



Nova Scotia Provincial Council

Catholic Women's League of Canada

Education and Health Communique 2

Inspired by the Spirit, Women Respond to God's Call

To: Diocesan Counterparts (*For distribution to all parish councils*)
From: Nova Scotia Provincial Health and Education Chairperson, Sandy Melish
Date: January 28, 2017
Copied: Provincial President, Peggy MacNeil and Executive (for information)
National Chairperson, Fran Lucas (for information)

October 2016 presented a wonderful opportunity to become acquainted, or more acquainted, as the case may be; when Provincial and Diocesan executive met to share and learn from the accumulative knowledge base of many dedicated sisters in the League. For those of us who are new to the concept of writing communiques, a welcoming feeling of acceptance and encouragement quickly put any doubts to rest.

As we enter into the New Year of 2017; many of us may consider, or attempt to make, lifestyle changes aimed at improving our overall wellbeing. Some may vow to lose weight, others to exercise more, or to simply become more in tune with existing habits that may cause concern for them personally. Whatever the challenge, we can all benefit by adhering to some basic rules that have been in place, but that continue to change with new and credible advances provided through the process of solid clinical research.

Knowledge is power; knowledge based on good research can provide the power or the tools necessary to meet our goals. To that end, many familiar resources that Canadians have long looked to for guidance over the years are themselves being challenged with the hope of a healthier population resulting from sound based research.

As Minister of Health, Jane Philpott looks to implement current views with a goal to improve the content of Canada's Food Guide as the source for healthy eating. One resource she may consider, could be an recent article in Time Magazine which alluded to a credible study published recently that questioned the benefit of choosing low-fat milk or dairy foods. This particular study could play a significant role in how we view the benefit of low-fat foods, specifically, dairy foods. This is of particular concern when considering the alarming rates of obesity and diabetes in Canada and the financial burden these problems place on our health care system.

In a new study published in the journal *Circulation*, Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian and colleagues analyzed 3,333 adults over a 15 year period and determined that those who had higher levels of three different by-products from full-fat dairy products, had, on average, a 46% lower risk of developing diabetes during the study period than those with lower levels. "I think these findings together with those from other studies do call for a change in the policy of recommending only low-fat dairy products," says Mozaffarian "There is no prospective evidence that people who eat low-fat dairy do better than people who eat whole-fat dairy."

Since full-fat dairy products contain more calories, many experts assumed avoiding it would lower diabetes risks but studies have found that when people reduce how much fat they eat, they tend to replace it with sugar or carbohydrates, both of which can have worse effects on insulin and increase risk of diabetes. In the current study, Moaffarian adjusted for the role that weight plays, and found the connection between full-fat dairy intake and lower diabetes risk remained strong, independent of weight gain. In fact, in a separate study published in the American Journal of Nutrition, another group analyzed the effects of full-fat and low-fat dairy on obesity and found that among 18,438 women in the Woman's Health Study; those who consumed the most high-fat dairy products lowered their risk of being overweight or obese by 8%. [1]

Considering this very important study and others that are as readily available on line, perhaps we should ask the question what, at the grassroots level, can we, as CWL members do to affect change. At a minimum, areas where ***we can exercise control over healthy food choices*** is in our homes, or when preparing for specific functions, such as our 'infamous receptions.' Is it not incumbent on us to practice what we preach by providing healthier food and beverage choices? It can be as simple as replacing sweets with fruit or vegetable trays, removing high sugar content drinks such as colas and juices or foods that contain artificial coloring known to increase the risks of obesity and diabetes and overburden our health care system. We can effect change by educating ourselves, by reading and understanding product labels and food content while offering suggestions and comments to our members of parliament when/if the occasion presents itself.

Ref [1] *Time magazine April 2016/CTV News*

You may also be interested in researching more information that may impact upon the subject of education and health by reviewing the content of the following:

Fran Lucas, National Chairperson for Education and Health released a new communique #2 December 2016; available on the national site at **CWL.ca**.

From the 2016 CWL National Convention in Halifax; you may also be interested, if you have yet to do so in researching at **CWL.ca** the contents of:

Resolution 2016.2 Eating Well with Canada's food Guide requested the Federal Government revise and date the food guide, and to do so every five years based on scientific evidence.

Resolution 2016.3 Warning Labels on Food and Drug Products for all Inactive Substances and Additives. ***(Members can and are encouraged to provide input or comment on Health Canada's proposed- Front-of-package labelling by 13 January 2017.***

In addition to these two important resolutions; on December 21st, 2016, Health Canada released Health Canada's healthy eating strategy publication which is available at the Government of Canada and the **CWL.ca** website.

I wish you all a very Happy and prosperous 2017.

May we continue to be blessed with peace in our homeland; and may God protect the women and men of our Canadian Armed Forces who so willingly sacrifice their wellbeing for the wellbeing and freedoms of all Canadians.

May Our Lady of Good Counsel guide us always.