

The Barbados Cancer Society was founded in 1990. Its mission is first and foremost Prevention and, secondly Early Detection, and cure. But if this is not possible, to always mitigate its effects and comfort the victims of this disease.

The Prevention of Cancer

Understanding the factors that cause cancer is the key to successful prevention and early detection increases the likelihood of successful treatment.

THE PREVENTION AND EARLY DETECTION OF CANCER

The mission of the Barbados Cancer can be summarised in these words

- To prevent and cure whenever possible
- To alleviate often
- And to comfort always

More specifically, its objectives are

- To provide Barbadians with accurate information about cancer
- To educate them about the measures they can take to prevent cancer.
- To help them to detect cancers at their earliest stages when they are curable
- To help them make the best use of the medical services
- To relieve the pain and suffering caused by cancer
- And, finally to provide social emotional support for persons with cancer.

During the first 23 years of its existence, the experience of the Barbados cancer society has been encouraging. For contrary to the belief strongly held by many persons including doctors, irrational fear of cancer is uncommon.

Most men and women will speak openly about the disease, and if given the knowledge and opportunity, will assume responsibility for the factors in their lives that can prevent and lessen the risk of cancer. Furthermore, they are willing to participate in decisions about priorities for their own health and the health of the community.

The Barbados Cancer Society, therefore, gives the highest priority to two of the most effective methods of treating cancer, namely prevention and early detection, and this is reflected in the clinics it provides for the early detection of cancer.[e.g. Cancers of the Breast , Colon, Cervix ,Skin and Prostate] as well as its Tobacco Control Program which has reduced tobacco consumption in Barbados by 50 percent since it was started in 1982.

The information provided by the Barbados Cancer society is scientifically accurate and is based on the thinking and recommendations of scientists working at Cancer Research Institutes in North America and Great Britain, scientists working at the U.S. National Nutrition Institute, and experts of the World Health Organisation. [WHO].

These recommendations are derived from current knowledge about the factors that promote the development of cancer on the one hand, and those that inhibit its development on the other. In order of importance the recommendations are classified as follows:

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Important

The personal actions recommended to reduce the risk of cancer are as follows:

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT

- Not smoking tobacco or using it in other ways.
- Not smoking marijuana or other illegal drugs or using them in other ways.
- Making good nutrition and regular exercise a lifelong process.

VERY IMPORTANT

- Avoidance of passive smoking.
- Using alcohol moderately or not at all
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Having a positive mental attitude which is a necessary condition for choosing a healthy lifestyle.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS RECOMMENDED FOR HEALTH ARE:

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT

- Limiting exposure to sunlight.
This is because though most skin cancers caused by overexposure to sunlight are rarely fatal, they outnumber other cancers by a wide margin.
- **VERY IMPORTANT**
- Protection from and avoidance of exposure to toxic industrial, agricultural, and household chemicals
 - e.g. Herbicides, Pesticides, Chemical cleaners etc.

METHODS OF EARLY DETECTION

Early detection cannot prevent cancer, but it makes it possible to shoot the disease without maiming or killing the patient.

**THE ACTIONS RECOMMENDED ARE AS FOLLOWS:
EXTREMELY IMPORTANT**

- Regular cancer screening tests
[E.g. the CERVICAL smear or the Mammogram]
- Self-examination of the breast in females and of the testicles in men.

VERY IMPORTANT is:

Systematic medical investigations of the symptoms and signs that may occur at an early stage of cancer. These are:

- A change of bowel habit or bladder habit.
[Cancer of the bowel or bladder.]
- A sore that does not heal [Skin Cancer]
- An unusual discharge bleeding from the vagina or rectum
[Cancer of the uterus or rectum.]
- Difficulty in swallowing
[Cancer of the esophagus.]
- A change in a wart or a mole
[Malignant Melanoma of the skin.]
- A nagging cough or hoarseness.
[Cancer of the throat or lungs.]

Before concluding I should like to discuss Diet Nutrition in greater detail because after the avoidance of tobacco good nutrition is the most important factor in the prevention of Cancer. Another equally important reason is that the same dietary factors that lessen the risk of cancer also lessen the risk of coronary artery disease, strokes, diabetes, hypertension and obesity, which like cancer, are the leading causes of premature disability and death in Barbados, all developed countries, and many of the more fortunate developing countries.

