JULY, 2010,

# MAKING STRIDES AGAINST CANCER

## WHY ME? THE ANTIGUA & BARBUDA CANCER SOCIETY

## JULY IS SKIN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer. An estimated 40 to 50 percent of Americans who live to age 65 will have skin cancer at least once. The most common skin cancer is basal cell carcinoma, which accounts for more than 90% of all skin cancers.

The most virulent from of skin cancer is melanoma. In some parts of the world, especially in Western countries, the number of people who develop melanoma is increasing faster than any other cancer.

*What are the most common forms of skin cancer?*

Three types of skin cancer are the most common:

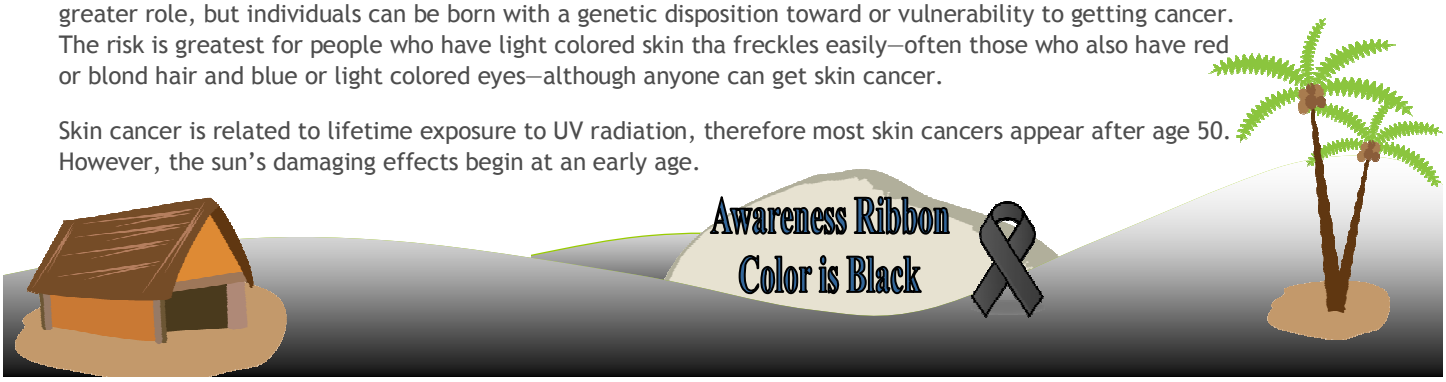
- **Basil cell carcinoma** is a slow growing cancer that seldom spreads to other parts of the body. Basal cells, which are round, form the layer just underneatht the epidermis, or outer layer of the skin.
- **Squamous cell carcinoma** spreads more often than basal cell carcinoma, but still is considered rare. Squamous cells, which are flat, make up most of the epidermis.
- **Melanoma** is the most serious type of skin cancer. It occurs when melanocytes, the pigment cells in the lower part of the epidermis, become malignant, meaning that they start dividing uncontrollably. If melanoma spreads to the lymph nodes it may also reach other parts of the body, such as the liver, lungs or brain. In such cases, the disease is called metastatic melanoma.

***WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF SKIN CANCER?*** The most commonly noticed symptom of skin cancer is a change on the skin, especially a new growth or a sore that doesn't heal. Both basal and squamous cells cancers are found mainly on areas that are exposed to the sun—the head, face, neck, hands and arms. However, skin cancer can occur anywhere.

For melanoma, the first sign often is a change in the size, shape or color or feel of an existing mole. Melanomas can vary greatly in the way they look, but generally show one or more of the "ABCD" features. (See attached brochure)

***WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE CAUSES AND HEREDITY OF SKIN CANCER?*** Ultraviolent (UV) radiation from the sun is the main cause of skin cancer, although artificial sources of UV radiation, such as sunlamps and tanning booths, also play a role, UV radiation can damage the DNA, or genetic information, in skin cells, creating "misspellings" in their genetic code and , as a result, alter the function of those cells. Cancers generally are caused by a combination of environmental and genetic factors. With skin cancer, the environment plays a greater role, but individuals can be born with a genetic disposition toward or vulnerability to getting cancer. The risk is greatest for people who have light colored skin tha freckles easily—often those who also have red or blond hair and blue or light colored eyes—although anyone can get skin cancer.

