched an extensive television and radio media campaign of public education on heart disease prevention throughout 2006.

One of the major elements of this campaign was to warn of the risks of **obesity** and to give guidance on healthy eating and physical exercise.



**A GLASS OF COCONUT WATER contains only 50 calories and supplies 400mg potassium.**

## Caribbean nutrition – Part 1

IN OUR QUEST for healthier eating choices, we are encouraged to eat foods with less fat and sodium, more fibre, more complex carbohydrates and lower in calories.

The foods that are most promoted are usually the imported ones, since more is known about them than about our local foods. We may therefore seek out whole grain cereals and breads, fruits such as the apple, plum and grapes, and vegetables such as broccoli and cauliflower. How do our local foods compare?

Who has not heard the adage, "an apple a day keeps the doctor away"? This is probably because the apple has fibre to facilitate gut health and rid the body of waste.

But do you know that one guava fruit has four times the amount

of fibre, slightly more potassium and 19 times the amount of Vitamin C as an apple? In comparison to a whole bunch of grapes, one guava has 25 times more Vitamin C, four times more fibre and about the same potassium.

Likewise, it would take 15 apples to supply the Vitamin C content of only one West Indian cherry.

Cranberry juice has become very popular because of its benefits to bladder health. But did you know that similar benefits could be had from coconut water at less than half the calories and with appreciably more potassium?

A glass of cranberry juice will provide about 150 to 200 calories while the same glass of coconut water contains only 50 calories whilst giving 400mg potassium compared to the 60mg for cranberry juice.

## CEO off to Bangkok

IN FEBRUARY 2006, the Foundation's chief executive officer (CEO) was invited by the Framework Convention Alliance (FCA) for tobacco control to attend the World Health Organisation first Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) as the only non-governmental organisation (NGO) representative from the English-speaking Caribbean.

The FCA is an international NGO of which the Foundation has been a member for three years and the FCA sponsored and funded his trip.

The CEO at FCA's invitation is to attend the second COP being held in Bangkok, Thailand early this month. The main business of this conference, of interest to us here in Barbados, will be in the production of the guidelines for the implementation of Article 8 of the FCTC which deals with "Protection from exposure to tobacco smoke".

This is because, of course, we are still awaiting legislation regarding the banning of smoking in "indoor workplaces, public transport, indoor public places and, as appropriate, other public places" in Barbados.

As previously announced, the Foundation is doing everything in its power to support the Ministry of Health in its plans.

Other issues and topics to be discussed include:

- A protocol on illicit trade in tobacco products
- Guidelines for the implementation of product regulation

- A protocol on cross-border tobacco advertising
- Education, communication, training and public awareness

- Packaging and labelling of tobacco products
- Financial resources and mechanisms of assistance

It will therefore be a very full week and a report of the conference will be carried in the July-September edition of the Foundation's quarterly magazine **Heartline**.

### GO FOR THE GOOD STUFF

LEAVE OUT THE SWEETS, THE FRIED FOODS, THE FAST FOODS.



Eat fruit, fibre and vegetables  
Every day

### GO FOR THE GREENS

### BE HEART SMART

For more information contact:

**Heart & Stroke**  
Foundation of Barbados Inc.

73, Railway View  
Ladymead Gardens  
St. Michael  
Tel: 437 3312 Fax: 430 9898  
Email: barbas@heartfob.org  
Website: www.hfob.org