

- Good morning, Virgin Islands. And welcome to Ability Radio, You and Your Health. This program is funded by the Virgin Islands Lottery. It's a calling show that provides health and literacy information, which talks about services and what is currently available in the US Virgin Islands. The listening audience can call in 779-1079 or 713-1079. We of course request, no use of names, no personal attacks, no unfounded allegations, product pitches, no profanity, and we don't give medical advice. So, we won't respond to questions asking for it. The opinions expressed for those who have the Disability Rights Center and those of the guests. If you recall a few weeks ago, we had Steve Prosterman who provided great information with respect to diabetes from the National Association of Diabetes. And today we are very pleased, very, very pleased to have with us Dr. Leticia Henry, a preventive specialist, who is going to speak to you about nutrition counseling, one of the topics that Mr. Prosterman mentioned. Dr. Henry, before you begin, we'd like for you to talk about yourself and what prompted you to become a nutrition specialist.

- Good morning. I actually was just recalling that I moved back to St. Croix over 15 years ago. And when I was thinking about moving back home, my dad said to me, "Don't come back here, unless you know everything you can about diabetes." That was his directive. And I was finishing up my doctorate at the time and had an opportunity to do an internship in Guam.

- Wow.

- And if we think our rates of diabetes are high, theirs are higher.

- Higher.

- And so, I took that opportunity to work at a wellness center in Guam. And tried to do what my dad said. Learning everything I could about how to change our eating, our lifestyle to be able to make a difference when I move back home and for the people of the Virgin Islands.

- And that's a, that's a good essential that you mentioned, eating style because when I was preparing for the show, I did a lot of research with respect to diabetes. And everything I looked at, just about everything I looked at, talked about exercise and nutrition counseling, and watching our diets. And as you know we have a very rich diet here in the Virgin Islands. We can't have our lunch or dinner without having macaroni and cheese and potato stuffing at one meal. And instead of, you know, kind of, cutting down on what we eat and turning more towards vegetables, we kind of continue that same type of eating habit, which isn't good for folks that are diabetics or pre-diabetics. Can you elaborate a little on that?

- Sure. One of the things I wanna make clear is that, to be able to eat healthy, as a diabetic or pre-diabetic, it doesn't mean changing your culture. Often times, people like they have to give up the provisions and they have to give up some of the more local foods and eat pasta. And pasta is not part our culture. It's not, it's wonderful in its way, but you don't have to give up what you enjoy. But at the same time, if we do a little history and if you were to go back in time with our grandparents and our great grandparents, they ate these foods that we consider cultural foods.

- Okay.

- But, the difference is, two differences. One is that they did not have cars to be able to move like we move.

- Donkey car?

- They had to, yes. They had to either use their own legs or, and then they tended animals and they did active, neither of my grandparents had, drove cars. They literally walk. My grandfather walk to work, and it

was just part of what you did. So, the foods that they ate, the, and even in some cases of larger quantities of provisions and rice and everything else that we enjoy, they burned it off.

- They burned it off.

- They were able to, their body was able to utilize it better because they were so active. And at the same time, they also engaged in what we now we call hydrotherapy or stress relaxation. They went to the sea and soaked. When last had we taken time to do that, to just go the sea?

- And we're surrounded by the sea.

- Into the sea and soak and you know, my dad tells a story, he never understood how his mom, his mom just sat in the sea. She didn't swim, he said "She didn't swim, she just soaked." And so, we want to continue eating these cultural foods but we forget what had to happen to be able to enjoy those.

- Wow.

- And then this other part of this is they did not eat all of them at the same meal. It was, you made of a set of provisions, you made rice, you made stuffing and these types of things is, they, some of them were for special occasions. They weren't consumed every day at every meal.

- Every meal, uh-hmm.

- And so, some of the richer items that we enjoy, we enjoy them daily. Instead of monthly, instead of for special occasions, and so, as much as we want to keep our culture if we're gonna do it right, we need to consider increasing our activity level and not having all of the things you enjoy all at the same meal.

- The same meal. Yeah.

- So, portions are gonna be a huge part of what we're gonna talk about today.

- Yes. What would you, are there different, would you consider different meals for different types of diabetes or it would be the same across the board?