Skin cancer is related to lifetime exposure to UV radiation, therefore most skin cancers appear after age 50. However, the sun's damaging effects begin at an early age.



# Making Strides Against Cancer

*CAN I DO ANYTHING TO PREVENT OR TEST FOR SKIN CANCER?* When it comes to skin cancer, prevention is your best line of defense. Protection should start early in childhood and continue throught life. Suggested protections include:

- *Whenever possible, avoid exposure to the midday sun.*
- *Wear protective clothing—for example, long sleeves, and broad rimmed hats.*
- *Use sunscreen lotions with an SPF factor of at least 15*
- *If a family member has had melanoma, have your doctor check for early warning signs regularly.*

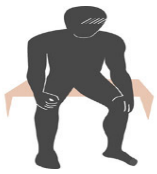
*HOW IS SKIN CANCER TREATED?* Melanoma can be cured if it is diagnosed and treaded when the tumor has not deeply invaded the skin. However, if a melanoma is not removed in its early stages, cancer cells may grow downward from the skin surface. Whe a melanoma becomes thick and deep, the disease often spreads to other parts of the body and is difficult to control. Surgery is the standard treatment for melanoma, as well as other skin cancers. However, if the cancer has spread to other parts of the body, doctors may use other treatments, such as chemotherapy, immunotherapy,radiation therapy or a combination of these methods.

As part of a routine cancer-related check-up, your doctor should check your skin carefully. He or she should be willing to discuss any concerns you might have about this exam.

It is important to check your own skin, preferably once a month. A self exam is best done in a well lit room in front of a full length mirror.

**Face the mirror**: Check your face, ears, neck, chest and belly. Women will need to lift breasts to check the skin underneath.

**Check under both sides of the arms**, the tops and bottoms of your hands, in between your fingers and fingernail beds.



**Sit Down**: Check the front of your thighs, shins, tops of your feet, in between your toes, and toenail beds.

**Now you will need a hand mirror for your thighs, back, and scalp**. Now look at the bottoms of your feet, your calves, and the backs of your thighs, first checking one leg and then the other. The back of the next, your genital area, lower back and upper back. It may be easier to look at your back in the wall mirror using a hand mirror. Use a comb or hair dryer to part your hair so that you can check your scalp.

**What should I look for?** Basal cells cancers and squamous cell cancers are most often found in areas that get exposed to a lot of sun, such as the head, neck and arms but they can occur elsewhere. Look for new growths, spots, bumps, patches or sores that don't heal after 2 or 3 months.

JULY, 2010, VOLUME 7, ISSUE 7

# WHY ORGANIC?

Organic is a rather odd name since all food is organic, meaning that it's made from living things. But it seems to have stuck. Organic farming is called biological farming in some countries. Then there's biodynamic farming...and permaculture. All these slightly different types or farming are sustainable which is the most important thing to remember. Confusing, isn't it!

**What's so great about organic food?** It looks much the same as ordinary food produced by modern farming. But there are differences.

- When you buy organic food you support farming which is sustainable. Because no hazardous chemicals are used, farmers don't get contaminated and nor do their families.
- Organic farming is friendly to our planet and the wonderful diversity of living things on it which is often called biodiversity.
- Organic foods should be free of pesticide (or other synthetic chemical) residues. Nobody knows what the long term effects of eating slightly contaminated food might be. High levels of pesticide residues can kill or poison people. Lower levels of residues may cause cancers. And some, in smaller amounts (just a few parts per trillion) can cause damage to a developing child's intelligence.
- There seems to be real differences in minor nutrients with organic fruit and vegetables being better. Although this is obviously very important, hardly anyone has done any serious work on just how much mor nutritious organic food might be.
- Organic produce does not contain genetically modified organisms.
- Many people claim that organic food tastes better.
- A study shows that organic food makes better busines sense as well as being better tasting and kinder to the planet.

We all benefit from a healthy environment, but those of us who eat organically produced foods get an extra advantages: reduced risk of ingesting pesticide residues. This is even more important for children, whose developing bodies are more susceptible to damage by chemical contaminants.

