

Health Ministry in Your Community

◆Initiation and Enhancement◆

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The Central States Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists

Health Ministry Department

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“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”
John 10:10

“Sickness, suffering, and death are work of an antagonistic power. Satan is the destroyer; God is the restorer.
The Ministry of Healing, page 113



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-Introduction-

We live in a world in which sickness, pain and suffering abound. Sickness and death are an inevitable part of human existence and there is a limit to the duration of our lives on this earth. Medical science has made tremendous strides in the treatment and prevention of disease. Despite the knowledge we have, there is still intolerable suffering every minute of time on this planet. In America today, trillions of dollars are spent on health care. Clinics and hospitals are found nationwide. Yet despite our medical institutions, much suffering continues unabated. Some have poor access to medical care due to lack of insurance or due to the fact that there is a misdistribution of medical services. Many need to be educated as to how they can find healing and how to maintain good health.

It may seem surprising to note that churches can play a substantial and efficacious role in the health of our nation. Strictly speaking, churches are not medical institutions. Yet it is a well established fact churches can in fact have a significant impact on the health of their members and the surrounding community.

We would like to submit to you now information that can help churches initiate or enhance their health ministry. We trust that this information will allow committed church members to help others to live longer here and also to find eternal life.

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Some Compelling Reasons for Doing Health Ministry

- We can minister as Jesus did: “*And Jesus went about all Galilee, **teaching** in their synagogues, and **preaching** the gospel of the kingdom, and **healing** all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.*” (Matthew 4:23)
- We have a mandate from the Scriptures: “*And as ye go, preach, saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils, freely ye have received, freely give.* (Matthew 10: 7-8)
- We have a mandate from the Sprit of Prophecy: “*I was again shown that the health reform is one branch of the great work which is to fit a people for the coming of the Lord. It is as closely connected with the third angel’s message as the hand is with the body.* (Counsels on Diet and Foods, page 69)
- We can help to reduce health disparities:
Churches by use of health promotion interventions can have a great potential to reduce health disparities. (Annual Review of Public Health 2007. 28:213-234)
- We can use information from the Adventist Health Study: The Adventist lifestyle has proven to improve the length and quality of life.
- We can reach a high-risk population: Regional churches are often located in the inner city

Health Disparities in the African American Community

- Heart disease death rate 29% higher, stroke rate 40% higher
- Prevalence of hypertension is among the highest in the world
- Twice as likely to have diabetes
- Obesity and physical inactivity are a major cause of such illnesses as diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers
- Death rate from all cancers 30% higher. Prostate cancer death rate twice as high, women 30% more likely to die of breast cancer
- Homicide rate 6 times higher
- Males have 8 times the AIDS rate and 9 times as likely to die. Females 25 times the AIDS rate and 22 times likely to die
- Infant mortality rate more than twice the rate for White infants
- Even when insured, less likely to receive: high tech intervention for heart attack and stroke, adequate prenatal care, cutting edge drugs for HIV infection, full options for treatment of prostate, breast and

Starting Health Ministry in Your Church

First Consider Some Important Goals For Health Ministry:

- **To promote total wellness: spiritual, physical, and mental. Empower people to live longer here and to also receive eternal life.**
- **To play a significant role in church growth**
- **To help reduce disparities**
- **To give care to everyone despite their ethnic group, social class or culture**

Getting Started:

- **Get your pastors support**
- **Develop a health team in your church**
- **Recruit and train church members to take part in health ministry**
- **Be familiar with the Scriptures, the Spirit of Prophecy, the Adventist Health Study, and the medical literature**
- **Make a yearly calendar for health ministry events and health promotion**
- **Network with other churches, community organizations, and health care facilities**
- **Make sure you minister to your own congregation**
- **Be aware of places in your community besides your own church where you can minister: shopping centers, libraries, barber and beauty shops, community events/festivals, community centers, and churches other than your own**
- **You can minister to people even if you have no formal medical training, but utilize if possible those who do. We will review below what you can do if there are no health professionals in your church.**

Major Health Priorities:

Heart Disease and Stroke

High Blood Pressure

Cancer: prostate, breast, colon, lung

Diabetes

Alzheimer's disease

Obesity and Physical Inactivity

Smoking, drug/alcohol abuse

AIDS and Sexually Transmitted disease

Doing Health Ministry If You are a Layperson

If you have the zeal and desire to serve your church and your community (even if you have no medical training) do not give up your vision. Consider now things that you can do to serve God and man:

- ▶ Study the Gospel accounts in particular as to how Jesus gave healing and wholeness to people.
- ▶ Read the book *Ministry of Healing* and other books by E.G. White.
- ▶ Look up information on websites. For an example, here are the 15 most popular websites for the latest health news: [Top 15 Health Websites | eBizMBA](#) (right click, then click “open hyperlink”). You can share with others the information you find.
- ▶ Be cautious about use of herbal medications and supplements. Do not assume that all of these things work or are safe. Ask for advice as needed about these.
- ▶ Try to contact a medical professional in a sister church or in the community for guidance as needed.
- ▶ Remind people to just go for doctor visits (especially men!) Remind people about the need for screenings such as blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, pap smears, mammograms, and colon tests. Screening may be needed even if someone is perfectly well.
- ▶ Remind people to take medications properly and to call their physician if they are having trouble with medication.
- ▶ Promote the use of a healthy diet: with plenty of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, reduced saturated fat, reduced trans fat, reduced fatty/fried foods, reduced salt (about 2500 mg daily—read labels!)

“Natural Remedies”

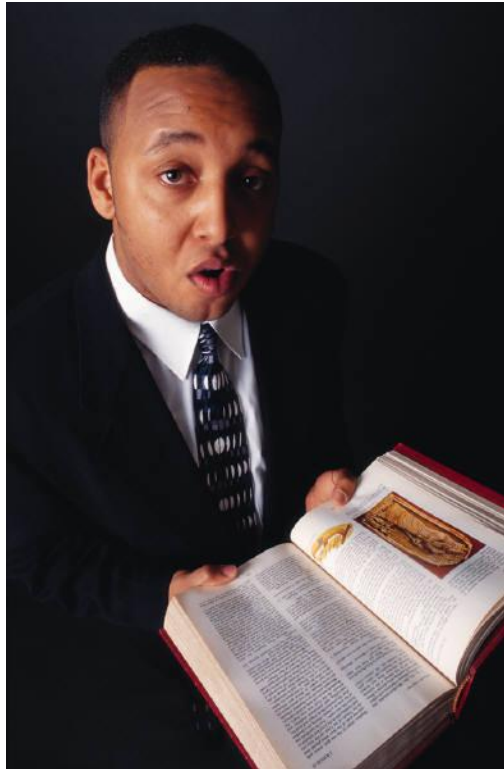
“Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies.”