- Actually, I like to meet people where they are. So, I don't promote anyone special diet for every single person because somebody might be willing to make more changes than somebody else. But, if the question is, what is the ideal diet or meal plan for somebody with diabetes or pre-diabetes, it's going to be, one, knowing what your starches or what your sugars at your meal are. That's step one. You have to recognize what are you eating that will turn to sugar once it gets into your digestive system because often times, diabetics get confused because they think of something is sweet, therefore that's what I stay away from. So, they'll wanna stay away from sweet potato. They won't eat sugar-apples, all of these things because by nature the name tells you, but they're considered sweet. And so, somebody will say yes, but they'll eat soursop because they won't eat sweetsop, so it's like, okay. It's irrelevant, for the most part, if something tastes sweet or not.

- Uh-hmm.

- You have to recognize that if it came in a, and this is how I say it to my clients, which is not all the way true but it works. If something came off a tree, for the most part, if something came off of the tree, it's gonna have some amount of carbohydrate, it's gonna turn into some amount of sugar in your stomach. Now, it varies but, so all provisions, whether they taste sweet or not. Even green bananas, some people will say "Oh, I can have green bananas, but I can't cassava." They all are root vegetables.

- Uh-hmm.

- They all are gonna turn to sugar once it get in your stomach.

- Okay.

- Rice doesn't taste sweet but it will turn to sugar and it does not matter if you wash it and wash it, and wash it. You are not washing away the starch. Actually you're, all that's left after you wash it is starch.

- Starch.

-So, it doesn't matter in terms of that washing. You still have to be careful with your portions.

- Uh-hmm. Portions size.

- And so, all provisions, rice, pasta, your potatoes, macaroni, all of that, plus fungi, dumpling, even if you make the, some people say, "Well, I'm gonna use whole wheat flour to make my Johnnycakes or to make my bread." And that's good, and we can talk about that as well, but it doesn't matter. It matters because it has more nutrition for you, more fiber because it's brown. So, brown rice over white rice, the brown rice is gonna have more nutrition, more fiber but both brown and white will turn to sugar once it gets in your system.

- That's such a good point what you just made because I've also been reading that you shouldn't be eating wheat products because wheat products have a lot of carbs in them. I'm saying, but wait, they told us to stop eating white rice and eat wheat brown rice. Don't eat white bread, eat wheat bread but, now I'm reading that, "No, can't eat it, period."

- Well, see, and that's a fallacy. If anybody tells you, and you can tell them to talk to me, if anybody tells you, "You have to stop eating carbohydrates," that's a family name, and I want, if you take nothing else away. You need to know that carbohydrate, which is the family name of these things. So, let's say carbohydrates, there are different types of carbohydrates. So, I'm a Henry. That's a family name. And then I have brothers and sisters. So, we all have first names. So, I'm Leticia, there's Lloyd, there's Carla, there's Carmen, there's Lavern. So, for carbohydrates, there are individuals among that. So, there's sugar, there is starch, there is fructose, there is, there is different first names, but they all are belong to the same family. And for the most part, all of them maybe except for a fiber, which is also part of this family, but all the others are going to turn to sugar once they get in your stomach.

- Okay.

- And so, we don't have to be afraid to eat these. It's really about eating the appropriate amount. And just a rule of thumb, if you can visualize a plate, and if you were to cut that plate in half and then quarter it, so one-quarter of your plate should have anything that's we consider starches.

- Uh-hmm.

- So, your rice should be in a quarter of your plate. If your, and this is not heaping up and this is an, provisions, all types. So, if you wanted rice and stuffing and macaroni, and provisions on your plate, if you can get a piece, a piece, a piece and a little spoon worth of it in a quarter of your plate, your body can handle that. So, if you still want a variety, and you wanna have it all at one meal, as long as you put a smaller portion, so that the entire amount of carbohydrates or starches fit in a quarter of your plate, your body can handle that. And that's the key piece. It doesn't mean you have to stop eating it. You just have to be very conscious as to the amount.

- There's certainly a lot of misinformation going out there to the public and no wonder people are confused in terms of, "Oh, what should I eat? I don't know what I'm gonna eat." One day they say it's okay, the next day they say it's not.

