

GPBUZZ

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BRINGING SPECIALIST CARE CLOSER

in the community



Official Opening of Ang Mo Kio Specialist Centre (AMKSC)

Trans-Disciplinary Care in Diabetes Mellitus

Anchoring Preventive Interventions in Primary Care

Direct Access for GPs to Musculoskeletal Care at AMKSC

Scan the QR code using your iPhone
or smart phone to view GPBuzz on
the TTSH website, or visit
<https://delivr.com/2KB6V>



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A New Chapter of Health in the AMK Heartlands

Allow us to welcome you all to this issue of GPBuzz, that features our latest addition to the TTSH and NHG family, the Ang Mo Kio Specialist Centre (AMKSC)!

The physical building itself is not new and housed the former Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic for 37 years, from 1981 to 2018. Tan Tock Seng Hospital and NHG are also not new to this neighbourhood, having operated a day surgery centre called 1-Health at Broadway Plaza here in Ang Mo Kio Central from 2008 till 2019, when the services were re-located and consolidated into this new centre.

Tan Tock Seng Hospital serves around 914,500 residents living in Central Singapore, with about 19.2% of this population aged 65 years and older. AMKSC is a key facility in TTSH's efforts to support Ministry of Health (MOH) vision to develop value-based population health, to shift the focus of healthcare from illness care to wellness, and from cradle to grave healthcare relationships with residents in the community. At AMKSC, we seek to design and develop new services and new models of care, to work hand-in-hand with our GPs and community partners, to bring better healthcare to the residents in the neighbourhood.

At AMKSC, we have outpatient clinics for functional screening, more holistic care for diabetes and therapy services for common musculoskeletal conditions that often do not require seeing a specialist doctor in the hospital. Siting these services more conveniently in the community will allow easier access to care and earlier return to health. The centre also provides cataract surgery (go to pages 10-11)

and diagnostic endoscopic procedures (more on page 6). To bring specialised procedures closer to the community, GPs who partner TTSH in shared care arrangements can now access these specialist services and provide better care for their patients. This will greatly boost the capabilities of GPs to provide better care for their patients in their own practice.

I hope you will enjoy reading about the many exciting new services and models of care that we will be rolling out in AMKSC. We look forward to hearing from you and meeting up as we seek your partnership in caring for the residents in Central Health. See you in AMKSC!

P.S. To all GPs, nurses and #FrontlineHeroes: Thank You for working hard around the clock to keep us safe and well in the ongoing pandemic. A very happy Labour Day, and our appreciation belongs to you!

Adj A/Prof Daniel Chew & A/Prof Kwek Tong Kiat, AMKSC Management Committee Chairpersons



TTSH Health Library - Your One-stop Resource Centre

Be in-the-know and make health decisions with TTSH Health Library

A digital resource platform for healthcare professionals, patients and caregivers, TTSH Health Library now boasts a new and improved look! Easily access over 600 useful patient education (PE) resources anytime, anywhere and for free, right at your fingertips.

PATIENT EDUCATION

- STEP 1** Visit TTSH corporate website
- STEP 2** Click on TTSH Health Library
- STEP 3** Explore various categories from **Diseases and Conditions** to **Lifestyle Resources**
 - a: Select a main category
 - b: Select a subcategory
 - c: Select your desired PE Material

Keen to learn more about a particular condition or health topic?

Share your ideas with us at patienteducation@ttsh.com.sg.