**Our Green Isle**...It's a new way of thinking and a new way of caring.

Why Me? Leading the movement... Won't you join us? Become a member of the Green Team.

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# Cancer & Your Environment

**What is Cancer?** Cancer is an uncontrolled growth of cells that disrupts body tissues and organs. Cancer cells are not normal in their structure and function. They grow and multiply to form tumors that invade local tissues and sometimes scatter throughout the body. At the beginning, there are no warning signs to alert us to the disease. Later, the signs of cancer are related to the location of the tumor. As the cancver progresses, it produces a wasting away of the body, pale skin, pain, fatigue and loss of appetite.

**How widespread is cancer?** It is estimated that one out of three persons will have cancer in their lifetimes. About one in six persons will die of cancer. No one knows the exact number of new cases diagnosed in Antigua each year because there is no nationwide cancer registery that exists. But know for a fact, that it is the leading cause of death after heart disease.

**Which cancers cause the most deaths?** In the some countries, lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer related deaths for both sexes, followed by prostate cancer in males and breast cancer in females. For children younger than 15 yars old, cancer is the second leading cause of death after accidents. Leukemia, brain cancer, and cancer related to the endocrine system are the leading cancers in children in this age group.

**How many kinds of cancer are there?** There are many types of cancer because cancerous cells can grow anywhere in the body. The location of the cancer and they tyupe of tissue involved helps to give the disease a specific name, such as lung cancer, ovarian cancer, and breast and prostate cancers. Other examples are melanoma (skin cancer involving cells that contain skin pigment called melanin) and leukemia (involving the white blood cells).

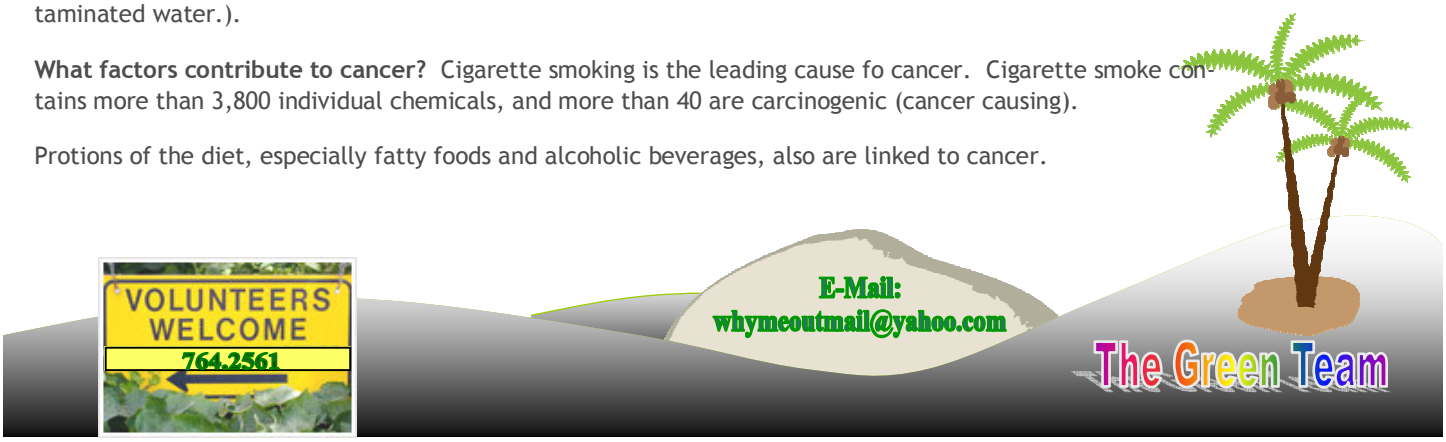
**How does cancer develop?** Cancer is a process with many steps. The first step invloves changes to the genetic code (DNA) of a cell called *initiation*. Normally, the body's repair system can replace damaged sections fo DNA, allowing the cell to recover. If the cell reproduces while DNA is damaged, more abnormal cells can be made that may cause cancer.

Usually, *initiation* by itself is not enough to produce cancer. The altered cells go through more changes that may require additional substances called a *promoter*. A period of many years usually exists between the initiation of the cancer process and the onset of the symptoms. No one completely understands this process, but certain aspects of a person's lifestyle can be linked to cancer formation.

