



# Caribbean Wellness Week 2015

## Caribbean Wellness Week 2015 Message

### *Love That Body...Create a Legacy of Health*

The first chapter in the Book of Daniel recounts how practising a healthy lifestyle manifested itself in the way one appeared physically. In the New Testament in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he reminds that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the Bible there are references made to the importance of maintaining one's physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health, buttressed by clear instructions on how to do so. Our own personal experiences have taught us that our entire outlook on life is buoyed when we are hale and hearty. Our entire life experience from the mundane to the marvelous is influenced by living a healthy lifestyle.

Wouldn't you like to look and feel like you are walking on top of the world? Wouldn't you like to see your family and neighbours thriving and living a vibrant life? How about a decrease in our country crime level; an increase in our national grade point average, less sickness and death from diseases like cancer, sugar and pressure; and how about living to see your great, great, grandchildren? Do you know that all of these things can be possible by simply living a healthy lifestyle?

Yes, you have heard it before - Be more physically active! Do not smoke! Eat less salt, fat and sugar! Check your blood pressure and blood sugar regularly! Watch your weight! Drink more water and eat more vegetables and high fibre foods. These health strategies are actually simple to master, and can all lead to you to follow. While these may seem like trivial things to do, these simple health strategies can help you to live a healthier life. Most chronic illness can be prevented or decreased by the loss of just 10% of your body weight (if overweight/obese), by simply eating more foods with fibre, drinking more water, eating less salty, fatty and sugary foods, engaging in physical activity in 30-minute intervals four or more times weekly and undergoing annual medical assessments. Failing to adhere to these simple health strategies is much more physically, mentally and emotionally stressful and financially costly. Think about the costs of a stroke or a heart attack, that's even if you survive it - the cost of medication, surgery, rehabilitation/therapy, time loss from work, and possible loss of independence including being able to move about freely or even speak.

We Bahamians like to say "Well something gatta carry me!" But does it have to be a stroke, cancer, heart attack or renal failure? The sad reality is that many times persons afflicted with these conditions live for years after the initial diagnosis in a debilitated state, suffering. You have the power to make the right choices. You can make the necessary changes! You can live a healthier life!

We often speak about leaving a financial or social legacy behind for our children to be proud of and even emulate. But what kind of health legacy are you creating for your children? Are you

training them to practice the same unhealthy lifestyles that you do? What kind of a future do you expect them to have? One filled with doctors' appointments, surgeries, therapies and taking excessive medication in a bid to treat disease conditions? Or is the Health Legacy you are creating point your children toward them living healthy, abundant lives? We have to take better care of the bodies that God has entrusted to us. Imagine for two seconds that you were God, would you be pleased with the way you are caring for your body?

During Caribbean Wellness Week 2015, we invite you to be intentional about consistently making healthy lifestyle choices a part of your daily living. Do not be afraid to ask for help. Love the body God has given you and do your very best to care for it. Treat it like the invaluable treasure that it is! Create a Legacy of Health that will be a good example for your children for generations to follow.

*Caribbean Wellness Day (CWD) was initiated from the Port of Spain Declaration in 2007. It aims to empower individuals to make healthy lifestyles choices throughout the region, and is observed annually on the second Saturday in September. Wellness Week in the Americas is a week-long observation by PAHO member countries that immediately follows CWD and began in 2011. This year, The Bahamas will observe both two events as Caribbean Wellness Week 2015 under the theme "Love that Body...Create a Legacy of Health" with a focus this year on healthy ageing populations.*