New Categories on TTSH Health Library

Medication & Drug Information

Learn more about your medication(s) and how you should administer them

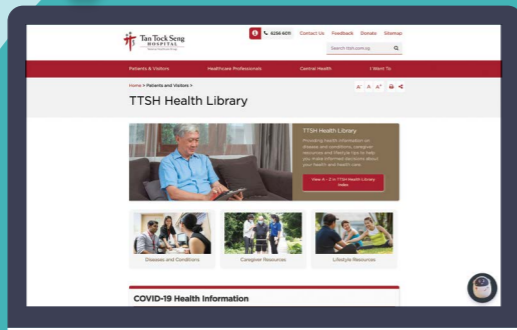


Caregiver Resources

Tips, information and community initiatives to support caregivers and care recipients

Covid-19 Vaccination and Health Tips

The digital Health Library offers tips on how to navigate the Covid-19 pandemic with confidence



Lifestyle Resources

Enjoy better wellness with physical, nutritional and mental well-being tips, all in one place

Diseases and Conditions

Learn about symptoms, treatment and how to manage your health condition(s)



Scan Me to Explore TTSH Health Library

Highlights from the Official Opening of TTSH Ang Mo Kio Specialist Centre



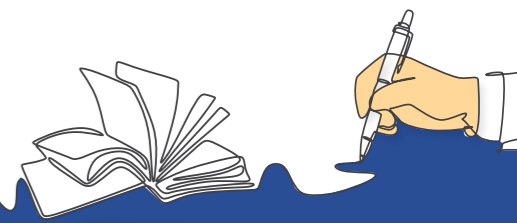
[From left] TTSH Chairman Medical Board Prof Chin Jing Jih, Senior Minister of State for Health Dr Koh Poh Koon, Prime Minister Mr Lee Hsien Loong, National Healthcare Group Chairman Mr Tan Tee How, and TTSH Chief Executive Officer Adj Prof Eugene Fidelis Soh officially open the TTSH Ang Mo Kio Specialist Centre.

On 18 March 2022, Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) officially opened the TTSH Ang Mo Kio Specialist Centre (AMKSC) in the heart of the Ang Mo Kio neighbourhood. The care models within the centre are part of the hospital's Central Health strategy to strengthen care beyond hospital walls and nurture healthier communities in Central Singapore.

AMKSC anchors care within the community through collaborations with GPs, Family Physicians, and other care partners in the neighbourhood. In his speech, PM Lee commended the way that AMKSC seeks to provide a more seamless healthcare experience and continuity of care for patients by collaborating with GPs and community partners.

Besides locating redesigned specialist care services at AMKSC, TTSH is also partnering GPs and polyclinics in the co-management of residents' health. Its first step is to enable direct referrals from GPs to specialist diagnostics, therapy and procedures offered at AMKSC.

Dr Lim Kim Show, a GP at Life Family Clinic in Ang Mo Kio, said: "Getting early intervention for musculoskeletal conditions such as carpal tunnel syndrome and osteoarthritis knee pain makes a big difference in patients' recovery. This direct referral process can cut down waiting time by more than a month, which means they get treatment that much faster."



PM Lee having a tour of AMKSC.

The centre also houses the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC)'s Silver Generation Office (SGO) and TTSH Community Health Teams (CHT). Together, they enhance health and social integration and promote healthier lifestyles amongst residents.

Through AMKSC, TTSH aims to provide better access to specialist care and promote preventive medicine in the community by working closely with partners in the neighbourhoods they serve together.

About AMKSC

Level 1 houses more than 20 consultation and treatment rooms, a physiotherapy gym, and a central pharmacy. This supports holistic care management plans for different patient conditions. Care models within the AMKSC include:



Scan the QR code to find out more about AMKSC services and referral information



Watch the full speech by PM Lee by scanning the QR code



Read on to find out more about the services offered at AMKSC and how GPs can refer your patients.

Endoscopy Service at AMKSC: A Useful Diagnostic Tool

Located near AMK Hub, AMK Specialist Centre is a convenient stop that offers General Practitioners (GPs) direct referral access to Oesophago-Gastro-Duodenoscopy (OGD) service to help the patients in the community. Patients who experience recurrent upper abdominal pain, bloatedness, reflux (heartburn) or other symptoms such as passing of black stools should consult a doctor for medical help.

