

Overweight does not necessarily equal unhealthy. There are many overweight people who are in excellent health. Conversely, many normal weight people have metabolic problems that are usually associated with obesity.

What is Belly Fat?

There are different types of fat:

Subcutaneous fat: the looser fat that can accumulate just under the skin. This is more a cosmetic issue than a health concern,

Intramuscular fat: fat found within the skeletal muscles,

Visceral fat: fat packed between your abdominal organs which is called intra-abdominal or belly fat and this is the condition usually associated with many health problems.

If you store excess fat around your waistline, even if you are otherwise skinny, this is belly fat also referred to as truncal or abdominal obesity. Belly fat is usually estimated by measuring the circumference around your waist. As a rule of thumb a measurement above 40 inches (102 cm) in men and 35 inches (88 cm) in women, is acknowledged as having excess belly fat.

So, you accept the fact that you have excess belly fat and you decide to do something about it. There are many articles that promise to help you lose belly fat, cure belly fat, burn belly fat and even obliterate belly fat! The prescriptions are supposed to help you lose that big belly fast and easily. Some even suggest that you need no exercise, no effort and can eat anything you like and yet easily attain a remarkable six pack abs. You start to believe and follow the programme and then with horror and disappointment you realize that your best efforts and intentions have been in vain. You have a persistent problem

Belly fat- ultimate battle of the bulges



that belies your dedicated efforts to obtain a flat abdomen.

It is virtually impossible to spot-reduce, by doing exercises that specifically target belly fat. There are, however, things that you can do to assist in your quest to lose belly fat and things you might be currently doing that are thwarting your efforts to get that attractive, flatter stomach.

Things that cause the storage of excess Belly Fat

Cortisol is a fat-storage hormone that is released by the body in response to stress. It increases appetite, sugar cravings, causes general weight gain and increases belly fat in individuals under stress.

Excess **insulin** production due to **insulin resistance** also results in excess belly fat. Insulin resistance refers to the condition when your body's muscle, fat and liver cells don't respond normally to insulin. This

results in your pancreas producing increasing amounts of insulin to help blood glucose enter cells so it can be used as energy.

It is therefore important to keep the levels of these hormones (cortisol and insulin) as low as possible to counter

the development of belly fat.

Overeating results in the intake of more calories that your body burns. This will lead to increases in body fat and belly fat in particular. This production of excessive belly fat is also

influenced by your gender, genetics, hormones, somatotype, lifestyle and certain foods.

Weight Loss Expectations based on Your Body Type

An effective plan to lose belly fat must address the causes of abdominal obesity. To lose belly fat as quickly as possible you need to customize your weight loss programme to suit your individual needs. Following the right programme, a **mesomorph** will attain successful results relatively easily. An **ectomorph** with belly fat (a skinny fat) should be able to lose belly fat easily, but will have difficulty gaining muscle mass and ab definition. An **endomorph** will definitely struggle to lose weight and belly fat, and will have to work hard to achieve defined muscle mass.



Eating to lose Belly Fat

Belly fat represents stored energy. To lose belly fat you have to stick to a calorie controlled diet and exercise to burn more calories (energy) than you eat. However, there is more you can do than simply reducing your calorie intake to lose belly fat. There are certain foods you can eat that will help you lose belly fat, while consuming other foods will actually increase belly fat. Foods that help burn belly fat are low in saturated fat and high in monounsaturated fat. These include olive oil, walnuts, and flax seeds. Foods which increase belly fat include refined grains. Choose whole grains instead. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables may help you to lose belly fat.

Exercising to lose Belly Fat

Once you have reduced your overall body fat percentage you need to exercise accordingly to strengthen abdominal muscles for a toned, flat

and defined tummy. Exercise will also stop muscle loss that occurs during diet related weight loss. Cardiovascular (aerobic) exercise will help you create a greater calorie deficit and increase metabolism to help you lose belly fat. Note that calisthenics (exercises like sit-ups, crunches, leg raises and core work) are not going to magically get rid of belly fat. These anaerobic exercises do not burn belly fat but target belly muscle to make these muscles bigger. These muscles are concealed beneath the belly fat which has to be banished before that desired six pack can be seen.

