

Red alert

HEART DISEASE THE BIGGEST KILLER FOR WOMEN

LEISURE TODAY

Women are being encouraged to have regular cardiovascular screening and blood pressure checks, as heart disease stands as the number one killer of women in Barbados.

There is also an increasing incidence of women having heart attacks below the age of 50.

This was the word from chief executive officer of the Heart & Stroke Foundation, Gina Pitts, as she spoke to **Barbados TODAY** this morning at Scotiabank, **CGI Towers**, Warrens, St Michael, where the foundation sought to raise awareness about heart disease among staff members, targeting particularly women.

Additionally, Pitts said that Barbados had the highest instance of strokes, where more women than men over the age of 65 suffered them.

"When we are looking at risk factors, what we are seeing is that those individuals who do less than 20 minutes of exercise five times a week, or, ten thousand steps a day which is another way of trying to get your physical activity up, have a higher risk. We are trying to get people more active; we are trying to get people to do more walking," she said.

She did not have statistics at hand to highlight the instances of women in Barbados who died from heart disease per year, but, Pitts said that the **Go Red For Women Day**, an international observance which raises awareness of heart diseases in women, showed that it



Chief executive officer of the Heart & Stroke Foundation, Gina Pitts (centre), handing a cupcake to Scotiabank employee Donna Parris (right) as Rekima Brewster (left), a nurse with the foundation looks on.

was also the number one killer in women worldwide.

The executive officer explained that the combination of high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, strokes and heart attacks, all combined, kill more women than cancers and other diseases.

On that note, she said the foundation grasped the opportunity to go to several corporate businesses today, raising that awareness, giving out healthy cupcakes to individuals who had good waistline measurements, and also looked into lunch boxes giving dietary and lifestyle advice.

"What we are trying to do is raise the awareness, especially to young women, . . . because these types of corporations have more women than men in them," she said. (AH)

Heart & Stroke Foundation nurse Desiree Edwards measuring the waist of Scotiabank employee Khadija Bullen (right) as fellow nurse Serkerra Collymore looks on.



Heart & Stroke Foundation CEO Gina Pitts (third from left) and nurses showing sample of cupcakes handed out today on Go Red For Women Day.