In such instances, OGD procedure would allow specialists to diagnose the patient's condition and provide them with proper treatment. This commonly performed procedure lets the specialist visually inspect the patient's oesophagus (foodpipe), stomach and part of the duodenum (small intestine) for any ulcers, bleeding, growths or inflammation.

Specialised Suites for Endoscopy

Our skilled professionals from TTSH will perform these procedures within AMKSC in Endoscopy Suites equipped with advanced facilities, at affordable private rate charges. Our specialists may perform a biopsy and take small tissue samples using the endoscope. If a biopsy for histology is performed, patients will be arranged for a follow-up appointment at a designated TTSH clinic for subsequent care management.

An endoscopy report together with the lab results will be returned to the referring GP within five working days. GPs should ensure prompt follow-up and treatment for their patients who have tested positive for Helicobacter Pylori.

Colonoscopy service is also available at AMKSC for patients who are assessed to be eligible under the National Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme. Patients will proceed to TTSH for a consultation before a scope appointment is arranged in AMKSC.





▲ Specialist performing an OGD procedure for patient in an Endoscopy Suite.

Please scan QR code to download GP direct access endoscopy request form for referral to AMKSC.



CME Events

Date & Time of Event	Organising Department	Name of Event	No. of CME Points Awarded	Registration Details
Thursday, 19 May 2022, 6pm to 7.30pm	Central Region Trauma Services	Management of Elderly Major Trauma Patients	1 CME Point	Online registration: https://tinyurl.com/44vrc7e8 
Saturday, 2 July 2022, 2pm to 3.30pm	NHG Eye Institute @ Tan Tock Seng Hospital	GP Workshop Webinar	2 CME Points	Registration Link: https://bit.ly/3svgOU1 For enquiries, please email eye@ttsh.com.sg 

Supporting Diabetes Mellitus (DM) Care in the Community

Dr Timothy Quek
Consultant and Head,
Department
of Endocrinology,
Tan Tock Seng
Hospital



Managing diabetes mellitus (DM) well is a complex task, which requires not only appropriate use of anti-diabetic medications, but also requires the patient to make major adjustments to his or her diet and activity levels. Access to screening services to monitor for the complications of DM is also an essential component of good DM care.

What increases this complexity further is that not only does DM have various subtypes which manifest differently, but DM in the same patient often behaves differently over the course of his or her life. Psychosocial changes such as losing one's job, bereavement, or medical changes like hospital admission for heart attack or newly diagnosed cancer, can significantly affect DM control. Therefore, the needs for a patient with DM often vary over the course of their lifespan.

For many patients with DM, it is impractical to expect the doctor to provide all the required patient education and screening during the course of the medical consult. Therefore, **nursing and allied health support is often required during the care of patients with DM.** They provide the patient with necessary and appropriate education and skills, to allow the patient to self-manage their diabetes (e.g. dietary modification, hypoglycaemia advice, timing of medications with meals and activity, self-monitoring of blood glucose, insulin self-injections).

Currently, many patients with DM are cared for using a multidisciplinary model of care, where the same patient would see multiple healthcare professionals — such as a doctor, diabetes nurse clinician, pharmacist, dietitian, podiatrist and medical social worker.

A New Role - Clinical Diabetes Educator (CDE)

In Ang Mo Kio Specialist Centre (AMKSC), we have provided special cross-training to a group of nursing and allied health staff in TTSH, to combine the roles performed by multiple allied health professionals into a single trans-disciplinary role, called the Clinical Diabetes Educator (CDE). The CDE has the breadth of knowledge to deliver basic diabetes education and training to the majority of DM patients in a single session. This reduces the need for patients to visit multiple healthcare professionals, thus cutting down on clinic visits and expenses.

Although screening and nursing / allied healthcare support services are available in the tertiary hospital and polyclinic setting, it is recognised that not all general practitioners practising in the community have ready access to such support services for DM patients.

Our aim over the coming years will be to implement a system where these support services can be made readily available for general practitioners. This would allow the provision of better DM care to a larger number of patients, while keeping their care anchored within the community.