It is thought that good nutrition reduces the risk of cancer in two ways:

- Firstly by stimulating mechanisms in the liver and intestine, which destroy cancer, causing agents.

- Secondly, by increasing the efficiency of the immune system that destroys cancer cells before they have become pathogenic.

The Dietary Factors to be avoided are as follows

1. A high fat diet that increases the risk of cancers of the breast, uterus, ovary, colon. Fat should provide no more than 20 per cent of the calories of a healthy diet. Mono-unsaturated Omega-3-fatty acids which lessen the risk of cancer of the breast uterus ovary and colon should be preferred to poly-unsaturated fatty acids. Limiting dietary fat combined with regular exercise also prevent obesity, itself a risk for cancer.
2. Regular consumption salt-cured nitrite-cured foods and barbecued foods that are risk factors for cancers of the stomach and colon.
3. Alcohol [except in moderation]. A Risk factor for cancers of the mouth the throat the esophagus and breast.
4. Chemical residues in foods

Actions recommended that reduce the risk of cancer are

1. Eat more foods that are rich sources of Dietary Fibre. These include whole grain high- fibre cereals, tubers,[eg potatoes, yams], legumes [peas and beans etc.], fruits and vegetables.
2. Eat more cruciform vegetables, e.g. cabbages, cauliflowers, brussell sprouts, broccoli, kale. These stimulate the production of enzymes in the small intestine that destroy cancer-causing agents.
3. Eat more fish—a rich source of Omega-3-monosaturated fatty acids. These lessen the risk of cancers of the breast, uterus, ovary, and colon.
4. Eat more fruits and vegetables, which are rich sources of Vitamins C, E, and Beta-Carotene. These inhibit the development of cancer by neutralizing free radicals, by-products of fat metabolism, which damage the structure and function all living cells.
5. Eat more low-fat dairy products, e. g. low-fat milk low-fat cheese, which are rich sources of calcium,- a catalyst in biochemical reactions which inhibit the development of cancer by reducing the rate of cell division in the breast and colon.

CONCLUSIONS.

The Barbados Cancer Society believes that accurate knowledge about cancer is the antidote to fear caused by the disease, and it can be used to improve its management.

This belief is confirmed by experience that shows that most men and women, if given this knowledge will use it to avoid the risk of cancer and inhibit its development.

Prevention is the most effective way of treating cancer. And the second best option is early detection, which makes it possible to shoot the disease without maiming or killing the patient.

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Re Meeting with
Senator Lynette Eastmond
Minister of Commerce, Consumer Affairs
And Business Development

Subject THE CONSUMER ACT & TOBACCO CONTROL

1. The implications of the Consumer Protection Act for preventing, reducing and eradicating Tobacco consumption.
2. Reasons for banning or ordering the withdrawal Tobacco products. e.g. harmful physical effects, economic costs, social harm and costs
3. Public support for banning and withdrawal.
4. Admission by the Tobacco industry that tobacco is addictive and tobacco consumption is harmful e.g.B.A.T. . & Philip Morris Ltd.
5. According to the Consumer Protection Act all Manufacturers and Suppliers of goods and services without exception are liable for their products.
6. There is nothing in the Consumer Act of 2003 that signifies that tobacco products or the Tobacco Industry are exempted from liability from Consumer Protection Laws.

7. There is no conflict between Public Health and Peoples' Rights to Basic Freedoms. Consumers have a right to be protected and the duty of Governments is to guarantee that Right.

All diseases, disabilities and deaths that can be prevented are unnatural disasters because being preventable they are unnecessary—none more so than those caused by Tobacco Consumption.

According to a message from Senator The Honourable Lynette Eastmond, Minister of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development on the occasion of World Consumer Rights Day 2004 some of the rights guaranteed by the Consumer Protection Act are as follows:

1. The Right to Safety
2. The Right to be informed.
3. The Right to choose.
4. The Right to be heard.
5. The Right to satisfaction.
6. The Right to redress.
7. The Right to education.
8. The Right to a healthy environment.

Perhaps the most fundamental human right is the right to Life. According to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights [1948] ARTICLE 2 RIGHT TO LIFE

“Everyone’s right to life shall be protected by law. No one shall be deprived of his life intentionally save in the execution of a sentence of a court following his conviction of a crime for which this penalty is provided by law.”

And according to Article 3 of the same Convention on Human Rights
“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.”

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