- Lifestyles

A change in lifestyle can prevent diseases

Jamaica Gleaner · 21 May 2025 · D1 · Keisha Hill/ Senior Gleaner Writer

LIFESTYLE DISEASES refer to chronic conditions primarily caused by unhealthy habits and choices such as poor diet, smoking, a lack of physical activity, and excessive alcohol consumption. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is paramount as it is a potent preventive measure against lifestyle diseases.



Adopting healthy habits like exercising regularly, consuming a balanced diet, getting adequate sleep, stress management, and abstaining from substances like tobacco and excessive alcohol significantly reduces the chances of developing conditions like heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and some kinds of cancer.

Dr Orlando Thomas, medical doctor and functional medicine practitioner at Thomas Medical and Shockwave Centre, said during a recent Healthy Living Series: you can embrace the power of a healthy diet to prevent lifestyle diseases. A healthy diet also provides essential nutrients, antioxidants, and fibre, supporting overall health and strengthening the immune system.

In addition, engaging in consistent physical activity helps maintain a healthy weight by burning calories and building lean muscle mass, reducing the risk of obesity and related conditions such as heart disease and diabetes.

“Exercise strengthens the heart, improves blood circulation and lowers the risk of high blood pressure and heart attacks,” Dr Thomas said.

Sufficient hydration is required for a healthy lifestyle and is crucial in reducing the risk of lifestyle diseases. Adequate water intake ensures proper bodily functions and helps maintain optimal health. Hydration supports digestion, nutrient absorption, and detoxification, promoting overall gastrointestinal health. In addition, it aids in regulating body temperature, lubricating joints, and protecting organs.

“Optimal hydration supports cardiovascular health, prevents conditions like kidney stones, urinary tract infections, and constipation, promotes optimal cellular function and supports immune system function, thereby reducing the risk of infections and diseases. In addition, weight management can help reduce excessive calorie intake, improve metabolism, and promote feelings of fullness,” Dr Thomas said.

STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Adequate sleep is needed for preventing lifestyle diseases and maintaining optimal health. Sufficient sleep supports various bodily functions, including immune system regulation, hormone production, and cellular repair. “Lack of sleep and poor sleep quality are linked to an increased risk of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and mental health disorders,” Dr Thomas said.

Effective stress management techniques, like exercise, meditation, deep breathing, and engaging in hobbies, help counteract the negative impact of stress on the body.

“By reducing stress levels, individuals can improve their wellbeing, enhance immune function, regulate blood pressure, promote better sleep, and lower the risk of developing lifestyle-related diseases,” Dr Thomas said.

A healthy weight is optimal for an individual’s height, age, and body composition. Weight management is crucial for a healthy lifestyle as it helps prevent lifestyle diseases. Excess weight, especially obesity, can increase the chances of developing conditions like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, certain cancers, and joint problems.

“Maintaining a healthy weight with balanced nutrition and regular exercise promotes overall well-being. It improves cardiovascular health, enhances insulin sensitivity, regulates blood sugar, reduces inflammation, and lowers the risk of developing chronic diseases. Weight management plays a vital role in optimising health and preventing lifestyle-related illnesses,” Dr Thomas said.

A healthy lifestyle is crucial for preventing diseases and promoting overall well-being. By incorporating tips such as regular exercise, a balanced diet, sufficient hydration, stress management, and monitoring vital health markers, one can pave the way for a vibrant, disease-free life. Therefore, prioritise health today and reap the benefits for a lifetime.