- Yes.

- It's terrible.

- And one of the biggest ones that has the confusion are fruits and juices and what to drink because, and I'm gonna try to give you a visual. I'm a visual person. So imagine for me a fruit that you could hold in your cupped hand. So if you were to close your fingers and curl them up and you have like a scoop, make your hand like a scoop, your fruit for somebody who has diabetes, your fruit should fit in that cupped hand. That's for you, one serving of fruit. So an apple that can fit in that hand but can a whole banana fit there unless it's the little ones, right, but a whole banana usually can't fit in your cupped hand. So a serving for banana would be half of a banana to be able to fit in that cupped hand. Grapes need to fit in your cupped hand, all local fruits. If you, that's your rule of thumb. So now imagine, let's go back to an apple for a second. You have an apple that fits in your cupped hand and we have to squeeze juice. Let's say we're gonna make fresh apple juice. If you pour your cup of juice, think of the cup that you usually drink from.

- Uh-hmm.

- How many apples would they have to squeeze to fill your cup with juice? It's more than what fat, fit in your one hand, right?

- Right.

- We tend to drink four, five, six or more apples worth or juice or fruit worth. And so when somebody says, oh, fruits make my sugar go up or juice makes my sugar go up, part of it is we consume too much.

- Overdoing it.

- We overdo it. But here's the thing, fruits have so much good nutrition in them. So if you're, your goal shouldn't be I'm gonna keep my blood sugars down. Your goal should be I wanna be healthy while I keep my blood sugars down. So somebody who says, "I'm not gonna drink juice or I'm not gonna eat apples or fruits," they put, they put themselves in a little disadvantage because what, where are you gonna get all your good nutrition? Yes, it can come from other sources like your vegetables and we'll, we can talk about that too but you don't wanna cut out a whole group that's gonna help you stay healthy if you don't have to. And so by being able to cut the amount that you eat, one of the biggest ones is mangoes. People who have diabetes or pre-diabetes think they can never ever eat a mango ever again or else. Now come on, you live on St. Croix or St. Tomas, wherever in the Virgin Islands that you are.

- And you're never gonna eat mangoes.

- And you're never gonna eat a mango again? Come on. So my thing is if you can eat a mango responsibly then you can still have a mango. Now some people can't because I have witnessed with my own eyes people who eat a bucket worth and they keep going. So I recognize that not everybody can stop at a mango that fits in their cupped hand because what size is that? That's like a kidney-sized mango, a Julie mango can't even fit in your cupped hand without you cutting it in half. But if you can keep your portion down just like sugar-apples, there are small sugar-apples and there are big sugar-apples. You wouldn't be able to eat a big sugar apple at one time. Otherwise, you do risk your blood sugar is going up as good as it tasted but if you can manage, you are allowed to eat fruits two, three times a day.

- Right.

- And so if you eat small amounts, so some people say, "Oh, I can't just eat half a banana." Well, if you can't limit yourself to the right portion then you might decide that I can't eat that fruit. Some people can

have a small apple and not feel cheated. So then you might need to eat the store bought fruits but if you can and want to still enjoy the local fruits, keep it to one serving and you'll be all right.

- But that's, okay. We're getting ready to go to a station break now.

- Good morning again, Virgin Islands. And welcome back to Ability Radio, You and Your health program funded by the Virgin Islands Lottery. Dr. Henry, while we were on break, we were talking about portions, your hand portion and how it relates to what size of hands you have.

- Yes.

- And maybe you can share with the listening audience what you shared with me.

- Well, what I was, what I should mention is that for each fruit or each item that we consume, there are actual portion sizes. So for example, 15 grapes are considered a serving. A two-inch round apple is considered a serving. So each fruit does have a certain serving size but for the most part, most of us aren't gonna count and most of us aren't gonna do weigh thing. So if you just use your hand, your cupped hand as a good measure, it, if you're a big person and you have a bigger hand, that's fine. But the concept is there. If you can limit your portions to what can fit in your cupped hand, one hand versus two, then you'll be all right.