High Intensity Interval Training

(HIIT) is an evidence based exercise strategy that will help you lose belly fat as well as improve your overall performance. HIIT is great for anyone wanting to lose weight. Those who have been conscientiously working out and have seen little or no results or those who are pressed for time and eager to achieve significant results in a relative short period of time would

benefit from HIIT. HIIT improves performance through short exercise intervals and involves alternating short, fast bursts of intensive exercise with slow, easy activity. HIIT involves a warm-up session followed by several short, maximum-intensity activities separated by moderate recovery intervals, and finally a cool-down session. This method is more effective at burning fat and maintaining muscle mass than long periods of traditional, lower intensity, aerobic workouts. As well as burning a lot of calories during the actual workout, HIIT results in an elevated metabolic rate that may persist for up to twenty-four hours after the exercise session is over. This means that you effectively keep burning calories after you have finished exercising.

So...do your utmost to reduce your belly fat and improve your overall health but do not become obsessive and stressed in your quest as this will generate cortisol and thus defeat your best efforts!

Dr. Mark Alleyne



Finding Balance

Eight Points to Good Health and Happiness

Health and happiness are of utmost importance to a balanced life. In a country like Barbados plagued with chronic non-communicable diseases, balance is key in the prevention and treatment of these diseases in addition to dietary and medical interventions.

But how do we get there? How do we achieve balance via good health and happiness? The simple answer is we need self-care and purpose.

Self-Care: How we take care of ourselves physically, mentally, spiritually

when it comes to our values and belief; how we seek help when we need support and direction from others.

Purpose: We must have purpose. It helps to drive our decisions and is the basis on which we do things. What is fulfilling and meaningful can stay constant or change with time and life events. Having purpose is the gateway to good health and happiness.

Emory University has come up with the "Health Compass" with eight points to health and happiness.

The Eight Compass Points:

1. Mindful Awareness

Meditation and mindful awareness help reduce stress, foster a greater mind-body connection and improve one's ability to cope with chronic disease. Meditation is a powerful practice, effective in reducing stress and helping you better cope with pain and worry. It also changes the way the brain works, allowing us to better focus on the things that are important to us. Being more aware of yourself and your environment makes a tremendous difference.

2. Food

Having a healthy diet is key to weight and disease management and the prevention of disease. Having access to healthy food, and the ability and knowledge to prepare healthy meals, are all important to good health. Many persons in Barbados have a challenge with healthy eating and this

continued on page 8

Lactose Free MILK is back –



you can drink all the milk you want!

A commentary by Professor Emeritus Sir Henry Fraser.

I've just collected several dozen cartons of fabulous Lactose Free Milk from Banks' wholesale department – just a few weeks' supply – because, like the legendary phantom of the comic strip, I'm a milk drinker. Sadly, I have the gene for lactose intolerance. I became intolerant about 20 years ago, and spent a fortune on lactase tablets. But finally, the locally produced new lactose free milk, I can drink my favourite drink again, by the muscle-building glassful!

Let me explain about lactose intolerance, and why so many of us have it. Lactose is the natural sugar found in milk. It makes up just under 5% of the milk. It's a large molecule, called a disaccharide where each molecule is twice the size of glucose, a monosaccharide. Glucose is the sugar "currency" – the "simple sugar of the body". Lactose must be broken down into the two monosaccharides, glucose and galactose, in order to be absorbed by the body.

The enzyme that breaks down lactose is called lactase. It's in plentiful supply in infants and children, but its production falls rapidly in some populations by adulthood. If you don't have the gene for continuous production of lactase as an adult, you will be intolerant of lactose, and milk will upset you. Why? Because if the lactose isn't broken down, it won't be absorbed, it will produce lots of gas in the gut (flatulence) and absorb water causing diarrhoea.

Who suffers from lactose intolerance? Well, most of us in Barbados do!