**What causes cancer?** There is no single cause of cancer. Cancer development depends on things such as family history (genetics), health, nutrition, personal habits and the environment. Genetic factors by themselves probably account for only a small fraction of cancers. Genetic factors do have an important influence on an individual's chance of developing cancer when combined with outside factors. These factors are either voluntary (such as cigarette smoking, diet, and sexual behavior) or involuntary (such as breathing polluted air or drinking contaminated water.).

**What factors contribute to cancer?** Cigarette smoking is the leading cause fo cancer. Cigarette smoke contains more than 3,800 individual chemicals, and more than 40 are carcinogenic (cancer causing).

Protions of the diet, especially fatty foods and alcoholic beverages, also are linked to cancer.



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# Cancer & Your Environment

Skin exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation in sunlight is the primary cause of melanoma, a skin cancer.

Sexual behavior that helps spread sexually transmitted infections is closely linked to cervical cancer in women.

*Environmental pollution by chemicals in drinking water, air, food and in the workplace may contribute to cancer*. The harmful health effects of chemicals depend on the dose, strength of the chemical compound and the length of exposure. Outside the workplace, very few cases of cancer are believed to be caused by exposure to chemicals in the environment.

Most cancers may be prevented through the identification and control of external factors. Approximately 30% of cancers are linked to cigarette smoking. The remaining 70% are liekly the result of interactions among various factors.

**How do chemicals cause cancer?** Some chemicals in the environment are toxic substances that can produce cancer in humans and animals. Most chemicals act by causing the initiation step in the cancer process (altering the DNA), but they can also act as promoters.

**What cancers are caused by chemicals?** Most cancer causing chemicals were first recognized in occupational settings. The workplace is unique because workers are often exposed to large amounts of chemicals over long periods of time. The first association of cancer with the workplace occurred in 1775/ A London doctor related cases of cancer of the scrotum among young chimney sweeps to their exposure to soot. Other cause and effect relationships have been noted in workers between:

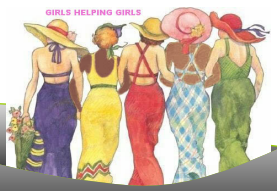
- *Benzene and leukemia*
- *Asbestos and lung cancer*
- *Vinyl chloride and liver cancer*

Workers may be exposed to a combination of carcinogens, which increases their cancer risk. The risk of lung cancer in asbestos workers who also smoke cigarettes is at least 50 times higher than the risk in non-smoking asbestos workers. Reducing chemical exposure can prevent most work related cancers.

**How are chemicals tested for cancer causing properties?** Studies and experiments with laboratory animals are the main sources that identify whether exposure to a certain chemical causes cancer. Laboratory test often use doses much higher than those found in the environment. Scientists then apply the animal results to humans to calculate the "cancer risk" for the tested chemical. This process is difficult because there is no complete match between cancer in animals and cancer in humans.

**If I am exposed to a carcinogen, will I get cancer?** Cancer development is a complex process, that occurs over a long period of time, and is influenced by many factors. The good news is that if exposure to carcinogens is stopped soon enough, the body can stop or reverse the cancer process.

**What can you do to reduce your risk of getting cancer?** Scientific evidence shows that lifestyle choices, a healthy diet, good nutrition and physical activity can reduce cancer risks.