Ministry of Healing, pg 127



- ▶ **Encourage exercise in your church—and do it yourself! Start a walking club and if possible give away or have people purchase a pedometer to help count their steps. Aim for 10,000 steps daily. Encourage at least 30 minutes of exercise daily.**
- ▶ **Encourage weight control.**
- ▶ **Encourage people to get help for addictions such as tobacco, alcohol and drugs.**
- ▶ **Look for opportunities to give brief health “nuggets” during Sabbath School time, and during the worship hour. Conduct an AY program on a health topic and invite speakers as needed.**
- ▶ **Help out with evangelistic meetings. Give brief health talks if possible near the beginning of the meetings.**
- ▶ **Help those who do not have a doctor find one.**
- ▶ **Try to help those who do not have health insurance to find clinics that help people without insurance. It is possible in the city you live in to find lists of such clinics**
- ▶ **Door-to door ministry can be considered. A team from your church can distribute health literature in your community. People in the community may initially be most receptive to literature on health topics such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.**
- ▶ **Organizations in your community such as the American Heart Association, and the American Diabetes Association, among others may have some excellent brochures and handouts, although these may need to be purchased.**

**Current Health Information to Improve Your
Ministry**



“When properly conducted, the health work is an entering wedge, making way for other truths to reach the heart.”

Counsels on Diet and Foods, page 73

Health Ministry in the End Time

On July 15 2004, Tommy G. Thompson then Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services presented testimony before the United States Committee on Appropriations and gave this testimony:

“The United States faces a grave and significant health challenge. Seven of 10 deaths each year are caused by chronic diseases. The underlying causes of these diseases are often risk factors that can be successfully modified years before they ultimately contribute to illness and death. Three such factors—tobacco use, poor nutrition, and lack of physical activity—are major contributors to the nation's leading killers. America's poor eating habits and lack of physical activity are literally killing us. Even worse, America's children are more sedentary and overweight than ever before. The prevalence of overweight has more than doubled in children and tripled in adolescents, and there are indicators that suggest that diabetes rates among children are also increasing.”

The Secretary went on to note the importance of **healthy lifestyles, health promotion, and disease prevention.**

These statements should make Seventh-day Adventists sit up and take notice. In fact the statements should be a clarion call for service, and to use the knowledge we have from the Spirit of Prophecy and the Scriptures to guide us in how we conduct our health ministry. We can also see the priorities we need to have in regards to our focus for ministry. We need to note that essentially what our health message teaches us is to endorse healthy lifestyles, health promotion, and disease prevention. Therefore our message will “scratch where it itches”. We can be used of God to help people to live longer and better here, and also to find eternal life. We should be trying to help people with the most critical health issues of our time. In doing this we will alleviate a significant burden of preventable illness and disability. What we are trying to cope with today for the most part are chronic diseases which are vast in scope, but amenable to relief by our health ministry. These are truly the diseases of the “end time”, and there has been little change over the years.

Leading Causes of Death in America

- 1) Heart Disease
- 2) Cancer
- 3) Chronic lung disease
- 4) Accidents
- 5) Stroke
- 6) Alzheimer's Disease
- 7) Diabetes
- 8) Influenza and Pneumonia
- 9) Kidney disease
- 10) Suicide

“When Christ healed disease, He warned many of the afflicted ones, ‘Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.’ John 5:14. Thus He taught that they had brought disease upon themselves by transgressing the laws of God, and that health could be preserved only by obedience.”

Ministry of Healing, page 113

“In teaching health principles, keep before the mind the great object of reform—that its purpose is to secure the highest development of body and mind and soul. Show that the laws of nature, being the laws of God, are designed for our good; that obedience to them promotes happiness in this life, and aids in the preparation for the life to come.”

Ministry of Healing, page 146

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Heart Disease



Heart disease is the leading cause of death in America today. There are different types of heart disease, but we must be most concerned about a condition called: coronary artery disease. This disease is related to loss of adequate blood supply to the heart muscle, which is due to narrowing or clogging of heart arteries. There may be symptoms of chest pain with this disorder. If the loss of blood supply is too great, the result is a “heart attack” in which part of the heart muscle dies and may be permanently damaged. Coronary artery disease may be caused by conditions as noted: smoking, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity and diabetes. This disease is highly preventable, and can be minimized and even helped (if present) by simple lifestyle changes. In your health ministry, try to educate your congregation and your community about things they can do to prevent heart attack, and to make changes also that may be helpful even after a heart attack. You can pass out brochures and handouts about this, and give brief health talks. You can promote exercise, smoking cessation, and weight loss. Classes can be conducted in your church to teach healthy cooking.

Risk Factors for Heart Disease

- Hypertension
- Diabetes
- High cholesterol
- Smoking
- Family history of heart attack
- Obesity
- Lack of exercise
- Stress

Reducing Your Risk of Heart Attack

- Get your blood pressure at least less than 140/90
- Get your blood sugar checked and under control
- Stop smoking
- Exercise 30 minutes daily
- Control your cholesterol with a diet low in saturated fats and no trans fats
- Control your weight by keeping your BMI less than 25 (see information on weight control)
- Learn to control stress

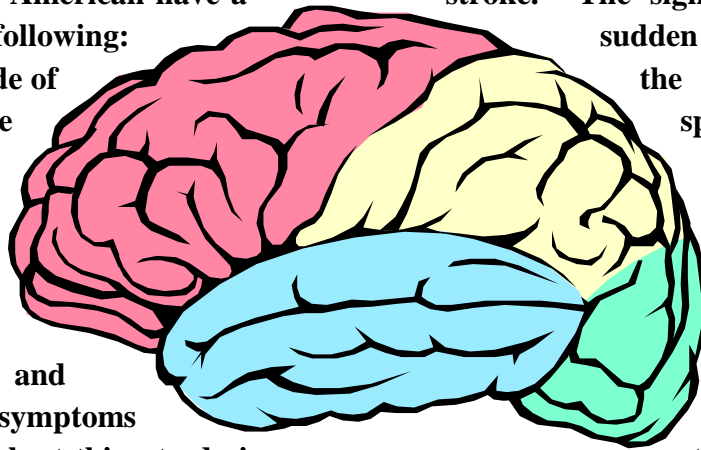
Signs of a Heart Attack

- Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain in the center of the chest.
 - Pain in one or both arms, back, neck, jaw or abdomen
 - Shortness of breath along with chest pain.
 - Cold sweating, nausea, dizziness
- CALL 911 FOR THESE SYMPTOMS**

Stroke

Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in America today.

What is a stroke? A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that should carry oxygen to the brain is blocked by a blood clot or the vessel bursts. When this occurs there is a loss of blood supply and oxygen to the brain and there is actually a death of brain tissue occurs. This may cause death or it may cause permanent injury and disability. Recovery from a stroke may be difficult or may be little if any recovery. For this reason, we need to do everything we can to prevent people from having such a potentially deadly illness. Every year about 700,000 American have a stroke. The signs of a stroke may include the following: sudden numbness or weakness on one side of the body, sudden confusion or trouble speaking on not being able to understand speech, sudden visual disturbance and trouble seeing in one or both eyes, sudden difficulty in walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination, and sudden severe headache. Such symptoms are a medical emergency and the best thing to do in this situation is to CALL 911.



