



Caribbean Wellness Day Message 2015

Improving The Quality of Life of the Region's Aging Population

Would you like to feel like you are 16 again? Would you like to have a vibrant life? How about less aches and pain especially from arthritis? How about having fewer complications from diabetes and high blood pressure? Would you like to live 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 may be over 60 years and have begun to feel the body's natural effects of aging. But did you know that you can improve the way you feel by just following some simple, yet powerful lifestyle practices? Let me introduce you to eight natural doctors that are sure to improve your life. Their names are Drs. Good Nutrition, Regular Exercise and Physical Activity, Water, Sunlight, Temperance, Fresh Air, Rest and Trust in God. Each of them offers powerful healing powers but they only work if you follow/fill their prescription.

Dr. Good Nutrition's prescription is to choose and eat foods and beverages that will nourish and strengthen your body. These foods include fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables (stay away from canned ones as much as possible); whole grains like cassava, potatoes, yams, breadfruit, bran, whole wheat products, oats, bulghur, pasta, brown rice; peas, beans, nuts and seeds; fish, lean meats and poultry (be sure to use low-fat cooking methods). Eat sweets in small amounts. Be sure to balance your plate: $\frac{1}{2}$ non-starchy vegetables, $\frac{1}{4}$ starch, and $\frac{1}{4}$ protein. Try to eat on time every day to feel well.

It is important to keep your muscles, bones and joints working well, so Dr. Exercise's prescription is for you to be active every day. Regular physical activity and exercise also helps you to feel good and have a lot of energy. It also helps to manage your weight, blood sugar and blood pressure. Just 30 minutes of exercise four times weekly can totally transform your health! So, if you like to walk, run, swim or dance or whatever activity you like, just go ahead and do it!

To keep your body well hydrated, Dr. Water advises you to ensure you drink enough water every day. It also helps to keep you feeling well and even helps to prevent and alleviate headaches and joint pain. Aim for about 8 cups (8oz) or more every day. Once your urine (pee) has a light yellow color you are getting enough. If it is very yellow, then drink up! However, if you take medication (pills) and nutrition supplements, they may discolour your urine but be sure to always drink enough water. Try to drink very little or no sweetened beverages like sodas. They have little or no nutrition and offer little or no health benefits.

Do you want to feel happy and vibrant and stay in a good mood? Dr. Sunlight's prescription is for you to get some sunlight! It is good for you! It helps to keep your immune system and bones strong, prevents and treats depression, helps lower high blood pressure and the list goes on! When indoors, pull aside the curtains, open the blinds and open your windows and let the sunshine in! Or better yet, get outside and enjoy the warmth and blessings of sunshine! Be sure to wear protective gear like sun glasses, sunscreen and a hat.

Did you know that certain substances like tobacco, nicotine and alcohol and even too much food can harm your health? Dr. Temperance advises you to stay away from those substances that harm your health and have in moderation those which will improve your health.

Breathe in, breathe out! Fresh clean air is needed for good health. Dr. Fresh Air's prescription is to ensure you breathe in fresh air all day every day. Open your windows and ensure your house is well ventilated. Breathing in stale musty air can make you feel and be sick.

Nothing beats the rejuvenation you get from a good night's sleep! Dr. Rest advises you to get enough sleep (up to eight hours every day) and make sure that your room is quiet and dark to get maximum benefits. Be sure to rest at intervals during the day. Getting enough rest and sleep helps you to feel better, think better and manage weight, blood pressure and blood sugar levels.

Now, Dr. Trust in God enables you to be able to use the prescriptions from the Doctors mentioned earlier. He is the One who created you and knows what will cause and help you to thrive and be in good health. He desires that you live an abundant life. Therefore, His prescription is for you to trust Him completely and follow the instructions He provided for caring for your body. And guess what? He empowers you to do so!

So, you have the power to make healthy lifestyle choices! You can live a healthier life!

The Late Ronnie Butler, a popular Bahamian artist, sang a song that goes like this, '...Age ain't nothing but a number. You're just as old as you feel...just like wine, I get better all da time.' Can you say that as you age that you are feeling younger than you actually are?

During Caribbean Wellness Day and even beyond, I invite you to be intentional and deliberate about consistently making healthy lifestyle choices as part of your daily living. If you need help, do not be afraid to ask. Love the body God has given you and do your very best to care for it...treat it like an invaluable treasure! It is the place in which you live.

Caribbean Wellness Day is celebrated annually on the second Saturday in September by member countries of CARICOM as part of a unified, regional response to the epidemic of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).

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