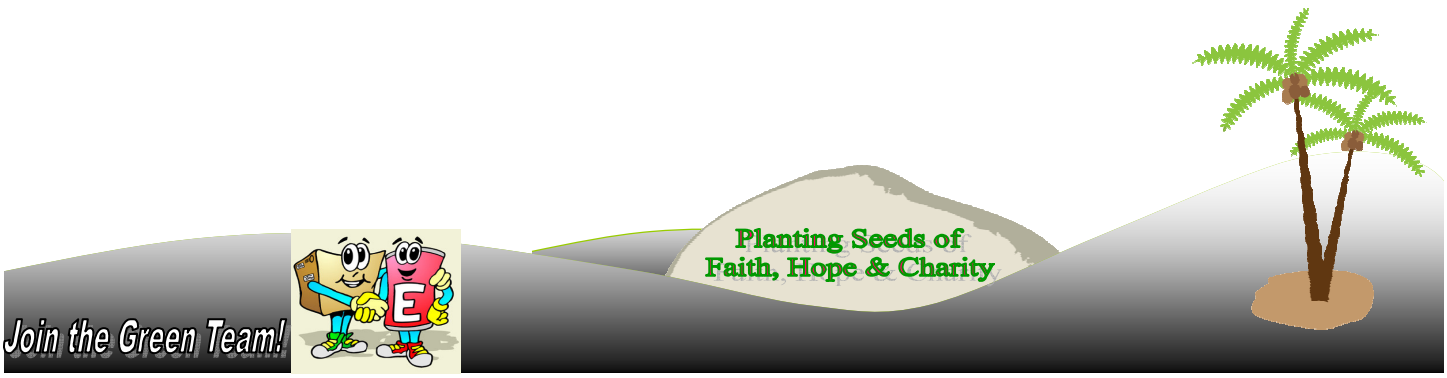


# Cancer & Your Environment

It is never too late to make these changes, but chaning long term behavior can be difficult. You must be persistent over time to reduce your risk of getting cancer. Here are some recommended choices you will need to make in order to reduce your risk:

- Avoid using tobacco products, such as cigarettes, snuff and chewing tobacco. This is expecially important for individuals who drink alcoholic beverages. Cancer risk of tobacco and alcohol combined is greater than the sumof their individual effects.
- Choose most of the foods you eat from plant sources. Eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Eat other foods, such as breads, cereals, grain products, rice, pasta or beans, several times a day. Wash fresh fruits and vegetables before eating.
- Limit your intake of high fat foods, particularly form animal sources. Choose food low in fat and limit consumption of high fat red meats. Choose baked and broiled meats, seafood and poultry, rather than fried food.
- Be physically active and achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Be moderately active for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week. Stay within your healthy weight range. Be aware that many fat free cakes, cookies, snack food and other desserts are high in calories.
- Limit consumption of alcoholic beverages. Men should have no more than two drinks a day. Women should have no more than one drink a day because they absorb alcohol more readily and usually smaller in body size.
- Avodi or reduce exposure to sunlight, particularly in childhood. Reduce your sun exposure by avoiding sun during the middle of the day, wearing protective hants and clothing, seeking shade while outdoors and applying sunscreen on uncovered skin.
- Follow safety rules and regulations at your workplace. If possible, carcinogens should be replaced with safer substitutes. Workers should handle hazardous materials in ventilated areas and be trained to protect themselves.

These findings are not surprising. It just reminds us of the importance of organic food production that works from the ground up, literally. No application of potentially harmful chemicals, soils are naturally healthier, richer sources of nutient dense, biological life. Plants grown in organic soils, and the animals raised on organic feed would automatically give us a nutritional advantage. Doesn't it make sense….for a safer environment overall, protecting our water, air and human health for our present and for our future generations?



# Get Sun-Certified Quiz

**Sun safety is not just for vacation. Are you sun safe every day? Take our Quiz.**

1. I can't get skin cancer, because my routine (work, drive to work, indoor hobies, and vacations) doesn't include any outdoor activities. A. True B. False

2. My husband should use sunscreen at the cricket matches, even though he only goes ( and gets burned) once or twice a year. A. True B. False

3. If I'm wearing sunscreen, I can stay in the sun as long as I want. A. True B. False

4. A sunscreen labeled SPF 30 blocks twice as much UV radiation as one labeled SPF 15. A. True B. False

5. It's safe to let my children play at the beach all day if they slip on a t-shirt after a couple hours and reapply sunscreen to their faces, arms, and legs. A. True B. False

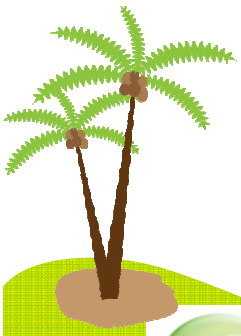
6. How often do you need to reapply water resistant sunscreen? A. Every 2 hours B. After sweating or swimming C. After you towel dry D. All (A-C)

7. Getting a "base tan" at an indoor tanning salon is as good a wayy to prevent sunburn when I go to the beach later in the summer. A. True B. False

8. What are the two most common (and painful) sunscreen mistakes? A. Choosing an SPF below 15 and missing spots B. Using too little and waiting too long to reapply

9. Now put it all together. You applied sunscreen at 12:00 noon for an afternoon of reading beside the pool. At 2:00 pm., which one of the following actions would best protect your skin? A. Move to the shade B. Reapply sunscreen.

