



## EMPOWERING SINGAPOREANS TO LIVE HEALTHILY

The Ministry of Health (MOH) will continue to invest in health promotion, improve patient experience and work with industry and community partners to help Singaporeans live more healthily.

### Continuing the War on Diabetes

#### *Inclusion of Non-Fasting Tests for Screen for Life*

2. Regular screening and follow-up is one of the ways in which Singaporeans can take charge of their health and improve early detection of cardiovascular risk factors including pre-diabetes or Type 2 diabetes.

3. From May 2019, all Community Health Assist Scheme (CHAS) general practitioner (GP) clinics will be able to offer two non-fasting tests for cardiovascular risk screening under the Screen for Life (SFL) programme. These are the glycated haemoglobin (HbA1c) test for diabetes and non-fasting lipids test for high blood cholesterol<sup>1</sup>. Non-fasting tests will reduce the inconvenience that individuals face when having to fast overnight<sup>2</sup>, and enable GPs to recommend screening tests which can be carried out immediately for patients.

4. The fees for these two non-fasting tests under SFL would be the same as current fasting tests, i.e. free for the Pioneer Generation, \$2 for CHAS Blue/Orange card holders and \$5 for all other Singaporeans. From 1 November 2019, the fees for all eligible Merdeka Generation seniors will be \$2, compared to up to \$5 today.

#### *Patient Empowerment for Self-Care Framework*

5. MOH has developed a Patient Empowerment for Self-Care Framework which aims to empower patients with diabetes to co-own their care journey, and to initiate and sustain lifestyle changes for better care outcomes. A set of reference materials for patients, caregivers and the public, as well as resources that healthcare professionals and community-based providers can use during clinical consultations or peer visits with patients with diabetes, have been developed. Topics include healthy eating and physical activity, treatment, stress management and caregiver tips.

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<sup>1</sup> Certain underlying medical conditions may affect HbA1c results and recent food intake (such as a high fat meal), may affect non-fasting lipids results.

<sup>2</sup> Such as elderly patients who may be more prone to experiencing low blood sugar levels

6. The full set of materials will be published on HealthHub by mid-2019<sup>3</sup>. MOH is also developing more in-depth materials and will seek public input from mid-2019 on specific diabetes-related topics to be published online for patients' reference.

7. MOH is also developing a care team education framework to equip professionals and lay volunteers in the community with essential skills to use the national diabetes reference materials in educating patients and caregivers more effectively. This will be developed in consultation with stakeholders such as public healthcare institutions, Primary Care Networks and other community providers, and rolled out progressively from end 2019.

### ***Risk-stratified framework to reduce lower limb and toe amputation***

8. As part of Singapore's efforts to enhance the management of diabetes, the National Diabetic Foot Workgroup, formed in April 2018, has developed a strategy to reduce diabetes-related lower limb and toe amputations, among patients with diabetes. Under the strategy, a set of clinical guidance has been developed for healthcare professionals performing regular and comprehensive foot assessments for patients with diabetes so as to identify and treat diabetic complications in a timely manner. This will be published by the second quarter of 2019.

9. Complementing the clinical guidance will be a new risk-stratified diabetic foot screening, management and escalation framework, which will be progressively launched in polyclinics and public hospitals from the second quarter of 2019, and eventually to the Primary Care Networks and GPs. Patients will be tiered based on risk factors suggestive of nerve damage, blood vessel disease and foot deformity. The framework aims to streamline diabetic foot care services across primary and tertiary care, and provides guidance to healthcare teams on timely care for patients with foot complications in the appropriate setting.

## **Supporting Women's Health**

### ***HPV screening test***

10. Early screening can help detect pre-cancers before they turn into invasive cancers. MOH will introduce a more accurate test to screen for cervical cancer. The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) test can detect the presence of cancer causing HPV strains and would require less frequent visits to the doctor. With the new test, women aged 30 years and above need only be screened once every five years, as compared to the current Pap test that needs to be done every three years.

11. Under SFL, the cost of this HPV test for eligible Singaporeans at CHAS GP clinics will remain unchanged, i.e. free for Pioneer Generation, \$2 for CHAS Blue/ Orange card holders and \$5 for remaining Singaporeans.

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<sup>3</sup> A pilot version of the introductory section is now available on HealthHub. Please refer to <https://www.healthhub.sg/PE-Selfcare-Framework-Patient> and <https://www.healthhub.sg/PE-Selfcare-Framework-Careteam>

### ***School-based HPV vaccination***

12. Cervical cancer can be effectively prevented through vaccination, which confers protection against HPV infection, the cause of cervical cancer. The World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended the inclusion of HPV vaccines to national vaccination programmes, and many countries<sup>4</sup> have introduced a school-based HPV vaccination programme.