Northern Europeans, who use a lot of milk, are well adapted, and only about 5% of them are intolerant. Most Europeans, Caucasians or "whitish" people are about 10% intolerant, but it rises rapidly in older folk. Asians and Africans are most often lactose intolerant...up to 80 or 90% of the adults of African and Asian populations are lactose intolerant by the time they grow up.

So, in Barbados, where people who are "black" or brown often have European ancestors, and people who are "whitish" often have African ancestors, it means that the great majority of us are affected. It's such a common problem, that most of us over 50, raised on terribly sweet condensed milk, never had the wherewithal to drink a lot of milk until the inception of our local dairy plant and most of us then suffered bloating, flatulence and diarrhoea. So the word went around "That milk no good!" No one understood the problem. Even some doctors and nurses would tell mothers not to give the children milk, because "they must be allergic to it". And yet the solution was so simple - our dairy merely had to produce milk free of lactose, and hey presto – like magic – we can all drink milk like the phantom!

My mother only became intolerant in her 60s, when her favourite food, ice cream, started to cause her problems. I became intolerant at 50, and had to cut back on ice cream, spend a fortune on lactase tablets and nag our dairy! And of course ice cream is made with ordinary milk. On the plus side, less ice cream, less

“ Who suffers from lactose intolerance? Well, most of us in Barbados do! ”

sugar, means less obesity! Yoghurt and cheese have much less lactose, and many partly intolerant people can eat yoghurt and cheese.

One of the problems created by lactose intolerance is that other milk substitutes are promoted. One such substitute is almond "milk" which is absolutely nothing like milk. It's "white water" with a few additives and whitened to look like milk, and has only one (1) gram of protein per standard glass compared to nine (9) grams of protein in milk!

So – well done, our local dairy. You've made the biggest contribution to the health and nutrition of Barbadians after our National Nutrition Centre! Let's hope that our medical colleagues, all of our nutritionists and dietitians and nurses (potentially the most powerful health educators) will all help to get the message across that this is the milk we can all drink now!



Professor Fraser is past Dean of Medical Sciences, UWI and Professor Emeritus of Medicine. Website: profhennyfraser.com

Navigating the Supermarket Successfully



How do you feel walking into a supermarket? Inspired? Overwhelmed? For most people, grocery shopping is a daunting task. For parents trying to feed their families on limited budgets, it's especially difficult. What's on sale? What foods will my kids actually eat? How do I get both quality and quantity?

With thousands of food choices out there and numerous name brands to choose from, how do we go about choosing the right foods in order to provide proper nutrition for a healthier lifestyle?

Here are three smart shopping tips to keep in mind for navigating the supermarket and making the most of your grocery shopping experience.

1. First and foremost, plan ahead. Take the time to write down or at least have an idea of the meals you plan to

eat for the week. Keep in mind how much time you have for cooking and food preparation. If you only have one or two days to cook, prepare meal options for the entire week and/or stock up on some healthy convenience foods.

2. Organise the list to match the layout of your favourite grocery store. It is too easy to become tempted by the thousands of processed junk food items, strategically placed to tease you as you walk down aisle after aisle. To avoid this, only go down the aisles that contain items on your grocery list.

Make your list market-friendly. To make shopping easier and faster, organize your list according to the sections of the store. Here are some basic categories:

- fruits and vegetables
- refrigerator cases (dairy, juice, eggs, etc.)
- meat, poultry and fish cases
- canned foods, condiments and oils
- grains and cereals
- breads
- frozen foods.

3. Learn to read food labels. Manufacturers of food products are required to list all the ingredients of most products available to us. The first ingredient listed will usually be the largest amount of any of the other ingredients. The second item will be the second most abundant, and the last item will be the least amount of all the ingredients in that particular product.

Try to avoid products that contain the following items when listed in the first few of the ingredients list. Large amounts of any of these ingredients will negatively impact on your health and fitness:

- High fructose corn syrup (HFCS),
- Lard and shortening,
- Oil,
- Sugar,
- Artificial ingredients e.g. colouring, flavouring,
- Sodium (salt),
- Preservatives,
- Butter,
- Cheese,
- Partially hydrogenated oils (margarine).