We look forward to working with all of you in the years ahead!

GPs can refer their patients for Trans-disciplinary Diabetes Care via referral to the Department of Endocrinology @ AMKSC.

Musculoskeletal Fitness:

An Oft-Overlooked Aspect of Physical Health

Sharika Udipi

Principal Physiotherapist,
Department of Physiotherapy,
Tan Tock Seng Hospital



The Global Burden of Disease Study (2017), found that although Singaporeans are living longer and healthier lives, musculoskeletal diseases have been found to increase the number of years of life with disability.

Nipping Musculoskeletal Pain in the Bud

In light of this, there is growing concern about the health burden of musculoskeletal (MSK) diseases.

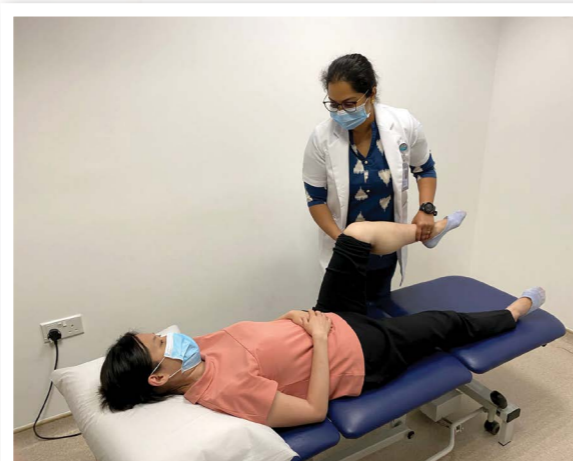
As first contact practitioners, General Practitioners (GPs) frequently encounter patients who suffer from various MSK conditions. Common MSK conditions include low back pain, osteoarthritis, and neck pain. GPs play a very important role in correctly identifying and treating these conditions early on. This prevents them from becoming chronic and affecting the productivity and quality of life of these individuals.

The Singapore National Health Survey conducted in 2010 estimated that low back pain can affect up to 80% of the adult population in Singapore. It mostly affects adults in their 30s to 40s.

Although back pain can be very debilitating, most instances are non-specific, self-limiting and resolves within a few weeks. Osteoarthritis (OA), another common MSK condition, can affect all joints in the body, but it commonly affects the knees, hips, shoulders, and hands. OA usually affects the older population, and can severely limit their quality of life.

In most cases of low back pain and early osteoarthritis, a combination of lifestyle modification, generalised exercises, weight loss and physiotherapy / occupational therapy are very effective in managing its symptoms. However, it is important to exclude any red

flags such as cancers, unexplained weight loss, trauma, serious neurological pathologies and other medical issues masquerading as MSK pain. These should be referred on for specialist care or to the Emergency Department for urgent attention.



Physiotherapist conducting a physical examination of the lower limbs for a patient with knee pain.



Physiotherapist supervising the patient with an exercise to strengthen her core.



Physiotherapist using models to explain to the patient on her knee condition.

Dedicated Team of Specialists

At AMKSC, the integrated MSK (iMSK) service consists of a team of physiotherapists and occupational therapists who are specially trained and ready to work closely with our GP counterparts in managing the acute flares of their patient(s), and to return them back to their previous function.

Our physiotherapists work together with their patients to prevent the recurrence of MSK pain by identifying mechanical and postural causes of their pain. Usually, a mix of manual therapy, ergonomic advice, strengthening and stretching exercises are prescribed to allow patients to quickly recover and return to work safely.

Our occupational therapists treat upper limb conditions, in particular hand and finger conditions, to alleviate pain with exercises, modalities, splints and modification of equipment to reduce the strain on the joints.

Upon referral, our therapists would communicate and provide timely updates to GPs on their patient's progress.