See page 10 for answers



**Why Me?**
**The Antigua and Barbuda Cancer Society**
**C/O P.O. Box 104**
**St. John's, Antigua**
**Tel: 268.562.6295/764.2561**
**Email: whymeoutmail@yahoo.com**
**www.whymeantigua.com**

# Take Care of Your Share
# Introducing "Our Green Isle"

Can you envision a world in which all people are caretakers of themselves, each other and the natural world? Our Green Isle...will provide information to all, old and new alike, about what you can do as individuals to help conserve, preserve and restore the beauty of the land around us and protect ourselves from diseases and cancers.

Have we gone mad? No, but by making sound environmental choices in your own backyard, (Our Green Isle) we believe that we all can make a difference in helping to create a healthy environment for all the world. That's you and your family! And image starting everything in your own backyard!

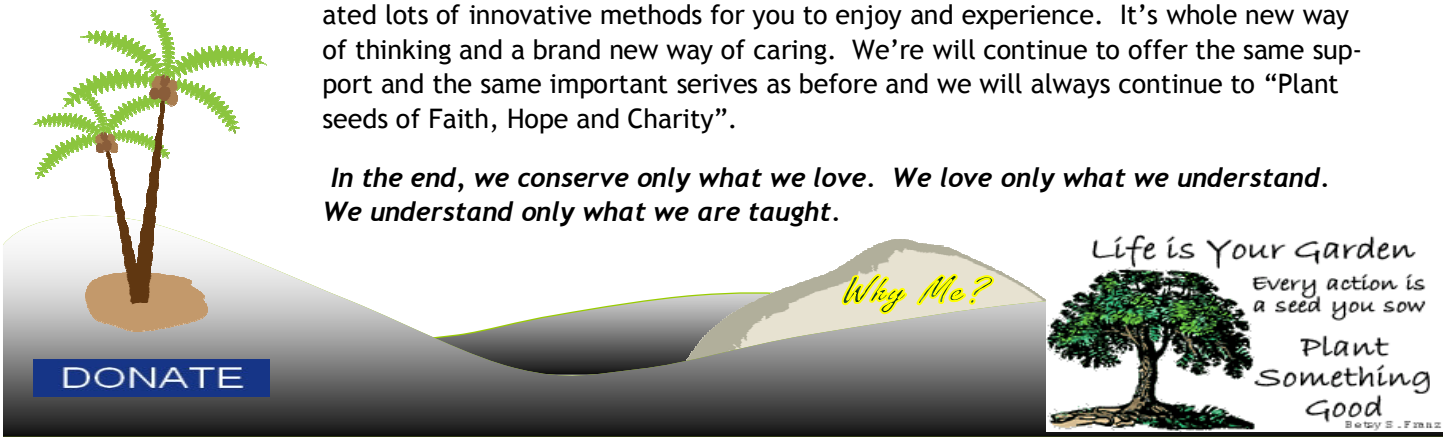
By eliminating chemical use, choosing plants that require less supplemental watering and just becoming a "backyard naturalist" contributes to the health of the entire surrounding ecosystem. You could be looking at lower electrical bills, lower water bills, cleaner natural water supplies and yards that are so beautiful that you hate to leave home. (Just for a few minutes to visit and shop at Our Green Isle).

Our Green Isle offering healthy lifestyle changes and solutions for you, your family and our environment. It's an organic farm that will be offering a variety of natural products that we hope you will support and become a part of the Green Team. Life as we know it, is changing on this planet, as a matter of fact, our liefstyles, diets and environment have changed more in the past 50 years than they had in the previous 1,000 years. But how does this affect us? Studies show the environmental changes affect the smallest creatures first, we will start with them. Children are small creatures too. As we move up the food chain, we discover that the changes in our environment are also affecting our children and adults are not immune. No one has really looked closely at the situation, but we now have the opportunity to affect not just the environmental healh of our land, but how we can make informed changes that will help to prevent diseases and cancers in our lives.