The risk factors for stroke are similar to those for heart attack:

- Smoking
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Physical inactivity
- Obesity

The strategy to help prevent stroke or to help recover after one has occurred is to control the risk factors noted. As in preventing heart attack, simple lifestyle changes can play a decisive role in helping in avoiding this potentially devastating illness.

Look at this web sites to help your ministry for information on stroke

[Power to End Stroke](#) (right click, select *open hyperlink*)

Hypertension Screening and Health Evangelism

High blood pressure is a serious health issue for all Americans, but it is especially severe in the African American community as noted:

- ➔ African Americans have blood pressure readings that are among the highest in the world
- ➔ African Americans develop hypertension earlier in life and the hypertension tends to be more severe and result in more target organ damage such as the kidney, brain and blood vessels
- ➔ The greater burden of hypertension leads to an 80% higher stroke mortality rate, a 50% higher heart disease mortality rate and a 329% higher rate of hypertension related kidney disease compared to the general population

Churches can play a vital role in helping to relieve the suffering and premature death related to hypertension. By doing screening and education, your church can both alleviate suffering and allow for contacts that pave the way for the proclamation of the gospel.

Some Important Observations about hypertension screening outreach:

- It is cost effective in times of limited budgets
- It attracts attention
- It allows for individual counseling on a variety of topics in addition to hypertension
- It allows for referral and assistance to those without health insurance
- It will allow you to direct people to attend your church and to inform them about other church ministries and events
- You will have an opportunity for prayer ministry during the time of the screening as some people may request this
- When attending large community events such as health fairs and various festivals, you may be able to network with other churches and other community agencies to benefit your community
- Those in your church who do not have medical training are able to participate in the outreach. The blood pressure machines can be operated by anyone after training
- You will be able to give away many brochures, magazines, and items such as step-counters to the community
- Your church will be playing a role in helping to decrease the tremendous burden of preventable suffering and premature death in your community

Places to Minister:

- At your own church, as well as other churches
- At local community centers, and libraries
- At shopping and supermarkets
- At health fairs and community festivals
- At local barbershops and beauty shops

Equipment and personnel needed:

- 1-2 folding tables about 3X5 feet or so
- 8-10 folding chairs
- Battery powered, self-inflating arm blood pressure cuffs, that give a digital readout with regular sized cuffs and at least one extra-large cuff. These can be operated even by those who do not have formal medical training-after some appropriate instruction. These machines can be purchased at most local pharmacies without a prescription.
- A purchased 10 feet by 10 feet folding canopy tent that can be used for years. Some community festivals make these a necessity
- A plastic banner with your churches name on the banner. Also place a message on the banner about free blood pressure screening and counseling. These can be used for years.
- A sufficient number of brochures, and handouts on topics such as hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease as examples. Organizations such as the American Heart Association and the American Diabetes Association among others have literature, but there will be a charge for this. As an alternative, you can make up your own handouts. It is important for you to prepare a handout or even a card on which you can write down the blood pressure reading and date. Use this information to advise regular doctor visits lifestyle measures (see below), and taking medications properly.
- Sufficient volunteers. It is best to have about 2-4 people present at all times—depending on how many blood pressure machines you will be operating.
- Each church can make its own investment in needed equipment and most of the items noted can be purchased and used for years

Looking at blood pressure readings:

Blood pressure	Normal	Prehypertension	High
Systolic (top number)	Less than 120	120-139	140 or higher
Diastolic (lower number)	Less than 80	80-89	90 or higher

Remember that high blood pressure is a “silent killer”. You can have it and feel perfectly well. One-fourth of Americans have high blood pressure and sadly 65% of high blood pressure is not well controlled. About one-third of adults with high blood pressure do not know they have it! It is a major risk factor for heart attack, stroke, and kidney disease.

Here are some lifestyle measures that can be done to help control blood pressure:

- ✓ Measure blood pressure at home by purchasing a machine at your local pharmacy. Get a self-inflating, battery-powered machine with a digital readout
- ✓ Maintain a healthy body weight. What is a healthy weight? A simple clue is a waist size less than 35 for women and less than 40 for men. You can also look at a BMI or-body mass index chart (see this in a following section in this document on weight control). A good body mass index or BMI is less than 25. Losing even 10 pounds may help
- ✓ Reduce salt intake to about 2500 mg daily, or 1 teaspoon. Read labels to help with this as most of the salt we consume is already in the food we eat without sprinkling.
- ✓ Increase potassium intake by eating 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily
- ✓ Eat low fat dairy products—less whole milk, cheese, and ice cream
- ✓ Eat less red meat and more fish and poultry
- ✓ Eat more whole grains, some nuts (less than a handful unsalted) , and less processed foods, and fast foods
- ✓ Exercise at least 30 minutes daily
- ✓ Take medication properly. Know the names and doses of medications. It is not unusual to need more than one medication to control blood pressure
- ✓ **Both** the systolic and diastolic readings need to be under control: ideally about less than 140/90 which is how the blood pressure is written
- ✓ Use a blood pressure device as pictured



Cancer Outreach Ministry

In America today, cancer is the second leading cause of death. It may also be a major cause of disability and certainly, of suffering for those with cancer and their families. A truly comprehensive discussion of screening is beyond the scope of this manual. However for the sake of your health ministry, let us look at some basic knowledge that you can use to minister to your church and your community.

Statistics:

- The death rate for all cancers combined is about 35% higher in African American men and 18% higher in African American women compared to white men and women
- The most commonly diagnosed cancer among African American men is prostate (37%), lung (15%), and colon and rectum (9%)
- The most commonly diagnosed cancer among African American women is breast (27%), lung (13%), and colon and rectum (12%)

Risk Factors:

- Tobacco use-which contributes to cancer of the lung, throat, nasal passages, lip, mouth, esophagus, pancreas, uterus, kidney, bladder, stomach and is also related to a type of leukemia
- Obesity and Overweight-related to cancer of breast, colon, rectum, uterus, gallbladder, pancreas, liver, stomach, kidney, and the esophagus
- Physical inactivity-being more physically active is associated with a lower risk of colon cancer and female breast cancer

Cancer related check-up

During a visit to the doctor's office, it is routine to do examinations as per gender for cancers of the thyroid, mouth, skin, testes, ovaries, and lymph glands. This examination varies in sensitivity as not all cancers can be detected and some may be hard to detect on a physical, such as cancer of the ovary. At the time of a physical, all health problems and risk factors can be reviewed. It is important to advise people to go for a general check-up at intervals agreed to by a medical provider and the person being screened.

