

CONSENSUS ACTION ON SALT AND HEALTH (CASH) recently disclosed that the average salt intake in the United Kingdom (UK) has fallen to 8.6g per day.

Professor Graham MacGregor, chairman of CASH, said this was the most important news that the organisation had heard about health and eating for a long time.

"Since the start of the salt reduction policy," he said, "salt intake has fallen in adults in the UK from 9.5g to 8.6g per day, that is, an approximate 10 per cent reduction in the national salt intake. This represents a

Salt intake falls in the UK

massive 19 700 tonnes of salt per year that has been removed from the UK diet.

Studies clearly suggest that each 1g/day reduction in the average salt intake would prevent at a minimum approximately 7 000 stroke/heart attack deaths a year in the UK, due to the fall in blood pressure that would occur. "As salt intake continues to fall over the next few years, the effect of this salt reduction policy on strokes and heart

attacks, the commonest cause of death in the UK, will become even larger."

"The reason that the average salt intake is falling is because many, but not all, food manufacturers and retailers, on an entirely voluntary basis, have reduced the amount of salt that they add to their foods. The UK is leading the world in the drive to save lives by cutting salt, and many other countries are now starting to follow the UK lead."

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The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has also announced that its programme will continue beyond 2012 and that it is introducing much stricter targets for the salt content of many categories of food. The aim must be to get salt intake as low as we can in order to save even more people from dying unnecessarily from strokes, heart attacks and heart failure.

Carrie Bolt, CASH nutritionist, said: "Many food manufacturers and retailers have now made quite large reductions in the amount of salt that they add to foods and these companies should be congratulated. However, there are still many companies that have made little effort to do this and we see wide differences in the salt content of many categories of foods.

"Incredibly, some of the products have as much as three times the salt content of similar products. If one manufacturer can produce a particular food with lower levels of salt, it is self-evident that others can also do it for the same product.

"Therefore, if these food manufacturers continue to refuse to cooperate with the new FSA salt targets, they should be highlighted and the public should be encouraged to boycott these unnecessarily high salt products."

Here in Barbados, the Heart and Stroke Foundation will continue to urge all to take less salt thereby reducing one's risk of suffering a heart attack or stroke.

Barbados gearing up for Heart & Stroke Week



AS PART of the drive to "Know Your Risk" for this year's World Heart Day, Barbadians are being encouraged to have their blood pressure tested. Last year, these Harrison College students had their pressure checked by HSFB personnel at a Health Fair at their school. (GP)

BY THE YEAR 2025 it is estimated that more than 1.5 billion people, or nearly one in three adults over the age of 25, will have high blood pressure (hypertension), one of the biggest single risk factors for heart disease and stroke, the world's No. 1 killer.

There are no obvious symptoms of high blood pressure, and the only way to know is by getting checked by a health-care professional. That's why this year's **World Heart Day** will be urging people to "*Know Your Risk!*"

Organised by the World Heart Federation, members and partners in more than 100 countries worldwide, **World Heart Day** activities include free heart health screenings, walks, runs, jump rope sessions, fitness events, public talks, scientific forums, exhibitions, concerts, sports tournaments and much more.

This year, **World Heart Day** will be held on September 28, and in Barbados the **Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados (HSFB)** is already geared up for an outstanding week of activities to recognise the occasion.

Barbados Heart Week will begin with a church service on **World Heart Day** itself. As with last year, the service will be held at St Matthias Anglican Church in Christ Church.

On Tuesday, September 30, the Foundation will open its doors to the public, giving them the opportunity to learn more about its work and projects, including the Cardiovascular Disease Prevention and Rehabilitation programme, popularly known as "The Gym With a Difference", and the Emergency Cardiac Care Programme.

The Open Day also allows a number of businesses associated with health care to display their products and services, and to join with the Foundation in promoting the notion of better health choices through counselling of visitors, interaction and the handing out of leaflets and other literature.

A discussion programme is planned for Wednesday, October 1, on **CBC TV**, when Foundation personnel and invited guests will share – with the large television audience –

information on the activities and future plans of the Foundation.

A Health Fair will be held at Harrison College during the day on Thursday, October 2, and in the evening at the same venue the highlight of the Week will take place – an awards ceremony for the Poster and Essay Competition for primary school students.

World Heart Day is supported globally by a number of internationally recognised companies. In Barbados Guardian Life of the Caribbean Limited has given yeoman support, teaming up with the **HSFB** over the past three years to sponsor a poster and essay competition; and the company indicated last year that it would continue its association with the event for a further three years.

This year's competition was launched in April and entries closed on July 31. It was open to students in two categories – 5 to 8 years and 9 to 11 years. The younger ones were asked to draw or paint a poster using the **World Heart Day** theme "*Know Your Risk!*", while those between 9 and 11 were asked to write an essay on the same topic. The format of the competition gives students the opportunity to learn by doing, so that they will make positive and far-reaching lifestyle changes.

A good number of entries were received in each category, and all are now waiting anxiously for the big day on October 2, when final results will be known, and presentation of the prizes made.

First prize in each category is \$400, second prize is \$200 and third prize is \$100. Each prize-winner will also receive a one-year subscription to the National Kids Geographic Magazine. Additionally, the school producing the winner in each category will receive a prize worth \$1 000.

Last year eight-year-old Keila Worrell, of Roland Edwards Primary School, was the winner of Poster Competition, while Olivia Alleyne, 10, of Christ Church Girls, came out tops in the Essay Competition for the second consecutive year.

Kiwanis Club of Bridgetown

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