



UPDATE ON THE WAR ON DIABETES

The Ministry of Health (MOH) launched the War on Diabetes in 2016, in response to the significant health and societal burden posed by diabetes, and established the national Diabetes Prevention and Care Taskforce to spearhead a whole-of-nation initiative to tackle diabetes. The vision of the Taskforce is to create a supportive environment for Singaporeans to lead lives free from diabetes, and for those with diabetes to manage the condition well.

2. The War on Diabetes has seen progress in garnering a whole-of-nation effort. We have introduced various initiatives under three key thrusts of the strategic framework:

- (i) Prevention through healthy living;
- (ii) Early detection and intervention; and
- (iii) Better disease management.

These key thrusts are underpinned by cross-cutting enablers such as public education and stakeholder engagement, as well as data and analysis, technology and research.

Prevention through healthy living

3. Nutrition and physical activity are the key focus areas to combat unhealthy lifestyles and obesity, which are risk factors for diabetes. By encouraging healthy eating and regular physical activity for all ages across settings, Singaporeans can make healthier lifestyle changes to prevent disease onset or manage the condition better.

4. We have increased the availability and accessibility of healthier options for Singaporeans. As of September 2019, the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) programme has achieved a further increase in market share to about 29%, from 25.4% in 2018 and 18% in 2016, with over 3,500 HCS products across 100 food categories. As of end 2019, one in two stalls across hawker centres and coffee shops listed at least one healthier option on their menu, as part of the Healthier Dining Programme (HDP). The number of healthier meals sold under the HDP between January to December 2019 grew to 205 million, compared to 158 million in the same period in 2018.

5. More food manufacturers are developing healthier ingredients. 52 partners have come on board the Healthier Ingredient Development Scheme (HIDS) as of December 2019, offering over 200 healthier ingredient products sold at participating food and beverage (F&B) outlets across Singapore. This is an increase from the 37 partners, which had offered 114 healthier ingredient products, that came on board as of January 2019. Additionally, seven major beverage manufacturers have also pledged to limit the sugar content in their drinks to 12% sugar or less by end 2020.

Based on an interim review as of mid-2019, four have met the pledge and the remaining three are on track to meeting the deadline.

6. Singaporeans of all ages have more support in adopting a healthy lifestyle. The Health Promotion Board (HPB) works closely with the Ministry of Education and Early Childhood Development Agency to increase the availability of healthier meals in schools to cultivate good healthy eating habits from young. As of December 2019, over 87% (1,348) pre-schools (childcare centres and kindergartens) have come on board HPB's Healthy Meals in Pre-Schools programme. Since the end of 2017, all mainstream schools are on board the Healthy Meals in School Programme. As of December 2019, 91 food outlets at Institutes of Higher Learning offer at least one healthier option on their menu, as part of the HDP.

7. HPB has also increased the availability and accessibility of physical activity programmes, such as Sundays @ the Park, Sunrise in the City, and the Community Physical Activity Programme, to encourage Singaporeans across all ages to incorporate physical activity into their lifestyles. From an initial 240 sessions per week in 2016, there was a scale-up of programmes that contributed to an increase in free workout sessions to more than 1,600 sessions per week, as of December 2019. More than 85,000 participants have taken part in these physical activity programmes in 2019.

8. The National Steps Challenge™ has also seen some progress in nudging more Singaporeans to be more active. The number of sign-ups has grown from 156,000 in the first season to 800,000 in the fourth season, totalling more than 1.9 million sign-ups across all four seasons. Overall, physical activity levels among Challenge participants were found to have increased, contributed by both greater volume and engagement in higher-intensity physical activities. The introduction of the Moderate-to-Vigorous Intensity Physical Activity (MVPA) category in Season 4 has spurred participants to engage in higher-intensity physical activities and exercises and reap greater health benefits. From Season 3 to Season 4, the duration spent on MVPA by participants increased by 19 minutes per week. Season 5 was launched on 26 October 2019. More than 850,000 participants have signed up as of mid-February 2020.

Early detection and intervention

9. Promoting regular, age-appropriate screening and strengthening follow-up is important as it allows Singaporeans to detect their conditions early and seek timely intervention.