Screening for Cancer:

Guidelines for screening for cancer change from time to time and the tests to be done need to be discussed and agreed upon by those being screened and their doctors. In addition, the timing of tests and choice of tests may need to change if someone in the immediate family has had certain cancers. These are important topics to be discussed with a doctor.

Special screening for certain sites is as follows:

- ▶ **Breast cancer**-mammograms, and breast examination in the office. The timing of these examinations, and other examinations such as ultrasound and MRI needs to be discussed with a medical provider
- ▶ **Colon and rectal cancer**-Usually beginning at age 50 screening is done. Earlier testing may be needed for a family history of colon cancer. Options include a colonoscopy, flexible sigmoidoscopy, barium enema, and stool testing. Colon polyps and cancers will be the areas of concern.
- ▶ **Cancer of the uterus**- This includes the Pap tests of the tip of the uterus (cervix), and as needed special tests of the lining of the uterus as needed
- ▶ **Prostate cancer**- This testing requires a discussion between the person being screened and the doctor to discuss risks and benefits. The testing involves a rectal examination of the prostate and a blood test called the PSA. Screening may start at age 40. Family history is important to also guide in timing of screening.

Please see the web site noted for more detailed information: (right click, and click open hyperlink)

[ACS :: American Cancer Society Guidelines for the Early Detection of Cancer](#)

What You Should Know About Diabetes

What is Diabetes?

It is a chronic condition that has no cure, but can be treated effectively. It is marked by high blood glucose levels resulting from defects in insulin production, insulin action or both. The cause continues to be a mystery although genetics, obesity, and lack of exercise play important roles.

Major types of Diabetes:

- ❖ **Type I diabetes:** This results from the body's failure to produce insulin. 5-10% of American have this type of diabetes
- ❖ **Type 2 diabetes:** This results from insulin resistance in that the body fails to use insulin properly. 90-95% of Americans have this type of diabetes
- ❖ **Gestational diabetes:** This occurs with pregnancy, and 5-10% of women are found later to have diabetes, usually type 2. This usually resolves after delivery
- ❖ **Pre-diabetes:** This is a condition in which a person's blood sugar is higher than normal, but not high enough to diagnose type 2 diabetes

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ About 29.1 million people in the United States have diabetes
- ❖ 8.1 million of these people have diabetes, but do not know it
- ❖ 86 million American have pre-diabetes (This is a condition that in general is without symptoms)
- ❖ Given present trends, for those born in 2000, one in three Americans, and 1 in 2 minorities will develop diabetes in their lifetime

Health Disparities and Diabetes:

- ❖ Diabetes occurs in people of all ages and races, some groups have a higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes than others
- ❖ Type 2 diabetes is more common in African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders, as well as the aged population

- ❖ African Americans are 1.6 times more likely to have diabetes as non-Hispanic whites
- ❖ Compared to non-Hispanic whites, African Americans have a greater burden of complications such as blindness, kidney disease and amputations

Risk Factors for Diabetes:

- ❖ A family history of diabetes
- ❖ Being a member of a minority ethnic group as noted before
- ❖ Being overweight or obese
- ❖ Childhood obesity
- ❖ History of having diabetes during pregnancy or having a baby weighing more than 9 pounds
- ❖ Lack of exercise

Signs and Symptoms:

- ❖ There may be no symptoms
- ❖ Unexplained weight loss
- ❖ Excessive thirst and excessive urination
- ❖ Blurred vision
- ❖ Repeated and persistent infections
- ❖ Tingling in the fingers & toes

Complications of Diabetes:

- ❖ Heart disease and Stroke
- ❖ Hypertension
- ❖ Visual Loss
- ❖ Kidney disease
- ❖ Nervous system disease (neuropathy-loss of sensation, and at times foot pain)

- ❖ Amputations
- ❖ Dental disease
- ❖ Pregnancy complications

Remember these complications are largely preventable.

All about Prediabetes:

- ✓ A condition in which blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not yet high enough to be called diabetes
- ✓ Fasting blood sugar 100-125 (fasting blood sugar 126 or greater is diabetes, and a blood sugar 200 or greater after eating is consistent with diabetes)
- ✓ Helped by 30 minutes of moderate activity daily and 5-10% weight reduction

Thriving With Diabetes:

- ❖ Eat well as instructed by a dietician
- ❖ Be active every day. Exercise 30-60 minutes daily
- ❖ See your health care team regularly at agreed times. Call them for any problems
- ❖ Take charge of your health, you are responsible for controlling your blood sugar
- ❖ Check your blood sugar regularly at home (fasting and after supper, and other times as needed)
- ❖ Take your medication as prescribed, even if you have no symptoms of diabetes.
- ❖ Take care of your heart: watch your blood pressure, cholesterol, and triglycerides
- ❖ Take care of your eyes: have a dilated eye exam each year
- ❖ Take care of your feet: inspect your feet, and have them looked at during appointments
- ❖ Take care of your kidneys: get needed blood and urine tests
- ❖ Get your Hemoglobin A1c (HGBA1c) checked every 3-6 months. This tells how well your diabetes is controlled. Please discuss this with your doctor.

Some Important goals:

Blood Pressure	About 130/80
Cholesterol	LDL less than 100 HDL above 45 for men HDL above 55 for women
Triglycerides	Less than 150
A1C (HbA1c)	Less than 7
BMI (Body Mass index as available on Charts using height and weight)	Less than 25

The LDL may be referred to as the “bad cholesterol” and HDL the “good cholesterol”

The Triglycerides are another type of fat measured on blood tests

The A1C is a special test done every 3-6 months to help tell how well the diabetes is controlled

The BMI is found on special charts that help determine where one is as far as a healthy weight is concerned

What is a healthy diet?

- ❖ A healthy diet is a way of eating that maintains overall health and prevents or reduces risk for complications such as heart disease and stroke.
- ❖ Healthy eating includes eating a wide variety of foods including vegetables, whole grains, fruits, non-fat dairy products, beans, and lean meats, poultry and fish.
- ❖ There is no one perfect food so including a variety of different foods and watching portion sizes is key to a healthy diet
- ❖ Make choices from each food group that provides the highest quality nutrients. In other words, pick foods rich in vitamins, minerals and fiber over those that are processed.
- ❖ People with diabetes can eat the same foods the family enjoys. Everyone benefits from healthy eating so the whole family can take part in healthy eating.

- ❖ It takes some planning but you can fit your favorite foods into your meal plan and still manage your blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol.

Some Important Medication you might need to take:

- ❖ Aspirin (in general 81 mg daily)
- ❖ Lisinopril, Cozaar and other such drugs to protect your kidneys
- ❖ Statins: To control your cholesterol e.g. Lovastatin, Zocor, Lipitor
- ❖ Oral medications for glucose control: glyburide, glipizide, metformin
- ❖ Insulin: examples: NPH, Regular, 70/30

These medications and others as needed **must be taken under medical supervision**. Not all or perhaps none may be needed, depending on your lifestyle and how well your diabetes and other important blood test values are controlled.