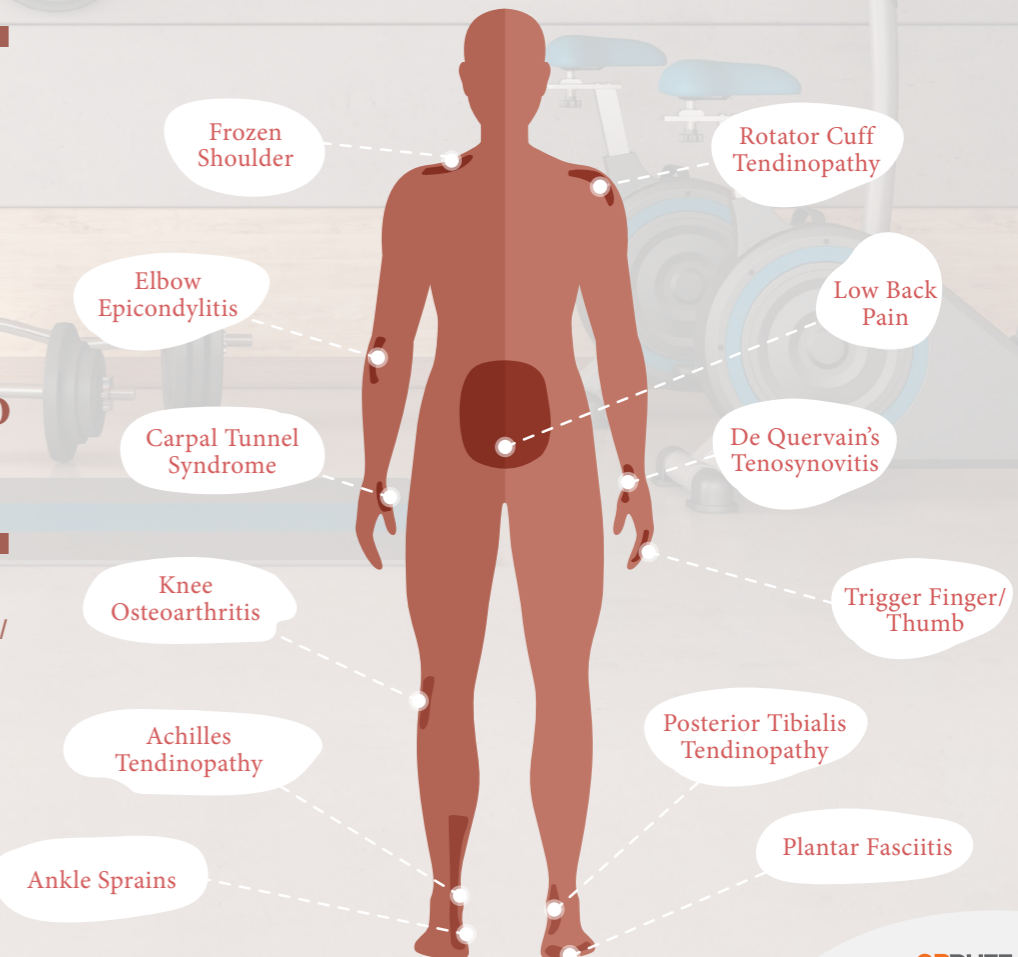


Occupational therapist going through tips on optimum holding and usage of handphone to prevent re-injury from repetitive movements, for patients with repetitive strain injury.

Therapists are also trained to identify red flags or concerning issues which will be escalated on for further specialist attention if needed. GPs will be regularly updated on their patients.

List of common MSK conditions that GPs can refer to AMKSC:

Refer to back cover for the 3-step referral to AMKSC.