After preparation and researching this topic, one can't help but to wonder what is in store for humanity. Have we been so seduced by the latest and greatest medical/hi-tech promises that we have abandoned all common sense? Or are we uninformed participants in some bizarre medical experiment? The changes are so dramatic...they are literally transforming our bodies right before our own eyes.

We hope to join hands with retailers, builders, garden centers, environmental groups and others who want to help encourage others to take care of *their share* of the planet. (What a great big piece of the pie!!) More information will start to filter out to you and we hope that you, your family and everyone will participate. We have created lots of innovative methods for you to enjoy and experience. It's whole new way of thinking and a brand new way of caring. We're will continue to offer the same support and the same important serives as before and we will always continue to "Plant seeds of Faith, Hope and Charity".

***In the end, we conserve only what we love. We love only what we understand. We understand only what we are taught.***



# Our Green Isle

***LOCATION:***

Margetson Estates (behind the Winter Medical Centre/behind the Catholic Church in Villa)

***PROJECT:*** Sustainable Organic Farm (Greenhouse) featuring culinary and medicinal herbs and spices and "some way-out" beefsteak tomatoes. Edible flowers and an assortment (reduced, reused and recycled) products.

This project will enable our organization to continue to thrive and most importantly, continue to fight cancer on all four fronts: education, advocacy, research and patient services. The best part of it all we get to enjoy the wonderous beauty that our world has to offer not only through the eyes of a cancer survivor, but as any other man, woman or child wanting to make a difference.

***VOLUNTEERS:*** Are you interested in *"backyard gardening"?* Have a few organic tricks up your sleves and wouldn't mind sharing? Spare time and nothing to do with it? Just interested in helping others and your community as well as saving the our ecosystem? Look no further. A detail schedule will circulate shortly or just send a e-mail to our address: whymeoutmail@yahoo.com.

***NEEDED NOW:*** Rakes

Forks

Gloves ( for children and adults)

Boots (for children and adults)

Water Hoses

Rocks (medium sized flat/standing 10" to 12" not kidding)

Concrete

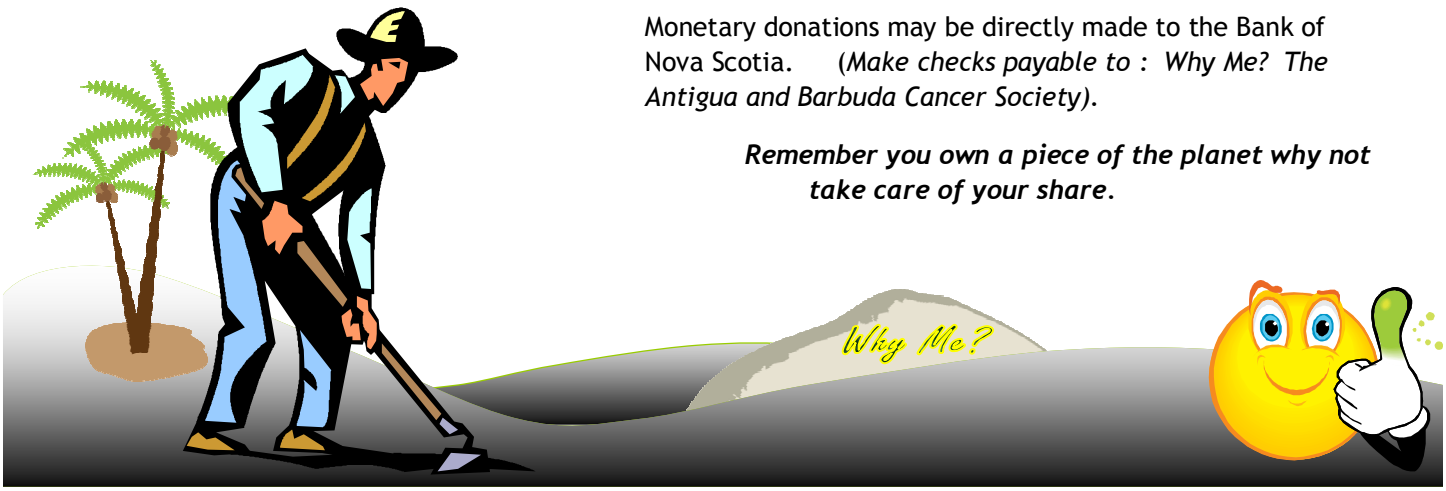
Wood (variety)

