

Better Health, Better Care, Better Life

The War On Diabetes



Rise of Diabetes in Singapore

Diabetes is a growing problem in Singapore today. Figures from the National Health Survey 2010 reveal that 11.3%, or 1 in 9 Singapore residents (Singapore citizens and Permanent Residents) aged 18 – 69 years were affected by diabetes. Of these, 1 in 3 diabetics were unaware that they had diabetes. Among the diabetics who were aware of their disease, 1 in 3 had poor control of their condition.

Prevalence of Diabetes in Singapore

Year	Rate*
1998	9.0%
2004	8.2%
2010	11.3%

* For Singapore residents aged 18 – 69 years

Source: National Health Survey 2010

In 2014, around 440,000 Singapore residents aged 18 years and above had diabetes¹. If we do not do anything, the number of diabetics in Singapore could rise to 670,000 by 2030 and nearly 1 million by 2050, based on an estimate by the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health.

Diabetes can deeply affect one's quality of life if it is not well-controlled and potentially debilitating complications develop. It is the second leading cause of morbidity and mortality in Singapore². Poorly controlled diabetes can lead to serious complications such as heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, blindness, and lower limb amputations. These complications, which are often life-long, affect an individual's health and quality of life. Furthermore, these can in turn affect their family members who need to take care of them and worry about their health.

Based on figures from the National Registry of Diseases, in 2014, about 1 in 2 heart attack cases had diabetes; 2 in 3 new kidney failure cases were due to diabetes; and 2 in 5 stroke cases had diabetes. There are over 1,500 amputations per year due to complications arising from diabetes, roughly 4 per day³.

¹ The figure is estimated and extrapolated from the National Health Survey 2010.

² Singapore Burden of Disease Study 2010

³ Ministry of Health



War Against Diabetes

Moving forward, MOH will adopt a multi-pronged and comprehensive strategy in the war on diabetes. We will tackle diabetes on 5 fronts:

- i. **Prevent** – Healthy living to avert or delay the onset and progression of diabetes;
- ii. **Screen** - Early screening and intervention for individuals at risk or those who are unaware they have diabetes;
- iii. **Control** - Better disease management to prevent or delay complications, and ensure a good quality of life at all life stages;
- iv. **Understand** - Public education to raise awareness on the prevention and care for diabetes, and motivate individual behaviour changes; and
- v. **Do your part** - Stakeholder engagement to galvanise a whole-of-nation effort to make supporting changes to the environment, while caring for Singaporeans with diabetes.

Minister for Health Mr Gan Kim Yong will chair a new Diabetes Prevention and Care Taskforce which will include representatives from Government agencies, the private sector, patient advocacy and caregiver groups.

The Taskforce aims to:

- Develop and implement a multi-year action plan for the war on diabetes;
- Reach out to the public and within the healthcare family to mobilise everyone; and
- Monitor progress and evaluate the outcome of our efforts.

The Taskforce will be supported by 3 workgroups, namely:

- a. **Healthy Living and Early Detection**
 - aims to promote healthy living in the population, and to identify at risk individuals for screening and follow-up;
- b. **Disease Management**
 - aims to improve diabetes outcomes and prevent disease complications under the care and support of a regular family doctor, while encouraging patients and their families to be active partners in the care process; and
- c. **Public Education and Stakeholder Engagement**
 - aims to educate the public on diabetes, focusing on the preventability of the disease and its avoidable burden, as well as engage the whole of society to do their part in this nationwide effort.



Fighting the disease together as a nation

Everyone has a part to play in this war. We are enhancing public awareness about diabetes and empowering individuals to take control of their health.