10. We have made screening more affordable. In September 2017, MOH enhanced subsidies for the Screen for Life (SFL) programme, where eligible Singaporeans can go for their recommended cardiovascular risk, colorectal and cervical cancer screening and follow-up at CHAS GP clinics, at \$0/2/5¹. In general, follow-up rates² for those with abnormal cardiovascular screen results have since improved from an average of 53% to 85% since the enhancement of SFL.

¹ The enhanced SFL subsidies are: Pioneer Generation card holders: free, CHAS orange, blue and Merdeka Generation card holders: \$2, other eligible Singapore citizens: \$5.

² This includes follow-up rates for hypertension, hyperlipidemia and diabetes.

11. Screening is also now more convenient. In May 2019, SFL adopted screening tests that removes the need for fasting prior to testing. This makes testing for diabetes and high blood cholesterol more convenient and provides more opportunities for ad hoc screening.

12. There is more targeted support for different population segments, for potentially at-risk populations not covered under SFL. The Diabetes Risk Assessment tool was rolled out in September 2017 targeting younger adults below 40 years old to assess their risk for undiagnosed diabetes. As of December 2019, the tool has been used about 467,000 times by individuals aged 18 to 39 years. Women with a history of gestational diabetes are also automatically eligible for screening subsidies under SFL since June 2019, as they are at higher risk of developing diabetes later in life.

Better disease management

13. We will continue to do more and better support individuals with diabetes in managing their conditions.

(i) Empowering Patients

- The first tier of National Diabetes Reference Materials (NDRM), which is largely pictorial and easy to understand, has been uploaded on HealthHub in December 2019 in all four languages.
- MOH has rolled out an online customisation portal in February 2020 to allow care team members to select and download specific pages from the NDRM and customise a personalised set for patients and their caregivers as needed.
- As part of developing the second tier of NDRM, MOH has conducted community pop-ups and a citizen design workshop from August to November 2019 with more than 700 participants to generate the topics that Singaporeans might wish to have in-depth information on. We will be developing in-depth materials based on these findings.
- MOH will also progressively roll out pilot programmes led by the healthcare clusters from April 2020 that aim to increase patients' ownership of their care journeys, and facilitate greater peer support and partnership with their healthcare providers.

(ii) Empowering Healthcare Teams.

- MOH has been introducing measures to increase support for patients by equipping healthcare professionals and lay volunteers to provide more holistic care for patients and their caregivers. One of these measures is the Care Team Education Framework, which aims to help professional and lay care team members educate and empower patients and caregivers more effectively.

(iii) Anchoring Chronic Disease Management in Primary Care.

- MOH is increasing our primary care's capacity and capability in delivering more holistic team-based care to patients with diabetes and other chronic conditions through Primary Care Networks (PCNs). As of January 2020, there are more than 500 GP clinics under 10 PCNs. Over 6,000 diabetic patients have benefitted from PCN ancillary services such as diabetic foot and eye screenings since last year.

14. We have introduced more initiatives and programmes to address common complications associated with diabetes.

- (i) The National Diabetic Foot Workgroup was formed in April 2018 to develop a national strategy to reduce diabetes-related lower limb amputations. Since June 2019, it has progressively rolled out a risk-stratified framework for diabetic foot screening, management and escalation across the polyclinics and public hospitals. This framework includes the creation of multidisciplinary teams, consisting of surgeons, diabetes specialists and podiatrists, for timely management of active diabetic foot cases escalated from primary care. Together, they provide holistic care for the patient in one setting, for better care and improved outcomes.
- (ii) The Singapore Integrated Diabetic Retinopathy Programme (SiDRP) was started in 2012 to provide a centralised screening programme at all polyclinics to detect eye complications in patients with diabetes. The annual number of eye screens performed by SiDRP has increased from about 14,000 since its commencement to 95,000 in 2019.
- (iii) The Holistic Approach in Lowering and Tracking Chronic Kidney Disease (HALT-CKD) programme was introduced in April 2017 to prevent and slow down deterioration of chronic kidney disease to kidney failure. This programme has been implemented across all 20 polyclinics. As at December 2019, about 80,000 patients have been recruited under the HALT-CKD programme.
- (iv) MOH will launch a public campaign from the second half of 2020 to raise awareness of regular diabetic foot and eye screening.

15. MOH will monitor the progress and continue to work closely with our stakeholders to fight diabetes and create a healthier Singapore for all.