

healthmatters

Summer 2023

The formula for a longer, healthier life?

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- ✓ Wellness assessments
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- ✓ Healthy living workshops
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LiveWell with BF&M

Get started today at bfm.bm/LiveWell.

Could the fountain of youth be as close as your kitchen faucet? Maybe.

About 60% of your body is water. It cushions your joints, protects your brain and spinal cord from injury, and helps keep your body temperature steady.

You lose liquid through sweating and other bodily functions. Early signs of dehydration include thirst, dry lips, and fatigue. Later on, you might feel dizzy, weak, or have trouble breathing.

Replacing your body's fluids wards off those symptoms and has long-term benefits. A recent study found that people who were well-hydrated had a lower risk for chronic diseases and lived longer, too.

To stay hydrated:

- Have a tall glass of water with each meal.
- Keep a refillable water bottle within reach during the day.
- Try sparkling water, or flavor tap water with lemon, mint, or cucumbers.
- Eat produce containing a lot of water, like strawberries, watermelon, celery, and cooked squash.

Every person's hydration needs are different. Talk with your healthcare provider about how conditions like heart failure or cancer, medications, or other factors may affect how much water you should drink.



MANAGE STRESS

to lower your stroke risk

Under pressure? You're not alone. And stress is no joke. A worldwide study found that stress at home, at work, or with money can lead to strokes.

You can't eliminate every challenge in life—nor would you want to. Overcoming obstacles encourages growth. The key is to change what you can and develop skills to better withstand the rest. Here's how:



At home: Remove extra, unnecessary stressors. For instance, you might lower standards around housecleaning or enlist family members to help with chores. Prioritise healthy habits, such as physical activity and good sleep, which both defuse stress and reduce stroke risk.



With money: Take stock of your situation. Make plans with your family for budgeting and saving. If necessary, reach out to utilities or your credit card company about payment plans.



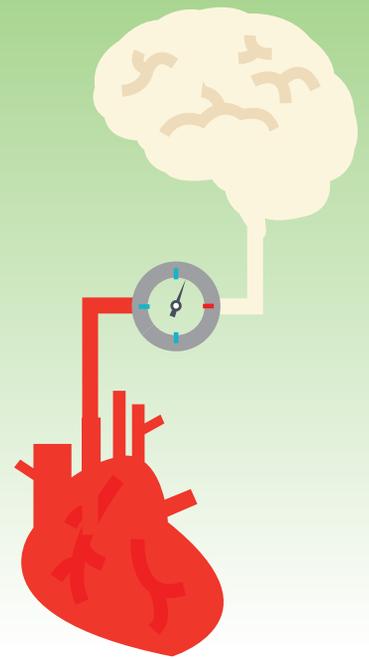
At work: The more control you have on the job, the less stress you're likely to feel. Ask your employer about options, including flexible working hours. If your workplace has problem-solving committees, ask to join them.



Anywhere: Build a support system of people you trust. Reaching out to friends, family, and mental health professionals, when needed, creates a buffer against stress and its effects.

REACH OUT FOR HELP

For help with mental health issues, call the 24-Hour Mental Health Crisis Line at 441-239-1111.



Lower blood pressure ... and PREVENT DEMENTIA?

High blood pressure happens when your blood pushes against your arteries with too much force. This can damage your blood vessels, including those that bring oxygen to your brain.

Reducing your blood pressure, meanwhile, may help keep brain tissue nourished and healthier. And your body might have an easier time clearing harmful substances—including beta-amyloid, a protein involved in Alzheimer's disease.

A recent study confirmed the link between the head and the heart. It found that when participants were treated for high blood pressure, they were also less likely to develop dementia.

Fortunately, it's never too late to start making changes that help your blood pressure. Healthy lifestyle habits can both prevent high blood pressure and bring high numbers down. Steps you can take include:

- Scheduling a checkup with your healthcare provider
- Working up to a goal of 150 minutes of physical activity per week
- Adding a fruit or vegetable to every meal

Take action to prevent youth diabetes

Health experts are looking ahead—and what they've seen concerns them. Type 2 diabetes is skyrocketing among people ages 20 and younger.

Some factors that contribute to the risk for type 2 diabetes are beyond your control. However, there are steps you can take to offer your children a healthier future. These include:

- **Encouraging exercise.** Kids should move about an hour a day, but even 10- to 15-minute bursts of movement count.
- **Helping your child make wise health decisions.** For instance, teach them to start reading food labels. Allow preteens

and teens one-on-one time with their healthcare provider to promote confidence and independence.

- **Focusing on family meals.** Eat together at the table when you can, instead of in front of a TV, computer, or phone. Plan well-balanced, satisfying meals to share. You'll model good nutrition, and you'll build bonds that can help you navigate future challenges together.

ALL ABOUT DIABETES

For diabetes education, research, resources, and services, visit the Bermuda Diabetes Association at diabetes.bm.

Why are younger people getting cancer?

If it seems like younger people are getting cancer more often, you're right. A research review found that, since the 1990s, rates increased worldwide for several types of cancers among adults younger than 50.

The study authors think that lifestyle changes since the mid-20th century may be starting to affect adult cancer rates. These include:

- Diets high in processed foods and sugars
- Less physically demanding jobs and more time spent sitting
- Greater alcohol consumption
- Children getting less sleep
- More adults working night shifts, which is linked to cancer risks such as obesity and diabetes
- Increased rates of type 2 diabetes, which boosts the risk for liver, breast, and other cancers

The good news is that you can make healthy changes at any age. These include:

- Stop drinking alcohol or cut back.
- Follow a healthy eating pattern rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Limit red meat, processed foods, and sugary drinks.
- Avoid tobacco.
- Work your way up to at least two and a half hours of moderate exercise per week. Kids should get an hour of activity per day.
- Talk with your healthcare provider about your risk factors and recommended cancer screenings. Discuss other steps that might keep you healthier longer.

TIME FOR A SCREENING?
Find cancer screening guidelines at cancer.bm/cancer-information/bermudas-cancer-screening-guidelines.

The other signs of SKIN CANCER?

You probably know that an unusual mole might be skin cancer. But do you know these other signs?

Bleeding or itchy sores. Typically found on the head and neck, the sores may be oozing, crusted, and either don't heal or return. They might be basal cell carcinoma, which usually grows slowly and can be removed.

Rough, scaly spots. Usually found on the face, ears, backs of the hands, or arms, these areas may feel itchy or sore. The pink-red or flesh-toned spots tend to occur more often in fair-skinned people and grow slowly. Some may turn into squamous cell skin cancer.

Bumps and growths. Small, pinkish, pearly bumps with blue, brown, or black areas could be skin cancer. Also watch for pink growths with raised borders and lower centers.

A dark band on your fingernail or toenail. This could be melanoma, which is less common than other skin cancers but more dangerous.

If you have any signs of skin cancer, see a healthcare provider right away.

Preventative healthcare matters.

Remember to schedule the screenings and healthcare provider appointments to which you are entitled under your coverage, because preventative healthcare matters.

Learn more online at bfm.com/preventativehealthcare

With **BF&M** you can.

* LiveWell is intended to complement rather than substitute for proper medical advice or treatment.

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