

Dr. Denaesh Ariyanayagam's Open Letter on Taking Charge of Your Health

Dr. Denaesh Ariyanayagam, Consultant General and Vascular Surgeon in Trinidad, shares a personal message encouraging people to stop delaying their health and start taking small, consistent steps toward better long-term well-being.

Scarborough, Tobago Sep 20, 2026 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.IssueWire.com)) - After many years as a surgeon, Dr. Denaesh Ariyanayagam has observed a common pattern: people often take excellent care of everyone around them while putting their own health last.

Life gets busy. Work comes first. Family responsibilities take priority. A small ache becomes something to check “next month.” A follow-up appointment gets postponed because there never seems to be a convenient time.

Then, in some cases, the problem is no longer small.

Dr. Ariyanayagam does not raise this point to create fear. Rather, his experience has shown him how often taking action earlier can make a health problem easier to identify, understand, or manage.

One principle that has guided his career is simple: “Honesty, competence, and patient advocacy should always come first.”

He believes that same honesty should extend to the way people think about their own health. Ignoring a concern does not make it disappear, and postponing routine care can mean missing opportunities to identify potential problems earlier.

The World Health Organization reports that noncommunicable diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer account for approximately 74% of deaths worldwide. Many of these conditions are associated with risk factors that can be identified and managed.

Cardiovascular disease also remains the leading cause of death globally, accounting for an estimated 17.9 million deaths each year.

Research has also shown the value of patients taking an active role in their healthcare. Understanding treatment plans, asking questions, attending appropriate follow-up appointments, and communicating openly with healthcare providers can all help people become better informed about their care.

The encouraging part, according to Dr. Ariyanayagam, is that improving health does not necessarily begin with one dramatic decision.

It often begins with one small one.

Throughout his career, Dr. Ariyanayagam has believed in taking the long view.

“Keep your eye on the goal and the big picture.”

Good health is not built in a day. In many cases, health outcomes are influenced by choices, circumstances, risk factors, and habits that accumulate over years.

For that reason, Dr. Ariyanayagam encourages people to focus less on perfection and more on consistency.

Preparation also matters.

“Set realistic goals, create timelines, plans to achieve them, and constant reevaluation.”

Although this philosophy can apply to medicine, education, business, and many other areas of life, it can also provide a practical framework for personal health.

To become more active in managing their health, someone can start by making the goal specific and manageable.

Schedule the appointment you've postponed.

Take the walk you keep pushing to tomorrow.

Write down questions before seeing a healthcare provider.

Learn what a prescribed medication is intended to do.

Make one change, follow through, and then evaluate what comes next.

Dr. Ariyanayagam also considers education an important part of helping people make informed health decisions.

“Education creates the foundation. But maintaining standards requires constant effort.”

That education can start with learning about family medical history and understanding personal risk factors. It can mean knowing which medications a person takes and why. It can also mean asking a healthcare provider to explain something again when an answer is unclear.

Patients should not feel that they need to understand every medical term before walking into an appointment. Asking questions is part of the process.

Good healthcare should involve communication between patients and the professionals caring for them.

Another lesson that has become increasingly important to Dr. Ariyanayagam over the years is the role of balance.

“Balance is crucial for well-being.”

Health is broader than surgeries, medications, medical tests, or individual appointments. Everyday factors such as physical activity, sleep, stress management, nutrition, social connection, and recovery can also play important roles in overall well-being.

Small habits can seem insignificant on their own. Repeated consistently, however, they can become meaningful parts of a person's routine.

Practical Steps to Consider This Week

Dr. Ariyanayagam believes people do not need to overhaul every part of their lifestyle at once. Instead, they can begin with a few realistic actions.

- Schedule a routine medical checkup if one is overdue.
- Learn about the family's history of heart disease, diabetes, or vascular conditions.
- Write down health questions before the next medical appointment.
- Make time for regular physical activity appropriate for individual health and ability.
- Replace some sugary beverages with water.
- Have blood pressure checked when appropriate.
- Make adequate sleep a greater priority.
- Review current medications and understand why each has been prescribed.
- Talk with a family member about working toward healthier habits together.
- Set one realistic health goal and review the progress after seven days.

None of these actions needs to be complicated. The goal is to make personal health something that receives regular attention rather than something addressed only when a problem becomes impossible to ignore.

“Hard work and dedication of a lifetime to quality and competence” has guided Dr. Ariyanayagam throughout his professional life. He believes a similar idea applies to personal health: steady, consistent effort can often be more sustainable than occasional bursts of motivation.

The larger message is not that everyone needs to transform their life immediately. It is that taking care of personal health deserves a place among life's other responsibilities.

A Simple Challenge

Dr. Ariyanayagam encourages readers to choose one practical health action and commit to it for the next seven days.

At the end of the week, they can consider whether to continue, adjust, or build on that action.

He also encourages people to share the idea with someone they care about who may have been putting their own health on the back burner.

Sometimes a simple conversation, a scheduled appointment, or one small change can start a more active role in personal health.

To read more, visit the website [here](#).

About Dr. Denaesh Ariyanayagam

Dr. Denaesh Ariyanayagam is a Trinidad-based Consultant General and Vascular Surgeon at St. Augustine Private Hospital. He graduated with honors in medicine and earned a gold medal from the University of the West Indies before completing postgraduate surgical training in Edinburgh, Scotland. A Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, the International College of Surgeons, and the American College of Surgeons, he has also served as a full-time faculty member at the University of the West Indies for 15 years and is a founding partner and former chairman of St. Augustine Private Hospital. Throughout his career, he has remained committed to patient advocacy, medical excellence, and lifelong learning.

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