Carla Ramsay

Acknowledgements:

Articles were submitted by the following persons:

Dr. Mark Alleyne
Nutrition Officer (ag.)

Professor Emeritus Sir Henry Fraser
Past Dean of Medical Sciences, UWI

Mr. Brian Payne
Community Nutrition Officer

Mrs. Karen Griffith
Community Nutrition Officer

Ms. Carla Ramsay
Community Nutrition Officer

Ms. Marianne Burnham
Community Nutrition Officer

National Nutrition Centre
Ladymeade Gardens
Jemmott's Lane, St. Michael.
Tel.: 427-1693/427-1694
Email: nutrition.centre@barbados.gov.bb
www.nutritioncentre.health.gov.bb





Delightful Recipes



Fruit & Oatmeal Bars

Ingredients:

¾ cup firmly packed brown sugar
 8 oz container vanilla or natural low fat yogurt
 2 egg whites, lightly beaten

2 tbsp skim milk
 2 tsp vanilla essence
 1½ cups flour
 1 tsp baking soda
 1 tsp ground cinnamon
 2 cups oat flakes
 1 cup diced mixed fruit, raisins or cranberries

Method:

1. Heat oven to 350°F.
 2. In a large bowl, combine sugar,

yogurt, egg whites, oil, milk and vanilla. Mix well

3. In medium bowl, combine flour, baking soda and cinnamon. Mix well and add to yogurt mixture
4. Stir in oats and fruit
5. Spread mixture onto bottom of ungreased 13x9 inch baking tray
6. Bake 28-32 minutes or until light golden brown
7. Cool completely on wire rack and cut into bars
8. Store in airtight container

Healthy Veggie Quesadilla – (2 per serving)



Ingredients:

1 sweet pepper, chopped
 2 onions, chopped
 2 tbsp olive oil
 1 can black beans, drained
 1 cup frozen corn (or canned corn, drained)
 3 chives/scallions finely diced
 1/2 tsp salt
 1/2 tsp paprika
 pinch of cumin
 1 cup mozzarella cheese (or cheese of your choice)
 10 flour tortillas (9 inch wraps can be used as well)

Method:

On a sheet pan, place the peppers & onions, drizzle with olive oil and roast at 425°F for 20-25 min

In a bowl, mix the roasted peppers & onions with the black beans, corn, green onion, salt & spices. Combine well

Heat a skillet, place tortilla in it and top with 1 tbsp cheese then 2 tbsp bean & corn mixture and then another 1 tbsp of cheese. Top with another tortilla. Cook two minutes per side, or until golden brown and lightly crisp (Repeat).



Breadfruit Pizza

Ingredients:

1 medium size ripe breadfruit
 1½ cups flour
 1 oz margarine
 2 eggs
 ⅛ cup low fat milk
 3 tsp lemon juice
 1 tin pizza sauce
 White pepper

Garnishes

½ sweet pepper, sliced
 1 onion, thinly sliced
 4 oz ham, chopped
 1 tomato, thinly sliced
 1 tin diced pineapple
 6 oz grated cheese

Method:

1. Cook breadfruit and mash while still warm, adding margarine. Remove lumps
2. Gradually add milk, lightly beaten eggs and flour. Beat with a wooden spoon until smooth
3. Add pepper and salt to taste
4. Spread in pizza pan with a palette knife
5. Cover with pizza sauce and garnishes
6. Sprinkle on grated cheese
7. Bake in moderate oven until cheese melts

Focusing on Health without Obsessing about Your Weight

As a Community Nutrition Officer (CNO) my job is to help patients achieve a greater measure of success with respect to their health. Too often the greatest part of my job is convincing people that, in spite of a universal focus on body weight, this is not all that matters. To measure success only in terms of pounds lost and failure in terms of pounds gained, is a flawed assessment of good health. Good health simply cannot be measured by pounds on a scale, and assessments of health exclusively focused on body weight consistently fails to paint a true portrait of health. During my time as a CNO I have witnessed patients gain weight, while becoming fitter, more muscular, and healthier. Conversely, I have also seen patients lose weight while

becoming sicker. The truth is that people can look great, feel well, and be healthy at almost any weight; so when it comes to optimal health the focus should never be exclusively on weight and weight loss.