- Thank you. One of the things that a couple of years ago, I was talking to this person who was telling me, you know, we have to make sure that we get the nutrients we need. And so my question to you is, okay, so what's the difference between nutrients versus vitamins? Because I'm doing a lot of supplemental vitamins like the Omega 3 to make myself feel better or to help me get better. And I'm drinking it because it seems to be helping me, you know, when I go to the doctor, my cholesterol is low. My, even my high blood pressure is low. So I'm really banking on that but if you could explain to the listening audience what are the differences between nutrients and vitamins. And honestly which are more important because when you're talking about controlling your diet and eating right, you know, we're talking about getting more nutrients versus vitamins.

- Well, actually, it's the same concept like I said with carbohydrates being the family name and then there are different first names in front of that. So it's the same thing, nutrients is the family name.

- Okay.

- And so vitamins is the first name. Minerals. So we talk about vitamin C, vitamin B but then there are minerals, calcium, iron, zinc, chromium, but then there's other nutrients like fiber, which they classify a little differently but for our purposes, we'll call it a nutrient. And then there's phytochemicals which came out in the last few years. They found out that there are some powerful nutrients right underneath the skin of your fruits and vegetables called phytochemicals. And they're still naming some of them but lutein is one. They found out, for example, that the red vegetables are fruit like tomatoes protects men from cancer better than those who don't have, who don't eat red vegetables like tomatoes. But it had to do with the phytochemicals that's associated with red fruits and vegetables.

- Uh-hmm.

- So these phytochemicals are there. The Omega 3 is there, all of those. So nutrient is the family name and then you need to get different nutrients and that's the key about eating a variety of foods as well is because when we get stuck in a rut and end up eating the same thing day in, day out, the same vegetables, some people, they're gonna only eat corn and maybe spinach or they're gonna limit themselves and what we're finding out is that lack of variety then limits your ability to get all the different nutrients that you need. And so, yes, supplementing is important but if we're still figuring out what is in some of the foods, you gotta then think they can't put it in a pill yet.

- Okay.

- So unless some of those supplements that are coming out are whole food supplements, you know, so they'll try to mimic that but we need to make sure we're eating a variety of foods and I didn't answer your earlier question about what a good healthy diet might look like for a diabetic or pre-diabetic. So here's what I would recommend, one, is that you need to have vegetables present at least two of your meals every day. That's a must. Now some, in our culture, eating vegetables at breakfast is not unusual. So having a little salad, lettuce, tomato, we do that. Having cucumbers in the morning with some kind of fish, we do that. So if you wanna make sure one of your times you eat vegetables ends up being at breakfast, go for it, but at least twice a day and oftentimes somebody with diabetes or actually the population as a whole will go through a whole day and never touch a vegetable. And that has to stop. We have to make sure that we incorporate as many vegetables in our day and then in terms of variety, don't stick to the same colored vegetable each time. Have eggplant, have, which is your purple, have the spinach which is your green. Have the tomatoes your red. Try to get as many different colors in your day as you can. So vegetables but before I move on from vegetables and eating them twice a day, there are such things called starchy vegetables. And so for someone who is diabetic, you do not want to count those starchy vegetables as vegetables. So for example corn.

- Is starchy.

- It's starchy. Red beans and peas, pigeon peas, lentils, all of those are starchy. All of your ground provisions, they're vegetables but they're starchy vegetables. Green peas, the little green sweet peas, starchy vegetable. And even pumpkin and I, that's one I hurt my heart but pumpkin is a starchy vegetable. Now hear me well. These are not things you stop eating as a diabetic. You, because these are still vegetables that are very, very good for you, but when you are putting them on your plate, they have to fit in the quarter of your plate that we designated as your starch section.

- Right.

- And so if you want rice and beans, both the rice and the beans need to go in a quarter of your plate.

- Uh-hmm.

- If you want to have provisions with corn or both those things have to fit in a quarter of your plate but the non-starchy vegetables, the eggplant, the spinach, the okra, the salad, those get to fill half of your plate.

- Your plate, uh-hmm.

- So you get to load up on those but the starchy vegetables only should fit in the quarter of your plate.

- I could just see people put in rice on one quarter and beans on the other quarter.

- And you know, those who are vegetarians, we do allow that because beans also have protein.

- Yes.

- So they do count in that category as well. So definitely if you're a vegetarian, you can use the other quarter of your plate which usually is for your meats.

