



Men's Health Awareness *with Dr. E. Marcus Cooper*



Throughout The Bahamas, men's health is a significant yet overlooked concern, with many men suffering in silence and refusing to seek help.

During the Cancer Society of The Bahamas' Monthly General Meeting on Men's Health Awareness, guest speaker Dr. E. Marcus Cooper, a specialist in gastroenterology, discussed the

health issues affecting men, emphasized the importance of early detection, and shared healthy lifestyle tips to enhance well-being.

Reasons for Poor Health Among Men in The Bahamas

According to Dr. Cooper, some of the most common factors contributing to poor health among men include:

- **Stigma** - Like in other countries, the stigma around men's health in The Bahamas results from traditional norms of masculinity, which equate suppression of emotions with strength. Due to a fear of being seen as feminine or unmanly, many men in The Bahamas hesitate to seek help for physical and mental health problems.
- **Avoiding doctors** - Compared to women, men are less likely to visit doctors for regular health check-ups, causing health conditions to often go undetected until serious symptoms appear.
- **Poor communication** – When seeking medical attention, men often do not fully report their symptoms, which reduces their chances of receiving an accurate diagnosis.

Men's Physical Health Issues

Common physical health issues affecting men, as described by Dr. Cooper, include the following:

- **Cardiovascular disease** - Men generally develop cardiovascular disease at an earlier age than women, with symptoms including chest pain, shortness of breath, and fatigue.
- **Cancer** - Prostate cancer is the most prevalent cancer among men in The Bahamas, while testicular cancer, though relatively rare, is a concern for young men. Over the past few years, The Bahamas has experienced a drastic increase in colorectal cancer cases among men and women.
- **Diabetes** - Studies show that men develop Type 2 diabetes at a younger age and lower body weight than women. If left uncontrolled, diabetes can lead to kidney disease, blindness, and nerve damage throughout the body.
- **Erectile dysfunction** - Many men experience erectile dysfunction, which can be attributed to physical conditions, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, and mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression. According to Dr. Cooper, frequent marijuana use is a leading cause of erectile dysfunction among young men in The Bahamas.

Health Tips for Men

For men, prioritizing your health may seem like a difficult, lifelong commitment, but Dr. Cooper recommends easy tips that can help you get started. Some of these tips are:

- **Schedule regular checkups** - Discuss your health concerns with your doctor and learn your blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose levels, as they are critical indicators of health.

- Get regular cancer screenings – This can help you detect and treat various types of cancer, such as prostate and colorectal cancer, early, significantly improving treatment outcomes.
- Move your body - Getting at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise each week can improve health, boost energy levels, and reduce stress.
- Eat a balanced, healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and lean protein - By doing this, you can maintain a healthy body weight and reduce your risk of developing health complications, such as heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers.

How is the Cancer Society Helping?

The Cancer Society of The Bahamas offers the following vital services to support cancer patients:

- Free accommodations and transportation for Family Islanders receiving cancer treatment in New Providence.
- Emotional and mental support at our Adult Support Group.
- Holding quarterly social events for children ages 2 – 17 years in our Freedom Kids Club.
- Financial Treatment Assistance Program (funded by the Bahamas Hope Challenge) for unemployed or uninsured persons who have been diagnosed with cancer.
- Monthly Free Pap Smears and PSA Screening in the Family Islands.

To learn more about our work or how you can get involved, visit www.cancersocietybahamas.org/newsletter, call us at (242) 323-4441 or (242) 325-2483, or email us at admin@cancersocietybahamas.org. Whether as a volunteer, spokesperson, or advocate, your involvement can make a difference in creating a healthier Bahamas.