It must be noted that body fat, especially the intra-abdominal or belly fat which is in contact with the vital organs still has to be a part of the discussion. This fat in and around

“ To measure success only in terms of pounds lost and failure in terms of pounds gained, is a flawed assessment of good health. ”

our bellies and vital organs may not only be a cosmetic issue (in terms of physical appearance), but it can lead to metabolic dysfunction and compromised health.

Can accumulation of such belly fat be avoided? There is no one prescription, but physical activity (resistance, cardiovascular and stretching), adequate sleep, and stress management all play essential roles. What we eat is of paramount importance and when it comes to improving the dietary quality of our menus, we should pay special attention to cooking and preparing our meals at home and avoiding the fast food craze. This may be the most effective strategy.

Brian Payne

COOKING CAN BE FUN

Life is richer if you enjoy foods prepared by your family, friends or by your own hands. It is of great benefit to know how to prepare a great meal. Most of us enjoy cooking and eating with our families and friends. In this way:-

1. We maintain healthy bodies
2. We can serve our own specialties
3. We develop good social habits
4. We develop our own identity

Food is also featured in celebrations of family events and national holidays. So we see that food is closely connected to our lives and to our individual and family lifestyles.

Personal Hygiene Rules

When you prepare food you should:-

1. Wear clean comfortable clothes and enclosed shoes
2. Protect your clothes with a clean apron

3. Cover your hair with a scarf or hairnet
4. Remove all jewelry
5. Always wash your hands before handling food, whether it is cooked or uncooked
6. Clean your fingernails and keep them short. Remove nail polish
7. Use disposable kitchen towels to wipe your hands
8. Never touch your mouth or nose while preparing food
9. Never scratch your skin or hair when handling food



10. Avoid sneezing or coughing over food
11. Cover cuts and bruises with waterproof dressings
12. Keep your surroundings clean.

Q
What are trans fats and why are they bad for you?

A
Small amounts of trans fat occur naturally in meat, milk and other dairy products but most trans fat is formed when vegetable oil goes through a process called hydrogenation. This leads to the production of industrialized partially hydrogenated oil which is solid at room temperature and is less likely to spoil.

Partially hydrogenated oils (containing trans fats) may be used to help give products a longer shelf life and can be found in some processed foods like biscuits and cakes. Some restaurants may use partially hydrogenated vegetable oil in their deep fryers because it doesn't have to be changed as often as other oils.

Consuming a diet high in trans fat can adversely affect your cholesterol level (lowering HDL – good cholesterol and raising LDL – the bad cholesterol) and may cause health problems such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes. In recent years many food manufacturers have claimed to remove trans fats from their products. However, you should be aware that products can be labeled “Zero Trans Fat” or “0g Trans Fat” and still contain up to 0.5g of trans fat per serving. So if you want to reduce your intake of trans fats, you should:

- read the ingredients list and avoid products that contain partially hydrogenated fat or oil
- try to eat fewer biscuits, cakes and pastries
- when eating out, try to eat fewer fried foods
- use liquid vegetable oil for frying

Q
I've been diagnosed as allergic to wheat. Can I eat gluten free foods?

A
Not if the gluten free food contains wheat.



Frequently Asked Questions

Gluten is just one of several proteins found in wheat and your allergic reaction could be in response to any one or more of those proteins. To avoid symptoms you will need to avoid all wheat products, gluten free or not.

Gluten free foods are of value to persons diagnosed with celiac disease or non-celiac gluten sensitivity (NCGS). For these individuals, ingestion of gluten, whether from wheat, barley or rye, can cause abdominal bloating, diarrhoea, constipation, fatigue and “brain fog”. Avoidance of gluten brings relief.