A Vision for Seamless Care:

Strengthening Eye Health Integration at AMKSC Community Eye Clinic

Dr Koh Yan Tong
 Consultant, Department
 of Ophthalmology,
 Tan Tock Seng Hospital



Dr Rosalynn Grace Siantar
 Consultant, Department
 of Ophthalmology,
 Tan Tock Seng Hospital

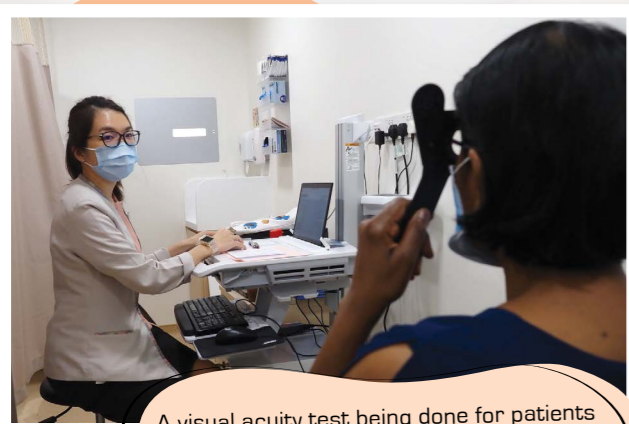


“A rapidly ageing population in Singapore is a major contributing factor to the rising prevalence of chronic eye diseases, which will likely bring about a surge in demand for eye care services. By right-siting patients in the primary eye care setting to General Practitioner (GP) clinics and Community Eye Clinics (CEC), timely and appropriate eye care can be made available to all!”

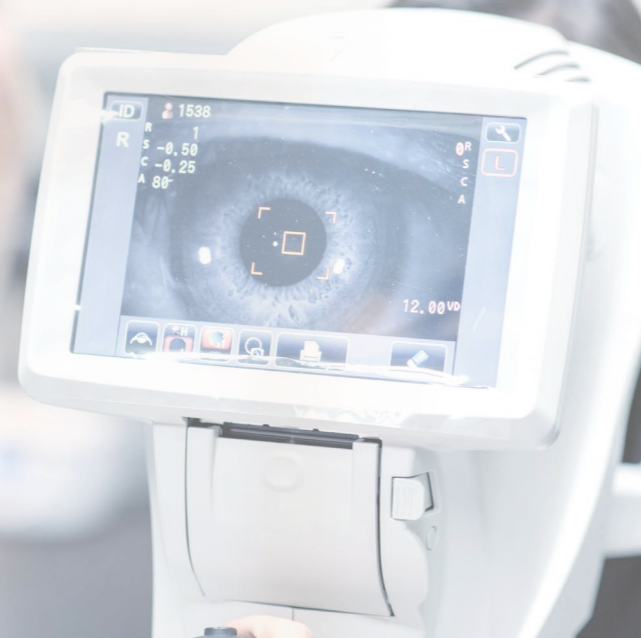
Bridging the Gap between Hospital and Home

As the first point of contact for patients concerned about their health, GPs are equipped with the ability to conduct eye assessments as well as perform detailed history-taking of patients with ocular symptoms such as blurring of vision, floaters, diplopia, redness and pain. Depending on the severity and duration of symptoms, GPs are able to manage early-stage or stable conditions, such as dry eyes and mild or early cataracts with no visual disturbance. If further specialised assessment is required, GPs can then refer their patients to our eye care professionals in CECs or hospitals following the respective referral criteria.

The CEC located in AMKSC provides GPs with timely accessibility to tertiary eye care intervention within the community. Led by a team of clinically accredited optometrists, CEC can tend to patients referred by GPs, who meet one or more criteria [refer below], and conduct a comprehensive assessment to provide a tailored management plan.



A visual acuity test being done for patients by our patient service associate (PSA).



Eye diagnostic tests conducted by our ophthalmic technician using specialised equipment for clinical assessment.



Our optometrist performs a thorough eye assessment during a consultation session.

In addition to management of stable chronic eye conditions, cataract surgeries and post-surgery reviews can also be conducted at AMKSC. Patients will have to be seen at TTSH first for a consultation as well as pre-admission checks and tests, before proceeding to AMKSC for their cataract surgery and one-month post-surgery review.