Remember: One can thrive with diabetes, and also prevent diabetes and prediabetes by living a healthy lifestyle. In your health ministry, you can help people to achieve this.



- ❖ [American Diabetes Association Home Page www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)
- ❖ [WHO | Diabetes](#)

Some helpful web sites (right click and click open hyperlink)

What You Should Know About Alzheimer's Disease



What is Alzheimer's disease?

- A disorder that results in the destruction of brain cells and abnormal structures in the brain: “plaques”, “tangles” and atrophy
- It is a progressive and fatal brain disease
- It is the 6th leading cause of death in America
- There is no cure at the present time
- It is one form of what we call “dementia”, and is the most common form

An Overview of “Dementia”:

- Dementia may cause changes in the following: memory, orientation, judgment, intelligence, perception, and mood
- Not a disease in itself but a broader set of symptoms
- Early diagnosis is important

Diseases and Conditions that may cause or mimic dementia:

- Alzheimer's disease
- Vascular dementia
- Parkinson's disease
- Huntington's disease
- Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease
- Pick's disease
- Lewy body dementia

- Depression
- Brain tumors
- Head injuries
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Hydrocephalus
- Infections
- Drug reactions
- Alcohol abuse
- Thyroid disease

Demographics:

- More than 5 million people in America have Alzheimer's disease, and is on the rise.
- It is more prevalent among African Americans than whites: Estimated at 14% to almost 100% higher
- Over 10% of all persons over 65 and nearly half of those over 85 have Alzheimer's disease
- More common in woman

A Public Health Crisis in the African American Community:

- There may be a lack of awareness as to how serious the problem is
- There is a greater issue with vascular disease that may play a key role in African Americans (related to hypertension, high cholesterol, obesity and diabetes)
- The epidemic will continue to spread as our population ages

Risk Factors for Alzheimer's disease:

- Age: greater than age 65, but there is an early onset form that may start as early as age 30
- Family history: in a first degree relative
- Vascular insult conditions: hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol, smoking, obesity, physical inactivity
- History of head injury

Memory Changes Related to Normal Aging:

- Forgetting part but not all of an experience
- Able to remember experiences later
- Able to follow written and spoken, rather than being unable to do this
- Able to use notes as reminders rather than being unable to use notes at all
- Able to care for oneself rather than needing assistance with daily tasks

Warning Signs of Alzheimer's disease:

- Memory loss
- Difficulty doing familiar tasks
- Problems with talking or writing
- Confusion about time or place
- Loss of judgment

- Difficulty with abstract thinking
- Misplacing things
- Changes in mood or behavior
- Changes in personality
- Loss of motivation

Medical Evaluation for Alzheimer's disease:

- Review of the medical history: current, past problems, family history, drugs, medication, alcohol use, supplement use, head injuries
- Physical examination, including neurological examination
- Tests of mental function
- Laboratory testing
- Brain imaging: MRI scan, PET scan

Treatment Considerations:

- Consider the total medical history: other health issues that may increase the risk for injury
- Consider the social situation: family members, support system, economic issues, medical team
- Consider the stage of the illness
- Remember the length of the illness may be anywhere from 8 to 20 years

Medications that may be used:

- Specific drugs to affect brain chemistry: *Aricept, Exelon, Razadyne* (cholinesterase inhibitors), *Namenda* (regulates a brain chemical called glutamate). These are not at all a cure
- Antidepressants
- Medication for anxiety
- Medications for: hallucinations, delusions, aggression
- Sedatives

Safety Considerations:

- Prevention of physical injury such as fall injury
- Prohibit driving
- Proper administration of medication
- Prevent dangerous wandering
- Caregiver help with daily needs, and support also for the caregiver!

The Church as a Support System:

- Pray with and for the person with Alzheimer's disease and their families
- Attending a worship service with music, praise and preaching may be uplifting
- Talk with, not over or around the person with Alzheimer's disease
- Support the caregiver
- At some point in time educate the congregation about Alzheimer's disease

Reducing Your Risk of Dementia:

- Do what is necessary to protect blood flow to the brain and protect the vascular system
- Control hypertension, diabetes, cholesterol, body weight
- Exercise on a regular basis
- If you smoke—STOP!
- Consume a low fat, low cholesterol diet
- Stay socially active-Go to church!
- Stay mentally active-use the Scriptures!
- Keep your blood pressure around 120/80
- Keep your fasting blood sugar about 90-120, your sugar after eating less than 180; your hemoglobin A1c less than 7
- Keep your LDL cholesterol as low as possible-100 is ideal
- Keep your body mass index as close to 25 as possible
- Remember exercise is not an option! Exercise is needed for good health and prevention.

For more information and help:

Contact the Alzheimer's Association

1-800-272-3900 www.alz.org (right click, select open hyperlink)

Obesity, Overweight and Physical Inactivity



BODY MASS INDEX CHART

Height (inches)	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
58	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167
59	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173
60	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	174	179
61	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185
62	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180	186	191
63	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186	191	197
64	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192	197	204
65	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210
66	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	216
67	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223
68	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216	223	230
69	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223	230	236
70	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243
71	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250
72	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	242	250	258
73	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265
74	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272
75	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279
76	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	254	263	271	279	287

Modern research has shown that being overweight or obese increases the risk of some serious health disorders. This is becoming a worldwide health issue, but the problem is especially severe today in America. We consume too many calories and our lives are too sedentary. Using the BMI chart and the waist circumference, we can identify issues with weight.

How Evaluate Your Weight

Look at your Body Mass Index (BMI) using your height and weight; and/or use your waist circumference:

Obesity=BMI 30 or higher

Overweight=BMI 25-29.9

Normal=BMI 18.5-24.9

Underweight=BMI less than 18.5

Male with waist circumference more than 40 inches; and female with waist circumference more than 35 inches= higher risk of obesity related conditions

Health risks due to being obese or overweight:

- Heart disease
- Type 2 diabetes
- Certain cancers (endometrial, breast, colon)
- Hypertension
- Cholesterol disorders
- Stroke
- Liver and Gallbladder disease
- Sleep apnea and other respiratory problems
- Osteoarthritis
- Gynecological problems (abnormal periods, infertility)

Life in America:

- **The majority of the U.S. population is relatively physically inactive**
- **We have things to keep us inactive: TV, video games, cars, mass transit**
- **68% of black women, 63% of black men, and 56% of white women and men are physically inactive and 2/3 of all Americans are overweight or obese**

The Cost of a sedentary lifestyle:

- **One of the ten leading causes of death and disability in the world**
- **Increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, colon and breast cancer, high blood pressure, cholesterol disorders, and other health concerns**
- **Has a similar negative impact as smoking!**

The Benefits of Exercise:

- Reduces the risk of premature death
- Reduces the risk of developing heart disease
- Reduces blood pressure
- Helps control cholesterol
- Helps to control diabetes

