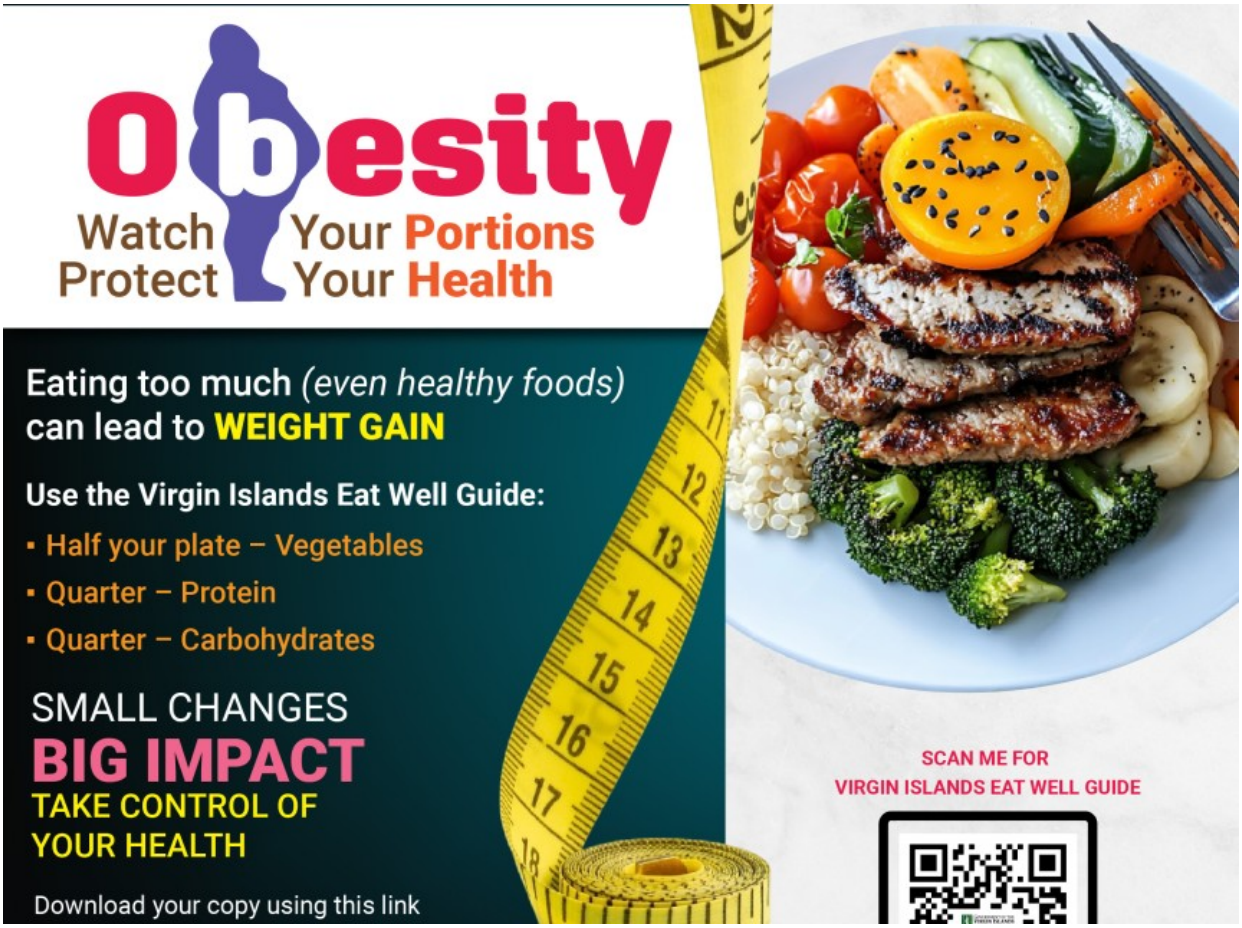
GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

# PRESS RELEASE

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# Virgin Islands Observes World Obesity Day with Call to Take Control of Health

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The Ministry of Health and Social Development is encouraging residents to take practical steps toward healthier living as the Virgin Islands joins the global observance of World Obesity Day under the theme, *“8 Billion Reasons to Act on Obesity.”*

Obesity remains one of the most pressing public health concerns in the Territory and is a major contributor to chronic non-communicable diseases including diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, certain cancers and stroke. These conditions continue to affect the quality of life of residents and place increasing pressure on the healthcare system.

Minister for Health and Social Development, Honourable Vincent O. Wheatley, said addressing obesity requires both national action and individual responsibility.

Honourable Wheatley said, “Obesity is one of the most serious public health challenges facing the Virgin Islands today. It is affecting our families, our workforce, and our healthcare system. We must take intentional steps to improve our lifestyles and protect our future.”

Honourable Wheatley noted that changes in diet and reduced physical activity over time have contributed to the increase in obesity and related chronic diseases.

“We have moved away from many of the traditional practices that once supported healthy living. We must now be more mindful of our food choices, remain physically active, and make use of the tools available to help us live healthier lives,” he added.

The minister also stated that the observance is an important reminder that everyone has a role to play.

“Our most important reasons to act are right here in the Virgin Islands, our children, our families, and our future. Together, we can build a healthier Virgin Islands,” he said.

Public Health Nutritionist Ms. Patrice Maduro encouraged residents to take small but meaningful steps.

“Simple actions such as reducing sugary drinks, choosing healthier foods, and staying physically active can make a significant difference in preventing obesity and improving overall health,” Ms. Maduro said.

The ministry continues to promote healthier lifestyles through initiatives such as the **Virgin Islands Eat Well Guide**, which provides practical guidance on balanced nutrition using familiar local foods. The **Food and Nutrition Surveillance Programme**, advancing **school feeding guidelines**, and conducting **nutrition assessments among the elderly** are also being strengthened to better support the health needs of residents across all age groups.

Residents are encouraged to use the Eat Well Guide as a resource and to make healthier choices as part of their daily routines.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development remains committed to protecting and promoting the health and social well-being of the people of the Virgin Islands through effective policies, sustainable programmes, and strategic partnerships that support a safe, healthy, and resilient society.

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## Gallery


Government of the Virgin Islands
Ministry of Health and Social Development
Obesity
Choose Water for BetterHealth
Sugary drinks increase your risk of obesity
WATER
• Water keeps your body healthy and helps maintain a healthy weight.
• Water helps remove waste and toxins from the body, supporting kidney function and overall health.
• Water keeps the body hydrated, which helps regulate temperature, improve energy, and maintain proper body function.
Take control of your health today to have healthier tomorrows.
Government of the Virgin Islands
Ministry of Health and Social Development
Obesity
MOVE MORE LIVE BETTER
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY helps prevent OBESITY and protects your HEALTH
Just 30 minutes of movement each day can help you:
• Maintain a healthy weight
• Reduce your risk of diabetes and heart disease
• Improve your energy and overall wellbeing
You don't need a gym
Walking, dancing, gardening, and playing sports all count
Take control of your health today to have healthier tomorrows.