- Uh-huh.

- You can put your beans and then we would just work with you to make sure your blood sugar stay good but that's also something you can do. So vegetables at least twice of in a day, half of your plate should be filled up with them. We talked about the fruits already, so you need to make sure you stick to just a cup, a handful, I should say not a cup. But a cupped handful at a time and you can have it two to three times in a day. And if you choose, maybe you limit yourself to one of those servings in the day being fruit juice and

make sure it's no more than 4 ounces. That's about what one cupped hand of fruit equals to, about half a cup. And then you wanna make sure that you have some really good fats in your diet.

- Yes.

- There isn't a really bad message going there that all fats are bad and we, especially avocados. They've gotten a bad rep.

- Yeah.

- So avocados actually are one of the best fat. They do not have cholesterol and they do not encourage your body to make more cholesterol. There's actually, when somebody tells me that avocados have cholesterol, one of the things I like to make sure you know. Your body makes cholesterol.

- Uh-huh.

- Your liver is the organ that makes cholesterol. When last have you cut open avocado and seen a liver? There is no liver.

- No.

- There is no cholesterol in avocados. Now here's where the confusion came in. There's some types of fat that would actually when you eat them, they go inside your body tell you liver make more cholesterol.

- Oh.

- And so for a long time people thought that the type of fat in avocados was that bad fat. We call it saturated fat. But avocados do not have saturated fat. They have, actually they have monounsaturated fat which is the same type of fat in olive oil. And we know, we've heard how great olive oil is for us.

- Yeah, right.

- But at the same time we didn't know how, that avocados had that same type of oil, but now we do. So please do not be afraid to eat your avocados. But here's the catch, as much as we need to eat good fats. They're still fat. And when we over eat anything whether it's good or bad, it can hurt us. And so if for example, you're using olive oil, typically you use a cupful or a tablespoon, a teaspoon, but we wanna eat the whole avocado. And so it equals if, you know, regular size avocado equals the same amount of calories or fat and if you had half a bottle of, like if you drink half a bottle of olive oil.

- Oh, my.

- It's too much. So, yes, it's good for us, but you have to, if you and I know I'm glad you can't see me to shoot me, but if you were to cut their avocado of medium size avocado in eight equal pieces, one-eighth of your avocado will be considered inappropriate serving equivalent to like a teaspoon, a tablespoon worth of olive oil. And that's what you need to be able to get in some good fats without overdoing it.

- Okay.

- And so good fats, in addition to avocados, nuts. We love our, well, peanuts I know is part of what we eat but there other nuts as well, the almonds, the walnuts.

- Pecan.

- Pecans. You wanna just make sure especially as you trying to get healthier to not have all the salt. So you're trying to get unsalted nuts or unsalted seeds of sunflower seeds, flax seeds. All of those you wanna be able to incorporate in your day. But just like with avocado, you cannot overdo it. So you can't sit

and eat a whole bag. Well, you can do it, but you shouldn't sit and eat a whole a bag of nuts and say, "This is healthy. Here I go."

- And when you're watching a football game, yeah.

- Right. So portion out and again, for our purpose, if you wanna use your same cupped hand, portion out the, a cup, a handful of nuts, walk away from the bag and enjoy that. Know that it's gonna be good for you without being excessive. So, good fats are on your list as well as for a healthy diet. And then the beans are legumes.

- Legumes, yeah.

- Those are also have a really good place to, or should be a really good, a part of your good diet. And it's not so much that it's gonna help your blood sugars, but it's gonna help you get healthy. One of the things that a diabetic is at risk for is they gotta protect their heart.

- Their heart, yes.

- They have an increase for some of the heart diseases, so we wanna protect your heart and beans happen to be in that category.

- Uh-huh.

- So, yes, pigeon peas qualifies, garbanzo beans or chickpeas, any of those things. The key there, though, is because they do have starch or carbohydrate, you can't overdo that either.

- Right.

- So small amounts, if you, if you take nothing else, you'll recognize you can eat a lot of things. You just have to have small amounts. And so the portion that I would recommend is about half a cup worth of beans or peas at least three or four times a week would be considered a really good part of a healthy diet for a diabetic or pre-diabetic. And then lastly, and I didn't, I'm, I should mention the starches or the carbohydrates and the portions for those. It's a little trickier but I'm gonna stick to a quarter of your plate. If you can make sure you keep, and for example; we love our bread. Bread is just a staple.