- Helps control weight
- Builds and maintains healthy muscles, bones, joints
- Reduces depression and anxiety
- Improves work performance

Exercise Daily:

- **It is not an option**
- **Try walking at least 30 minutes (or more) daily-get a step counter to help**

- **The benefits from exercise exceed any medications we have**
- **Try alternative forms of exercise if you have joint problems: such as swimming and pool exercising**

Forms of Exercise:

- **Aerobics: walking, jogging, biking, swimming**
- **Flexibility training: stretching, yoga tai chi, martial arts**
- **Strength training: Weight and resistance training**

Getting Started:

- **Get medical clearance if needed**
- **Potential concerns: heart disease, heart irregularities, uncontrolled high blood pressure, smoking, extreme obesity, chronic joint problems, asthma, diabetes, years of a sedentary lifestyle**

Aerobic Exercise:

- **Gets your heart rate up, and makes you sweat**
- **Get your heart rate to 60-80% of your target heart range found by this formula:
220-age**
- **Try for 30 minutes daily**

Examples of Aerobic Exercise:

- **Walking, treadmill**
- **Jogging**
- **Exercise bike, road bike**
- **Swimming, pool exercise**
- **Elliptical trainer**
- **Exercise DVD's, tapes**
- **Sit and Be Fit!**
- **Other activities such as gardening, yard work**

- Incorporate into your life: take the stairs, park farther away!

Strength Training- It's For Everyone:

- It is more important as you get older
- Try to do weight or resistance training 2-3 days weekly. All you need is about 20 minutes
- Example: pushups, crunches, biceps curls, triceps exercises, shoulder exercises, squats, arm rows

A Healthy Diet:

- Eat less red meat and more poultry and fish
- Try to reduce fried foods
- Use only liquid oils to cook with
- Use little salt and sugar when cooking
- Eat less processed and snack foods
- Try to avoid fast foods
- Eat at least 5 servings of fresh fruits and vegetables daily

Some Tips for Weight Loss:

- Join a gym and get a personal trainer if needed
- Use exercise DVD's and videos at home
- To accomplish weight loss, you need to burn more calories than you take in. One pound = 3500 calories so you need to reduce your daily intake by 500-100 calories daily to lose 1-2 pound each week (the most reasonable goal)
- Remember even losing 5-10 percent of your body weight may produce benefits such as better blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol
- Weigh yourself daily and keep a record of this
- Make a life-long commitment to maintain a healthy weight. Exercising 60-90 minutes daily and using a sensible diet will help with this

A helpful website from the North American Division Health Ministry Department:

[InStep for Life](#) (right click and choose-open hyperlink)

A Ministry to Those with Addictions: Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs

Smoking Cessation:

Call NCI's Smoking Quitline: 1-877-44U-QUIT (1-877-448-7848)

It's an Addiction!

- Nicotine is a drug found in tobacco
- Nicotine is as addictive as heroin or cocaine
- Over time one may smoke more
- Withdrawals symptoms occur when quitting

Cigarette smoking is the single most important cause of preventable premature death in the United States!



Smoking in the U.S.

- 25% of adults are smokers
- Men and women smoke at equal rates
- 1.3 million people quit each year
- 3,000 teens start smoking each day

Health Consequences of Smoking

Heart disease
Lung disease
Cancer
Blockage of arteries
Stroke
Cataracts
Gum and tooth disease
Visual impairment



A cigarette contains: 4,000 chemicals, tar and nicotine

A Strategy for Quitting Smoking:

- ▶ Pick a “Quit Day—A day to start a hopeful journey
- ▶ Get ready for quit day by marking the day on a calendar
- ▶ Tell family and friends—enlist their help
- ▶ Get rid of cigarettes, ash trays and lighters
- ▶ Stock up on things like sugarless gum and hard candy to use instead of smoking
- ▶ On your quit day—do not smoke even one puff!!
- ▶ Keep active-try exercising or do a hobby
- ▶ Consider use of smoking aids
- ▶ Avoid smoking situations
- ▶ Reduce or avoid alcohol, and caffeine

Smoking Aids:

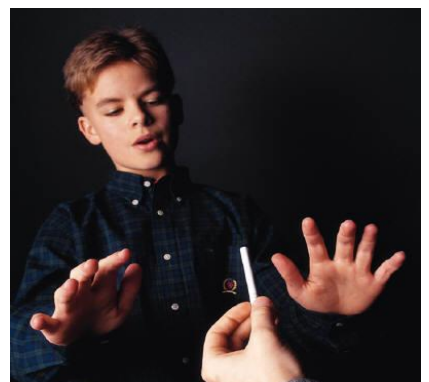
- ✓ Nicotine patches and gum
- ✓ Pills such as Wellbutrin and Chantix
- ✓ Classes and support groups
- ✓ Discuss these things with your medical provider
- ✓ Call the Quitline
- ✓ These Aids may significantly help your chances of quitting

Dealing with Withdrawal

- Avoid temptation
- Change habits: switch to juices or water rather than alcohol, take a walk instead of a coffee break
- Exercise and eat less fat, sweets and calories to avoid weight gain
- Use sugarless gum, hard candy, carrot sticks or sunflower seeds
- Do something to reduce your stress-exercise, seek spiritual help

Coping with Stress

- *Have faith in God*
- *Study the Bible*
- *Pray for divine help*
- *Talk with a trusted friend*
- *Learn to relax*
- *Get 7-8 hours of sleep daily*
- *Exercise at least 30 minutes daily*
- *Eat properly: three meals daily, avoid snacking*
- *Have a hobby*
- *Work out anger*



Alcohol and Drug Use:

You may not have training or experience to help those who have addictions; however there are things you can do to help.

You can have a meeting in your church or even your home or other suitable location to have a **support group to pray with and to just have a discussion with those who are battling with addictions. Remember that what goes on in these meetings is totally confidential, and that church members may be much more reticent to come to these meetings than non-members. You can meet weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly as agreed upon by all concerned. You should also advise those you serve to also get help from professional services as needed. Obtain your pastors support in this ministry.**

Here are some things you can do in your support group which you can give the name “Addiction Recovery Support Group”, or another name you might prefer:

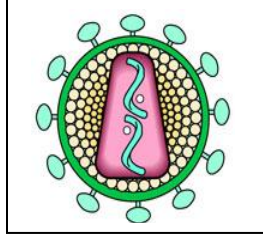
- ➡ Study together the chapter in the book *Ministry of Healing* entitled: “Working for the Intemperate” pages 171-182**
- ➡ Review the 12 Steps noted on these pages. These have been used since about 1935 to help first with alcoholism but have also been used for other issues such as dependency on narcotics, cocaine, food, sex and gambling among others**

The 12 steps to help with overcoming addictions:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Educating the Church About AIDS/HIV and Sexually Transmitted Diseases

AIDS/HIV



HIV infection and AIDS:

- **HIV (the human immunodeficiency virus) causes infection and eventually AIDS (the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome)**
- **The HIV infection gradually destroys the immune system, which makes it harder to ward off infections and some cancers**

How is HIV Spread?

