



Silent, Sneaky Killers: Hypertension and Diabetes

At Health Expo 2005 held at the Breezes Runaway Bay and Golf Resort, Nurse Ingrid Hinds, family nurse practitioner, focused on the "silent, sneaky killers": Diabetes and Hypertension (high blood pressure). They are labeled the "silent, sneaky killers" because they will sometimes be detected only when it's too late.

She started out with the basics of Hypertension. "What is Hypertension? It is a dangerous condition in which an individual has a higher blood pressure than normal. This is blood pressure greater than or equal to 140 (systolic) over 90 (diastolic). The proportion of individuals who are hypertensive increases with age and is greater in blacks than in whites. Approximately 20% of the Jamaican population is hypertensive. In 2001, about 839 persons died from hypertension," she said.

CAUSES OF HYPERTENSION

She said that in the vast majority of cases, there are no direct causes, however, health conditions that can trigger off hypertension will include kidney and thyroid diseases. "There are, however, certain risk factors for the condition," she said.

RISK FACTORS

Nurse Hinds named genetic factors that play a role in hypertension. "This plays an important role. Children with one, and even more so with two hypertensive parents will have greater risk in having hypertension," she said. Environmental factors, she said, include an inactive lifestyle, excessive alcohol intake, smoking and increased salt intake.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Nurse Hinds stated these signs and symptoms of hypertension:

- Elevated blood pressure on an average of three readings

Headaches that usually cause a pulsating feeling at the back of the head (early in the morning and subsides during the day).

She said that other signs and symptoms are usually related to the underlying cause. "High blood pressure is hence called the 'silent killer' as there are no major signs," she said.

MANAGEMENT OF HYPERTENSION

According to Nurse Hinds, a balanced diet is recommended. "This should be low in sodium (salt). Avoid salt when cooking. Also avoid pickles, tin foods, potato or banana chips, and so on. You should see regularly the dietician who recommends the appropriate diet. Weight loss is important in individuals who are obese," she said. She said that moderate activity such as brisk walking for 30-45 minutes three to five times per week is very important as well.

Also, she said that there are various types of oral medications that can be taken. These are usually ordered based on the severity of the condition, age, race, or other conditions. The dosages, she said, also vary based on certain factors. "Medications ordered should be given as prescribed. Patients should avoid being out of medications at anytime," she said.

She continued, "Blood tests should be done yearly or more often as recommended by the doctor. An ECG (Electrocardiogram - an electrical reading of the heart, used in the investigation of heart disease) should also be done yearly. A chest X-Ray should also be done," she said.

PREVENTION

There are ways of preventing hypertension, even if it is hereditary. These include regular visits to the doctor, reducing salt intake, regular exercise, maintaining normal weight, avoiding smoking and avoiding excessive intake of alcohol.

The total well-being catered to at Breezes Runaway Bay

The total well being - mind, body and spirit - was refreshed at Health Expo 2005 held on Thursday, February 17 at Breezes Runaway Bay and Golf Resort. This in an effort to get people in the business sector, and the public in general, gaining useful information on how to take care of their bodies.

Dr. Horace Raymond of the Apex Medical Centre spoke on gum disease with the help of graphic images on how these diseases can affect the gums. He mentioned various types of the prevention of periodontal diseases such as eating and drinking sensibly and brushing and flossing twice a day. "Brushing in a circular motion will get the bristles of the brush in hard to reach places. You should use a soft or medium bristle toothbrush," he said. Other preventative measures are fluoridating your water and visiting your dentist at least twice a year. Some methods of prevention, he said, are infection control, surgical therapy, restorative therapy and maintenance.

Ruth Brown of FAMPLAN Jamaica enlightened the gathering on how the organization seeks to help the community. She said that FAMPLAN is ardent in helping the change the negative thinking on how the society views sex and sexuality and that includes promiscuity, women and sex and HIV/AIDS. "We women have to be empowered. These are our bodies and we have to take care of them," she said. The services FAMPLAN provides include medical exams and services and youth programmes. Ms. Brown ended her presentation with how to use a female and male condom properly.

A thorough breast cancer presentation was given by Yvonne Williams of MoBay Hope Medical Centre. "There are two main types of breast cancers: Ductal Carcinoma and Infiltrating Ductal Carcinoma," she said. She gave the risk factors and the age a woman would most likely develop breast cancer:

Age:	
20 - 29	1 out of 2,000
30 - 39	1 out of 250
40 - 49	1 out of 67
50 - 59	1 out of 35
60 - 69	1 out of 28
70 - 79	1 out of 14
Lifetime	1 out of 8

Other risk factors, she said, are family history, early menarche (that is, menstruating early), late menopause and never having children.

She said that the survival rate will go by stages. "In stage one, the early stage of the cancer, there is a 95% change of survival. This is when the cancer is detected in the early stages. Stage two, there is an 85% survival rate, for stage five, 55% and for stage four, 20%," she said.

Beverly Scarlet from the Adventist Health Profession Association showed the importance of how a fully balanced well being is very important. "God wants us to be healthy in body, mind and spirit. Health is a state of the whole physical - mental, social, emotional and spiritual well-being. We need to avoid the things that are bad for our bodies. Everybody needs to take responsibility for his or her own well being," she said. She mentioned eight concepts to strengthen the body and spirit: nutrition, exercise, water, sunshine, temperance, air, rest, and trust in divine power. "In nutrition, you should have a balanced meal each day. You should allow four hours after one meal before eating again to allow time for the food to properly digest. You should also wait four hours before going to bed after eating. Exercise three times per week for 30 minutes," she said.

Carlyle Roberts, hair technician of Soft Sheen, gave important tips on how to care hair. He also dispelled myths about health care. "Relaxers came about because there weren't any products for blacks. Relaxers were created back in the 50s so that blacks could be accepted, especially the men in entertainment. They would not have been accepted in certain places if their hair wasn't straight," he said. He also showed some of the products that Soft Sheen has to offer.

Other participants in the health seminar were Kaiser Medical Centre, Runaway Bay

HEART Institute (Food Hygiene Bureau), Books and Nutrition Ltd., Lasco Distributors, St. Ann Health Department, Herbal Life International, F.L.S.H Medical Clinic, WISYNCO Ltd., Imperial Optical Ltd., Biogen Chemical Ltd., and Amalgamated Distributors.



A nurse from MoBay Hope Medical Centre is undertaking a blood sugar test on Sandra Thomas, a housekeeper at Breezes Runaway Bay Resort and Golf Club in St. Ann. The tests were offered at the Health Expo held at the resort.

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