Once they are assessed to be clinically stable for continued recovery in the community, patients will be discharged back to their respective GPs to encourage the co-management of their ocular conditions in the long run. This not only ensures that eye care services remain affordable and accessible, but also empowers GPs with the ability to provide continued care for their patients.

List of CEC referral criteria for GPs

- 1 Blurring of vision over a duration of 4 or more weeks
- 2 Persistent redness of the eyes (that may be accompanied with mild pain or ocular discomfort)
- 3 Suspected Glaucoma with raised eye pressure or increased cup-disc ratio, which requires screening for evidence of Glaucoma
- 4 Diabetic patients with Singapore Integrated Diabetic Retinopathy Programme (SiDRP) referral recommendation within 3 months

Refer to back cover for the 3-step referral to AMKSC.

Anchoring Preventive Interventions in Primary Care

Dr Wong Chia Siong

Director,
Population Health Office,
Tan Tock Seng Hospital



Dr Darren Seah Ee-Jin

Director,
Family Medicine Development,
National Healthcare Group Polyclinics



Rise of Lifestyle-related Chronic Disease

The rising prevalence of chronic diseases in Singapore is a cause for concern, with hypertension, hyperlipidemia and obesity showing an upward trend amongst Singapore residents from 2017 to 2020.¹ Additionally, the number of Singaporeans living with diabetes is projected to climb from 450,000 today to one million by 2050. One in three Singaporeans is at risk of developing diabetes in his lifetime. The rise in chronic diseases is largely driven by changes in lifestyle risk factors and population ageing, a key trend whose rapid pace is expected to impact healthcare spending. Government healthcare expenditure tripled between 2010 and 2019 and it is projected that we will spend about \$27 billion or around 3.5% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) by 2030.² This is not a sustainable trajectory and more needs to be done to maintain health and well-being among Singaporeans.



Role of General Practitioners

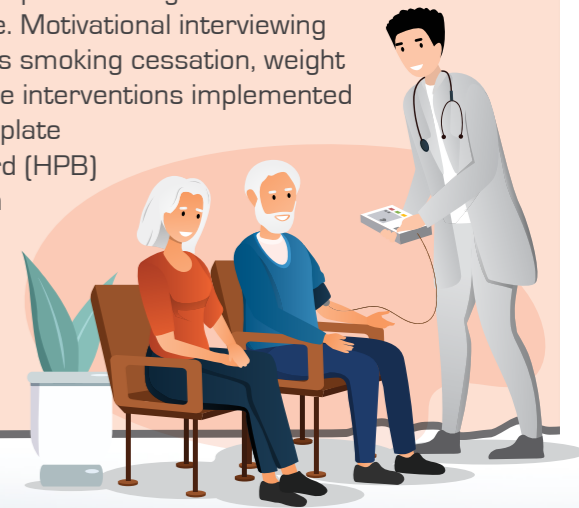
Our general practitioners (GPs) are well-suited to anchor the key tenet of preventive care. Uniquely positioned in their capacity, GPs are skilled generalists trained to identify and manage risk factors, and influence patients' lifestyle behaviours and habits through counselling and motivation. GPs also take a whole person approach which considers the unique culture, values, preferences and needs of individuals. This holistic outlook is important in managing risk factors, and allows the GP to appropriately identify patients who are at risk or in need. The relational continuity between GPs and their patients offers opportunities for ongoing evaluation of risk factors and follow-up of early interventions. Local resources have been made available to enable joined-up care between different healthcare professionals or across organisation boundaries. There is also growing attention to the concept of "social prescribing" where GPs are encouraged to refer patients to a range of local non-clinical services to support the health and well-being of their patients.



EMPOWERING RELATIONSHIP-BASED CARE FOR BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES

Relationship-based care considers the patient's ideas, concerns and expectations and can nurture a better understanding of the patient's family and community in which he/she is living to create an opportunity for a therapeutic relationship to develop.³ These considerations are particularly relevant for preventive interventions where ongoing adherence to lifestyle modifications is beneficial. Thus, any health system transformation or policy changes that aims to improve preventive care must support the building and strengthening of the relationship between GPs and their patients.