- It's a staple.

- And to take it away, it's just a crime. And so, yes, whole wheat bread or whole grain breads are considered healthier because they have more nutrients, more fiber and so forth. But you do have to be careful, because some breads might look brown, but the brown came from coloring.

- I read that too.

- Yeah. So don't be fooled. If it has a label, you're looking for dietary fiber and you're trying for it to have at least three grams of fiber or ten percent of the daily value coming from fiber; otherwise it's just a brown bread.

- Yeah.

- That's not gonna help you. When you go to the bakery ask your baker, are they actually using whole wheat flour to make their bread brown or are they coloring.

- Uh-huh.

- Find out, because just eating brown bread does not automatically make it healthy.

- Uh-huh, uh-huh.

- And so you wanna do whole grains or whole wheat products as much as you can to get the extra nutrition, but whether it's brown or white, a quarter of your plate. So imagine that quarter of your plate and your butter bread. How much of your butter bread can fit in a quarter of your plate? If you can get it down to that portion, whoo.

- Yeah, you gotta [inaudible]

- You're good. You can keep butter bread. But if you still wanna eat half or a whole one, you're really gonna run into trouble. Now here is good news. You, when you cut your portions like that, you then get to eat more often during the day.

- Uh-hmm.

- Because your breakfast of eating a butter bread that's gonna fit in the quarter of your plate. You will not be able to last till 1:00, 2:00 in the afternoon, to then eat another meal. You're going to need a snack midmorning to be able to help you and actually that's not a bad thing. A lot of times we think hunger is evil. Hunger is a way your body is trying to communicate to you. When you wake up and you don't eat breakfast and you don't eat anything till 2:00 in the afternoon and you say, "I'm feeling good. My body doesn't need it". Your body needs it. It's, you're just being lied to. Your body is silent because it's trying to just keep you alive. It's just trying to survive what you're putting it through. But if you notice as soon as you eat breakfast, your body wakes up because now it has permission to work and to function better.

- Uh-huh.

- And so when you start to get hungry before 12:00 don't be upset, be happy because that's a sign your body is working more efficiently and better.

- Uh-huh.

- Because now it's able to utilize the nutrients and help you stay healthy. So hunger, don't look at it as an evil. It's really a sign that your body is needing a little bit more. But if, so make sure that you've think of snacks, and we can give some suggestions of that, I guess.

- Uh-huh.

- But make sure you have snacks that you're gonna eat midmorning or midafternoon. I like, in terms of snacks, your nuts, your seeds, those are really good snacks. Some people like low fat dairy products, like, their yogurt or string cheese, or the block cheese if you can get in a low fat version. Some people like that and then of course people will do fruits or vegetable also as snacks in between. But those are your key things that I want you pay attention to. You're gonna limit your starches, try, for most of them to be whole grain. You're gonna make sure you have vegetables at least twice a day. You're going to, and those are the non-starchy vegetables.

- Uh-huh.

- You're gonna make sure you have your fruit in their correct serving, two or three times a day. And you're gonna make sure you have your beans at least three to four times a week, half a cup portion. And the good fats. You're gonna make sure you include healthy fats from nuts and seed, and avocados, and olive oil. Oh, I should mention. As much as olive oil is good for us, we got olive oil from the people in the Mediterranean. They're heart health was so amazingly great that we thought, "Okay. We're gonna be that same way". Because...

- Mediterranean diet?

- Yes. And so we, America started using olive oil and we didn't get any healthier. And so the researchers went back to the Mediterranean to figure out what happened.

- Yeah.

- And it turns out the people in the Mediterranean do not cook with olive oil. They dipped their bread in it. They pour it over their salads. They use it cold. So it turns out, when you heat good oil like olive oil the chemical structure changes.

- Okay.

- And so these benefits that we were hoping for, you know, we pay extra for that olive oil.

- No kidding.

- We're not getting these benefits that we're paying more for because are sauteing everything, we're cooking with it and heating it up. So if you're spending extra for your olive oil, it's a waste of your money unless you are using it cold.