- Sexual Activity**
- Sharing needles used in injecting drugs**
- Transfusion of infected blood or blood products (low risk in US)**
- Mothers can transmit to babies before birth, during birth and with breast feeding**

The Global Impact of HIV/AIDS:

- Over 35 million people now live with HIV or AIDS**
- Every day over 6000 people become infected with HIV**
- 15 million children have been orphaned by AIDS**
- More than 28 million people have died of AIDS since 1981.**

The Impact of AIDS/HIV on America

- **About 1.2 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in America**
- **Since the start of the epidemic more than 650,000 people have died**
- **50,000 people are infected each year**
- **Washington DC has the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in America with 1 in 20 people living with HIV/AIDS**
- **African Americans bear the greatest burden of HIV/AIDS. They are about 14% of the population but 44% of people with new infections**

How is HIV NOT Spread:

- ✓ **Shaking hands**
- ✓ **Everyday contact at school, work or in social settings**
- ✓ **Insects**
- ✓ **Touching a doorknob**
- ✓ **From pets**
- ✓ **From food**
- ✓ **Note: the virus does not live long outside the body**

Symptoms of HIV Infection:

- **Diarrhea, Fatigue, Fever**
- **Frequent vaginal yeast infections**
- **Headache**
- **Mouth sores**
- **Muscular stiffness or aching**
- **Sore throat**
- **Swollen lymph glands**
- **NO SYMPTOMS**
- **People with HIV may have no symptoms for up to 10 years**

Preventing HIV Infection:

- Abstaining from any sexual contact*
- Having a mutually faithful monogamous relationship with an HIV free partner*
- Consistent use of condoms which may reduce risk of infection by 80%, but by no means giving complete protection*
- Avoid injection of drugs and shared needles*
- Circumcision in males-this may reduce risk by 60%*
- Frequent testing for HIV infection for potential exposure so treatment can be given as needed and avoid spreading HIV*
- Continual education of all young people on the dangers of unsafe sex practices*
- Remember: One fourth of HIV infected persons or more are unaware they have it*

Getting Tested

- ❖ **By looking in the phone book you can find places to get tested with state and city health departments**
- ❖ **Testing is free, anonymous and confidential**
- ❖ **Some have advised routine screening for all adolescents and adults-in the future universal screening may be advised**

HIV and Sexually Transmitted Diseases

- ❖ **There is a connection between HIV and other STD's**
- ❖ **If a person has another STD (such as syphilis, gonorrhea, or herpes), that person is three to five times more likely to pass HIV to someone else**
- ❖ **It is important to be tested for other STD's when being tested for HIV**

Sexually Transmitted Diseases:

What is a sexually transmitted disease (STD)?

These are a group of infections that a person can get from sexual contact. This contact can include vaginal, anal or oral sexual contact. These infections may also be spread by skin to skin touching of certain body parts and kissing. If not treated, STD's can cause serious health problems such as cervical cancer, liver damage, brain damage, inability to have children, and even death. STD's can be prevented and this is the best approach. An STD can be treated, with some being, curable and others requiring management with ongoing treatment. There are about 20 STD's but we will focus on the most common ones.

What are some of the common symptoms of STD's?

- Genital discharge, itching
- Pain or burning with urination
- Sores, bumps, warts, blisters on genitals
- Pain in the lower abdomen, pelvis area
- Also one can have an STD with **no** symptoms

Some Common STD's

<i>Name of STD</i>	<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>
HPV (human papilloma virus)	Warts in vaginal, penis or rectal area. May cause cancer of cervix or vagina	No medicine can cure warts. They can be removed. Repeated examinations needed
Chlamydia	No symptoms at times in women. Discharge from vagina, penis. Pain in pelvis	Antibiotics can cure the infection. Both partners must be treated
Gonorrhea	Discharge from vagina, penis. Pain with urination. Pelvic pain	Both partners must be treated with antibiotics
Syphilis	A painless sore on genitals, or in mouth area. Rash also possible	Both partners must be treated with antibiotics
Herpes (a viral infection)	Painful blisters in vaginal or penile area, that may come and go	Not curable but treatment available
HIV	The cause of AIDS	Not curable, but treatment is available
Hepatitis B (a viral infection)	Causes inflammation of the liver. Fever, diarrhea and vomiting may occur.	A vaccine may prevent this. No cure is available, but it may get better with time
Trichomoniasis	Women have heavy vaginal discharge Men may have no symptoms	Antibiotics are curable
Pubic Lice ("crabs")	Redness and itching caused by lice	Medication can cure this infection

Risk factors for getting STD's

- ▶ Even a single sexual contact can cause infection
- ▶ A person can get more than one infection from one sexual contact
- ▶ A person who looks healthy and has no symptoms may still have an STD
- ▶ Unprotected sexual contact is risky
- ▶ It is possible to get diseases that may also be sexually transmitted by sharing needles to inject drugs, steroids, vitamins, and hormones. Also tattooing and body piercings may spread these diseases such as HIV, Hepatitis B and also Hepatitis C

Testing

- Consider testing for unprotected sexual contact, after sharing needles or other exposures as noted
- Confidential testing and treatment is possible after calling the local health department
- Learn all you can from your health care provider. You may want to get an evaluation even if there are no symptoms
- When testing for HIV, STD testing must also be considered

Prevention of STD's

- Avoiding sexual contact as it is the one sure way to prevent STD's
- Use latex condoms properly for all sexual contact
- Have sexual contact with one faithful partner
- Never share needles for injecting anything
- Using any drugs or alcohol may increase risky behavior that can lead to getting an STD

Educating the church and the community about HIV/AIDS and STD's

These are sensitive topic for discussion in the church. We still need to take the time to inform people in the church and the community about these issues as many are at risk, especially our young people. Use AY time or have a “rap” group with just the young people being present.

Some Helpful Web Sites

[Sexually Transmitted Diseases - Information from CDC](#)

[African-American HIV/AIDS Resource Center: HIV & Black Churches](#)

Church Health Outreach to the African American Community-The Role of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

It Started with a Vision!

The time was June 6, 1863. The place was Otsego, Michigan at the home of fellow believers with visitors James and Ellen White also present. It was here that the subject of health reform was opened to Ellen White in vision. Subsequent to this, as is well known, a plethora of books, articles and manuscripts were produced by this individual who is considered to be under divine inspiration in the things that she spoke and said. It is good to look back at the things she said. It is also gratifying to see that we have as a result of her spoken and written words information that even



James

today can help us live longer and better. In fact, we ignore her words to our peril. Today we in the Seventh-day Adventist Church consider her counsel along with key Bible texts to be our “health message”. The key tenets of our health message can be summarized as follows: (See *The Great Visions of Ellen G. White*, Volume I, pages 93-97)

“I saw that it was a sacred duty to attend to our health, and arouse others to their duty.”