Galvanize

Water Tanks ( or water barrells)

Monetary donations may be directly made to the Bank of Nova Scotia. (*Make checks payable to : Why Me? The Antigua and Barbuda Cancer Society).*

***Remember you own a piece of the planet why not take care of your share.***



"Why Me?" The Antigua & Barbuda Cancer Society

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## *MAKING STRIDES...*

### *FOOD FOR THOUGHT*

The challenges ahead for biodiversity conservation will require a better understanding of one species*: our own*. This one social species will dramatically affect the entire living system of our planet over the next 20 years. Thus, not only do we need to learn more about human-human relationships; but we need to understand human-nature relationships.

The health of man, beast, plant and soil is one indivisible whole; the health of the soil depends on maintaining its biological balance and starting with…truly fertile soil, the crops grown on it, the livestock fed on those crops and the humans fed *on both* have a standard of Health and Power of Resisting Disease and Infection *greatly in advance of anything ordinarily found in this country*...FOR THAT MATTER THE WORLD.

The word *"diet"* comes from the ancient Greek *"diaita"* which means…*"A NEW WAY OF LIFE."*

Why Me?

## Get Sun-Certified Answers

1. **True**...Dermatologist say brief sun exposures all year round can add up to major damage for people with fair skin. And the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays do pass through car windows. When added up, everyday exposures are linked to squamous cell cancer.

2. **True**. Many people think its OK to get sunburn now and then, but studies show that even occassional exposure to strong sunlight seems to increase the risk of most serious type of skin cancer melanoma.

3. **False**. It not smare to broil in the sun for several hours, even if you're wearing sunscreen. These products don't provide total protection from ultraviolent rays. It is recommended to wear a wide brimmed hat with a shirt and sunscreen rated SPF 15 or higher and reapply every two hours. Don't forget the sunglasses.

4. **False**. The Sun Protection Factor (SPF) describes how long a product will protect your skin if you apply the sunscreen correctly . Fair skinned people begin to burn in about 15 minutes on a sunny day, so wearing an SPF 15 sunscreeen (if applied and reapplied properly) would prevent sunburn for about 225 minutes (15 SPF X 15 minutes until sun burn = 225) or 3 hours and 45 minutes. The SPF 30 sunscreen should last for 450 minutes (30 X 15 = 450) or 7 hours and 30 minutes. Be sure to chose a broad spectrum product that blocks UVB and UVA light and use a lot.

5. **False**. UV rays easily go through a white cotton t-shirt, especially if it's wet. Your childre4n will get only about as much protection as an SPF4 sunscreen—certainly not enought for all day and well below the minimum of SPF 15 recommended. For babies younger than 6 months shade and only shade, sun protective clothing and hats.

6. **All (A-C)**. For best results, most sunscreens need to be reapplied about every 2 hours or sooner but be sure to check the label. Some are water resistant and are made to protect you when swimming or sweating but may only last for 40 minutes. Don't forget to reapply when you towel dry.

7. **False**. Experts say a "base tan" gives you very little protection against sunburn. Also tanning injures the skin. What you don't see is UV damage to deeper layers, where it builds up from evry tan and burn you ever received. There is really no safe tan.

8. **Using too little and waiting too long to reapply.** About 1 ounce of sunscreen ( a palmful) should be used to cover the arms, legs, neck and face fo the average adult. For best results, most sunscreens must be reapplied at least every 2 hours and even more often if you're swimming or sweating. To be safe use a lot of sunscreen and use it often.

9. **Move to the shade**. While all 3 actions help, getting out of the mid-day sun is the best choice in this situation. Seeking shade si a key element in prevent skin cancer, especially between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm. Sunscreen should not be used to extend your time in intense sunlight. It's an important part of a larger strategy that is recommended to protect your skin but it does not protect you totally.