There are diagnostic tests for celiac disease but, unfortunately, with NCGS diagnosis is not so straightforward. Also, with celiac disease only gluten must be avoided so all gluten free products can be consumed. With NCGS it may be necessary to avoid gluten and wheat, which means that foods labeled “gluten free” but containing wheat would still have to be avoided.

Gluten free products have no particular value for weight loss, diabetes management, or any other condition unrelated to gluten



— Eat fewer fried foods —

sensitivity or gluten intolerance so don't spend money unnecessarily.

Q
Does drinking ice water make you fat?

A
No it doesn't! Water is a zero calorie beverage.

Excess calories from foods and sugary beverages are stored in the body as fat but since water has no calories it cannot make you fat.

So, if you're trying to lose weight, ditch the juices, soft drinks and other sugary beverages and drink more water – however you like it, hot, iced, or straight from the tap.

Karen Griffith



Finding Balance

Eight Points to Good Health and Happiness

may lead to dietary issues which are frequently the primary problem behind conditions of diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol and obesity.

3. Physical Activity

Our bodies are meant to move. Regular physical activity reduces stress and pain, improves mood and helps to control weight and prevent diseases. Balance, flexibility, endurance and strength as well as rest and relaxation are key to proper health.

4. Meaningful Work

Meaningful work includes work in and outside the home, volunteerism, entrepreneurship and career transitions. Having work that meets your financial, intellectual and creative needs can foster good health.

5. Relationships

Friends, family, colleagues and community are central to our well-being. These relationships may shift over time. If we change our address as we get older, it can be more difficult to find new friends. It is important to have supportive friends and family and a community where we feel safe and have access to help when we need it.

Our social network is often important to our sense of self and security.

6. Environment

Environment includes home, work, neighborhood and nature. It is desirable to have a safe, comfortable home and neighborhood, a workplace that meets your needs and a community where you have access to transportation, food and other amenities. Environment can also include access to nature and the outdoors. All of these influence our physical and mental well-being.

7. Conventional Medical Care

Access to good healthcare and resources, and creating and maintaining a healthcare team as needed contributes to our health and happiness. The health team includes a general practitioner, a specialist and other allied health professionals. In Barbados, there is a national health-care scheme where free healthcare is afforded to all Barbadians and residents of Barbados. Good, clear communication with health-care professionals is also important to receiving good care, especially when you need to navigate between many specialists.

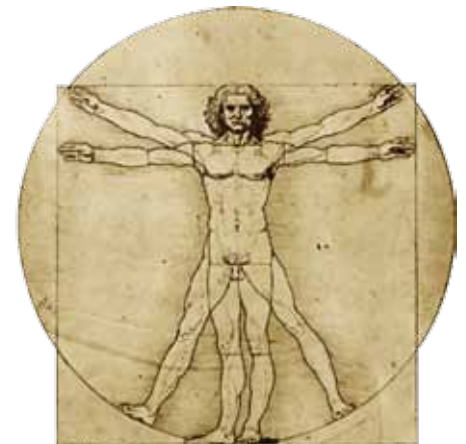
8. Complementary Care

Seeking complementary healthcare has become commonplace. Examples of evidence-based complementary care include massage therapy, acupuncture, chiropractic care and practices like yoga and tai chi. Relaxation techniques including

breathing exercises, guided imagery and progressive muscle relaxation are also considered complementary care. These practices have become more accepted and can complement conventional care. It is important to seek qualified practitioners using evidence-based complementary care.

An Integrative Approach

The concept of good health and wellness is more than just the absence of disease. Good health or optimal health is integrative in two ways. It is the use of conventional care along with evidence-based complementary care in the treatment and prevention of illness. An example of how this integrative approach can work is: seeing an ENT physician as well as an acupuncturist for chronic sinusitis. The ENT can diagnose the problem and the acupuncturist can help in relieving the pain.



Good health requires good self-care.

The field of the compass represents self-care and the eight points of the compass represent the overlapping areas of our lives that affect out health and wellbeing and where we act to take care of ourselves. Thus self-care is an integrative approach to health, recognizing the overlapping sectors of our lives. If we address all of these using the health compass approach we should be on our way to good health and happiness.

Marriane Burnham