The Great Visions of Ellen G. White, Volume I page
93

- **The care of our health should be considered a religious duty:** We have a duty to care for our bodies to keep them in as good a condition as possible and to teach others, who may not have our knowledge to do the same.
- **Disease is caused by a violation of the “laws of health”:** in other words by wrong choices, and living an unhealthy lifestyle we can bring avoidable illness on ourselves.
- **The need to practice temperance:** Temperance is defined as avoiding that which is harmful and judicious use of that which is healthful. She advised avoiding alcohol, tobacco, tea, coffee, highly spiced food, overwork and unbridled sexual behavior.
- **Promotion of a vegetarian diet:** The original diet of Adam and Eve was advised, which means use of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Avoiding in particular meat such as pork.
- **The control of appetite:** Too frequent eating of food and eating too much food were to be avoided.
- **The need to control the mind and emotions.** We need to avoid states of mind that can cause disease. This may include stress, anxiety and depression.
- **Using “natural remedies” in healing.** These can be described using the modern day mnemonic as NEWSTART. This includes proper nutrition, exercise, pure water, sunlight, temperance, pure air, proper rest, and trust in divine power.

- **Practicing personal cleanliness.** This included body cleanliness, clean clothing and a clean environment.
- **Church health education:** The church needs to accept the mission to teach members and those outside the church to adopt a health-preserving lifestyle.

The Current State of the World's Health

Ellen G. White described the world as being a “vast lazar house” (*Desire of Ages*, page 823). In other words, this world is a place where sickness, death and pain abound. Some illness is unexpected, but all too often illness is related to the personal choices, lifestyle and habits that people have. This means that there is a significant amount of preventable suffering, premature death and illness in the world today.

Traditionally in the developing countries of the world, the populace suffered for the most part from infectious diseases such as AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. In contrast, more developed countries suffered from chronic diseases not spread by infection such as cancer, hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. However, we have a new alarming trend in the world today, in that chronic diseases such as those noted above are now becoming a world-wide phenomenon. Thus poorer countries must now contend with the infectious diseases they have hand for many years in addition to the ailments more common in richer countries. The key to helping to improve health is lifestyle changes, and this needs to be done on a global level. Since the health message of our church aims to prevent illness and encourage a healthy lifestyle—we can see that this message is needed as never before, and it is needed worldwide!

The Current State of Health in America

In general, we are a nation in which our lifestyles are contributing to a large degree to preventable illness and premature death:

- We are having a continued growth in excessive body weight in both adults and children.
- Obesity contributes to a number of serious health conditions such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer. In particular we are having an epidemic of diabetes.
- Our diet is unhealthy with too few fruits and vegetables, and too much salt, sugar, fat and calories. Overindulgence and super sized servings are common.

- We are in general a sedentary nation, and this serves to produce a substantial burden of preventable illness.
- We are burdened by chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and stroke that account for about 60% of our health care expenditures. 7 of 10 deaths each year are caused by chronic diseases.
- Modifiable risk factors are present that if controlled can produce a large impact in disease reduction. Simple things such as stopping smoking, regular exercise, and eating a more healthy diet are crucial.
- We as a nation spend more than any nation world-wide for health care. We often have high-tech expensive health care. However, as noted above, simple low tech changes in lifestyle can have the largest, and cheapest impact. **We need to change our lifestyles.**
- There is a shortage of primary care providers who can provide needed preventive care and management of chronic health conditions.

The Current State of Health in the African American Community

When working in the African American community, one needs to be aware of the fact that this population is one of those (along with Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians, and Pacific Islanders) that suffers from an increased burden of illness and suffering due to the most serious causes of death and sickness in America. This situation is described by the term “health disparity”. What this means is premature deaths, a decrease in quality of life, a loss of economic opportunity, and feelings of being subjected to injustice. (The specific illnesses and conditions have been noted above.) The causes of disparities may be due to racism, socioeconomic status, lifestyle choices, and a poor environment. This situation is not new and has persisted for many decades and in the face of rising health care costs/spending and many available medical facilities in this country. Given the fact that the SDA church has been given a potentially powerful health message, we should accept the challenge and the mandate to do what we can as a church to help improve the health of of our church members and the surrounding community. We dare not fail to do this.

Why Regional Churches Should do Health Ministry

From coast to coast, regional churches are frequently in the vicinity of impoverished black communities, where there is much preventable suffering. These churches are indeed in the “hood”. Considering what we have as a church, we need to accept the challenge to do **preaching, teaching, and healing** and fulfill the mandate we have been given as noted above.

What Adventist Churches Can and Should do to Minister to the African American Community

- **Every** church should have a health ministry department- a layperson can do this and have a health committee as well, (as noted above) to help with the ministry.
- Pastors can play a key role in promoting health among their members and in their communities.
- Network with other churches and with other agencies such as the American Diabetes Association, the American Heart Association, the American Cancer society, local departments of health and local health facilities.
- Focus on the most serious health issues in the African American community such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, stroke, obesity, high blood pressure, AIDS/HIV, STD's, smoking and drug use (Remember that church members are not immune to these conditions!) Information as has been noted above can be given to church members and the community.
- Read and become familiar with books such as *The Ministry of Healing*, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, and other health literature penned by Ellen G. White. Encourage church members to do the same.
- Read the book: *The Blue Zones*, by Dan Buettner. This book discusses places in the world where the most people who live to be 100 years of age are found. This includes Adventists in Loma Linda California.
- Promote exercise by individuals and groups in the church such as walking and biking groups with the pastor leading the way.
- Present the health message at the time of evangelistic meetings and in the Sabbath sermon from time to time.

Ellen G. White articulated some simple but powerful principles of healthy living that can be used to help improve the wellbeing of everyone, as noted above. Following these principles has allowed those who follow them closely to live longer and better.

The Adventist Health Study reveals the following benefits:

- Five simple health habits promoted by the SDA church for over 100 years may increase life span by up to 10 years: not smoking, consuming a plant based diet, eating nuts several times weekly, regular exercise, and controlling body weight.
- The closer one's diet is to a vegetarian diet, the lower the health risks of cholesterol, diabetes and high blood pressure.
- For those following the lifestyle prescribed by the church there are significantly lower death rates for: lung cancer, colon/rectal cancer, breast cancer, and coronary heart disease.

We can conclude that promotion of the Adventist lifestyle in the African American community can help to reduce health disparities.

- **Do door-to-door ministry as needed delivering health brochures or tracts to the community. This is a good method of initial outreach, and use of the health message as the “entering wedge”**

The Challenge Before Us

We as a church can and should do more to improve the health of our members and our communities. We are fully equipped with Biblical, prophetic (the words of Ellen G. White), and scientific information that can help us to make a difference in the lives of multitudes. We are poised to help people live better here and also find eternal life. We need to accept the challenge we are confronted with.

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