13. To bring about more comprehensive coverage of HPV vaccination for cervical cancer prevention, MOH will offer fully subsidised HPV vaccination from April 2019 as part of the national school-based health programme. All female students in the current and future Secondary 1 cohorts attending national schools (including government-funded Special Education schools), Privately-Funded Schools<sup>5</sup> and full-time Madrasahs can opt in to the programme. All other female Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents who are in the current and future Secondary 1 age-equivalent cohorts, including those studying in Private Education Institutions<sup>6</sup>, will also be eligible to receive fully subsidised HPV vaccination at Health Promotion Board (HPB)-appointed clinics.

14. MOH will also progressively introduce a one-time “catch-up” HPV vaccination programme for current cohorts of female students in Secondary 2 to 4 (and Secondary 5 where applicable). More information will be provided at a later date.

### ***Extension of SFL to gestational diabetes***

15. An estimated one in five pregnant women in Singapore suffers from complications due to gestational diabetes. Women with a history of gestational diabetes are at a higher risk of developing diabetes later in life, while children born from such pregnancies are more likely to develop childhood obesity and Type 2 diabetes later in life.

16. From June 2019, subsidised screening under the SFL programme will be extended to women with a history of gestational diabetes so as to improve screening rates and facilitate early detection and management of diabetes.

## **Helping Singaporeans Stay Tobacco- and Trans fat Free**

### ***Tightening tobacco control***

17. Tobacco control continues to be a priority for MOH in 2019. The Minimum Legal Age for the sale, purchase, use and possession of tobacco products was raised to 19 on 1 January 2019, and will be raised to 21 over the next two years. Standardised packaging with enlarged graphic health warnings for all tobacco products will also be introduced in 2020.

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<sup>4</sup> Countries that have introduced school-based HPV vaccination programmes include Australia, Brunei, Canada, Hong Kong SAR, Malaysia, and the United Kingdom.

<sup>5</sup> These are Anglo-Chinese School International, St. Joseph’s Institution International High School and Hwa Chong International School.

<sup>6</sup> Private Education Institutions are registered with the Committee for Private Education under the Private Education Act.

18. Besides legislative measures, MOH is focusing efforts on preventing initiation and encouraging cessation. In 2019, HPB will focus its efforts on two fronts: to nudge smokers to take their first attempt to quit, and subsequently to quit successfully. HPB is working with MOE and institutes of higher learning to incorporate anti-tobacco messages into the school curricula. HPB also deploys Student Health Advisors to 50 secondary schools, three ITE Colleges and five polytechnics to provide support and counselling to students on health issues which include tailored counselling for youth smokers in schools.

### ***Ban on Partially Hydrogenated Oils***

19. Trans fat consumption is associated with increased risk of cardiovascular diseases. The key source of trans fat in our diets is artificial trans fat in the form of Partially Hydrogenated Oils (PHO) found in oils, fats, and certain pre-packaged products including snacks, baked foods, prepared meals and fat spreads.

20. In 2013, Singapore introduced legislation to limit the amount of trans fat content in fats and oils sold in Singapore to 2%. The regulation covers all locally manufactured and imported fats and oils that are supplied to local food service establishments and manufacturers, as well as those sold in retail settings. This has helped to reduce the average daily trans fat intake among Singaporeans from 2.1g in 2010 to 1.0g in 2018.

21. To build on this, MOH plans to ban PHO and eliminate artificial trans fat from Singaporeans' diet. The PHO ban will replace the current trans fat limit on fats and oils, and also apply to all pre-packaged food products. Based on consultations with the industry, this is feasible with the use of alternatives such as sunflower and canola oil, which are unsaturated and healthier.

22. MOH will further consult the industry and work with relevant agencies on the implementation details. More information will be announced in due course.

### **Strengthening Community Mental Health Services**

23. The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) has trained over 14,000 frontline staff from government agencies and community partners to identify and respond to persons with mental health issues in the community.

24. To strengthen mental health services for youths-at-risk, MOH is looking at developing a new integrated youth service with partners including AIC, HPB, Institute of Mental Health and National Council of Social Service. Youths who need help will be referred to social and health services for assistance and intervention in an integrated manner. MOH will also review and update the Enhanced Community Mental Health Masterplan announced in 2017 and continue building communities of care around mental health patients and their families.