- Cold. Yeah. Well, you know, that's so interesting because when we come back from the commercial break. I'd like to get into, you know, even though a lot of this food is good, well, you're really giving us some really good examples of how we should eat better. The expense, yeah, unless you grow your own vegetables this is, I think it's gonna be expensive. So we...

- We will see.

- ...address that.

- Welcome back. Thank you, folks. Ability Radio, You and Your Health, program funded by the Virgin Islands Lottery. We're reminding the listening audience that you can call in at 779-1079 or 713-1079 and ask questions, this information is fabulous, very, very good. We're just mesmerized by what's being said here. And I understand we have a caller.

- Yes, good morning, Iris.

- Good morning.

- It's Archie.

- Good morning, Archie.

- Good morning. Great information and great show. I just, since the nutritionist, Ms. Henry, was it?

- Yes.

- Had mentioned olive oil, I was just wondering about the latest craze regarding coconut oil and coconut water and if she can comment on that. And the second one is that, if you can mention any diabetes support groups that you may know of and then I'll just take the information off the air.

- Okay. Thank you for the question. There is a lot going on right now in terms of the coconut and how we should or shouldn't use it. And to be honest, the debate is still alive and well, so I can't give you a definitive answer but here is what we know so far. In terms of the coconut water, it's considered for a diabetic as a fruit. And so when you are using it or drinking it, you need to limit that portion to one serving a fruit. The good thing is that as with some other fruits, most other fruits, the portion size is three to four ounces of juice, whereas with coconut water you get twelve ounces which is about the amount from one coconut. So you can drink a coconut full of coconut water and your blood sugar should be fine if you

count it as your fruit. In terms of the coconut oil or the meat, the jelly, well, right now the information says that coconut has saturated fat and earlier we talked that saturated fat is considered the bad fat. It's a type of fat that for years we knew when it got into your system it told your liver make more cholesterol. If you already have a cholesterol problem, getting your liver to make more cholesterol just isn't wise.

- Uh-hmm.

- And so foods that had this saturated fat, we strongly encourage you to decrease, so for example all of the skin on chicken or turkey, that's saturated fat. The fat on oxtail, that's saturated fat, so all of those things we would ask you to reduce. With coconut, especially the meat and with coconut oil, it's believed that it is saturated fat and so, therefore, for years it was discouraged especially if you already had high cholesterol for you to use the flesh. You could've use the jelly because it may not have as much saturated fat but once it turned hard and you have that meat or once you turned it into oil you, we were discouraging people from using it. But now, the debate is whether or not the type of saturated fat in coconut is the same bad fat in chicken skin.

- Uh-hmm.

- So, I don't have a great answer except to say this. I like to play, be a little bit cautious, so if you already have heart disease or already have high cholesterol issues you want to be careful and not use coconut oil or eat the flesh, the meat of coconut on a regular daily basis. I would save it for maybe once a week, once a, every couple of months. I would use it sparingly because we just don't know for sure yet. But those who don't have cholesterol issues and don't have problems with their heart, then you probably could use it safely more often than that, especially if you enjoy the flavors and there are some really good things coming out about it. It's just that the research is still not firm yet.

- Okay. Good. And...

- In terms of the diabetes support groups they're coming. At least on St. Croix, I can't say that there is one that I can tell you about and I don't know if the gentleman from an earlier show had mentioned any but as of right now, at least on St. Croix, I do not know of a current active support group for diabetes which is a shame but...

- Yeah, he mentioned that, he mentioned that when he was on the show.

- Okay.

- Any other questions, Archie? He's gone.

- Oh, he cut...

- Okay. You mentioned something that was really good while you're talking about saturated fats and that's the butter versus the margarine situation here. Some people are told, "No, eat the butters better than the margarines." Some say, "No, eat the margarine, it's lighter than butter." What advice would you give us?

- Now, that one, I won't lie. It hurt my heart when this happened because when I went to school how many years ago butter was the enemy and so because butter has saturated fat and we, I told you what saturated fat does, that we knew, hey, you really shouldn't be using that on any regular basis. And that's one of the reasons too we'd encouraged people to start using skim milk or low fat milk because home milk has that same saturated fat. So anything with the saturated fat, we were trying to cut down on in people's diet. And so margarine was born. So here's the thing with margarine, so butter comes from animal fats, just like lard, lard came from animal fat, right? All saturated, but margarine came from plants and most plants except the coconut we were just talking about has the unsaturated type of fat which is supposed to be good for us. So of course, somebody who's gonna make money figured out a way to change plant oil into this margarine. But think about it, most oils or plant oils, vegetable oils are liquid at room temperature and so they had to figure out a way to change this liquid oil into a solid margarine.

- Right.

- And so the process is called hydrogenation, that's how they're gonna turn this liquid into a solid. Do you know it turns out that hydrogenation process causes trans-fat. Now, trans-fat, we now know is just as bad for us as saturated fat. And so all of a sudden, again just like with the olive oil, we weren't getting any healthier by using margarines instead of butter. So researchers went back to figure out what happened, we thought we were doing something good here.

- Uh-hmm.

- But it's that same concept when you, they, that process changes the chemical structure of the oil to the point where it created this trans-fat which is so terrible for us. It also goes to your liver and tells it to make more cholesterol.

- Make more cholesterol.

- And so if you notice now, when, you know, years and years ago when you put butter on the counter, it stayed solid for a long time, you didn't have to put it back in the fridge right away. But now the margarines you put it on the counter and it's gonna melt on you fairly quickly.

- And some melt into water.

- Because what they've done now is try to reduce or change this process so that they, it does not have as much trans-fat in it so when you look at the labels you're looking to see not only is there saturated fat but is there any trans-fat and the recommendation is zero, your, most of the items you eat should have zero grams of trans-fat for a healthy diet. And so yes, margarine isn't as good as we thought but they're trying to make better margarines now.

- Uh-hmm.

- So that they has the less trans-fat in them. But a good rule of thumb is anything you wanna just have a little spread on your, on your, you're not trying to coat it like we did back in the day, you're trying to have just a little spread and maybe even use it without.

- Yeah. It's, and we're closing down now but everything you said this morning that all figures on limit your sizes, portion control, which is going to help us continue to, or improve our health status and feel much better about ourselves, everything is in portion control.

- It is. That's one of the hallmarks of a good diabetic diet. We wanna make sure that we do that and if there's time I wanted to tell you about some spices that might help with the diabetes as well.

- We're in for a break now, thank you.

- Okay. We're back. You know, we're having such a good time with this topic that I don't know how to stop you from saying what you have to say and there's not enough time for you to do everything, so we might have to just have you come back with us.

- Not a problem, thank you.

- But you were, during the break you were talking about spice, oh, before the break you're talking about spices that would help.

- I wanted to just point out two that we now have pretty solid research on especially if you're in the pre-diabetic stage, turmeric has been shown to be excellent in helping to delay, prevent diabetes. So if you have ever been told you have a touch of diabetes or pre-diabetic you want to look into using turmeric

more often whether you take it in the capsules or you put it in your food, your soups, your smoothies, that's a really good one. Usually the recommendation is one to three teaspoons a day, cinnamon is the other one. So you wanna make sure cinnamon is a part of your diet as well adding it to as many as items as you can.

- I add it to my coffee every day.

- Awesome, awesome.

- But turmeric sounds interesting.

- Well, we, as we're closing just wanting to make sure that you take the time to, yes, do your own research but if you can speak with a professional, find a dietician in your area, I believe there's one on St. Thomas that does private practice and then I have a private practice here on St. Croix. I also work at the Frederiksted Health Clinic and work outside of some doctors' offices. So if you would like, I'm in the phonebook, you can always give me a call and see where might be the best place for you to see me but find someone who can break this down for you so that you're just not going in the wind and thinking you can't eat.

- Well, Dr. Henry, we so appreciate you being here with us early this Saturday morning. And I wanted to remind our listening audience that this tape, this show has been taped and it will be at the [www.drcvi](http://www.drcvi.com) website. Please tune in to that website to listen. This has been a wonderful morning. We so appreciate you being here and giving us this wonderful information.

- Your welcome. Have a good day, everybody.

- You too, thank you. Bye-bye.