GPs may commonly use motivational interviewing to increase the patient's intrinsic motivation. The person-centred process guides the patient to develop and strengthen intrinsic motivation and helps to bring about behavioural change. Motivational interviewing can be effective in various lifestyle interventions such as smoking cessation, weight loss and physical activity. There are also local preventive interventions implemented which target specific lifestyle factors. For example, the plate method has been advocated by Health Promotion Board (HPB) to help communicate healthy eating practices. GPs can also prescribe exercise as courses such as Exercise is Medicine Singapore (EIMS) and Graduate Diploma in Sports Medicine continue to strengthen relevant knowledge in the primary care community.



Navigating the Road Ahead

Beyond lifestyle interventions, there have been other preventive care efforts which have scaled up in recent years. One such development is the National Adult Immunisation Schedule (NAIS) which was set up in 2017 to provide guidance for immunisations, and is now supported by a subsidy framework.⁴ A comprehensive set of disease-screening guidelines was also published in 2019 by Screening Test Review Committee under the Academy of Medicine.⁵ Listing tests suitable for population- and individual-level testing, it is used by general practitioners to decide on appropriate screening tests for patients.

Every visit in Primary Care is an opportunity for preventive care. Yet we are well aware that if general practitioners adopt all recommended tasks of preventive care in their day-to-day practice, they will be short of time to address patients' key concerns.⁶ Thus, it is important for us to communicate and synergise efforts between GPs and the health system, to work our way towards a healthier community for the future.

References:

1. Ministry of Health and Health Promotion Board, Singapore. National Population Health Survey 2020.
2. Ministry of Finance (2022). Budget Statement For Budget 2022.
3. Royal College of General Practitioners (2021). The power of relationships.
4. Agency for Integrated Care (2019). Vaccination & Childhood Developmental Screening (CDS) Subsidies.
5. Academy of Medicine, Singapore (2019). Report of the Screening Test Review Committee.
6. Yarnall KSH, Pollak KI, Østbye T, Krause KM, Michener JL. Primary care: is there enough time for prevention? American journal of public health. 2003;93(4):635-641. doi:10.2105/ajph.93.4.635

Move Strong & Be Balanced:

Your Healthy Ageing Guide

Physical function is an important marker for health, especially in older adults. As we age, progressive loss of muscle mass may affect our overall quality of life and ability to complete daily tasks.

Professionals recommend engaging in strength and balance exercises at least **twice a week** to delay age-related muscle loss. Other factors including sufficient sleep and meeting the daily nutritional requirements are also essential for the body's recovery and optimal performance. To help individuals take the first step toward healthy ageing, Active Health Coaches from SportSG and physiotherapists from Tan Tock Seng Hospital's Community Health Teams have developed a short guide comprising exercises that build strength and balance. Leveraging the power of habit, this guide suggests ways to incorporate simple exercises that will help you activate different muscle groups. The exercises can be incorporated into your daily routine without the need for specialised equipment or supervision.

We hope that this guide will be useful in kickstarting your journey to move strong and be balanced! For more tips on simple lifestyle changes for better health, speak to a health coach from the TTSH Community Health Teams.

You may locate us at the latest Community Health Post at Ang Mo Kio Specialist Centre every **Wednesday between 9am and 12pm**. Alternatively, scan the QR code to find your nearest Community Health Post and to book an appointment.



Active Health, an initiative under Sport Singapore, offers a wealth of resources to help you eat, move and rest better. In the upcoming months, you can also look forward to joining walks led by Active Health Coaches at different parks including Bishan-AMK Park, where the recommended exercises will be incorporated along the route. Visit the Active Health Labs, including one at Bishan Swimming Complex, for more information on this programme and for comprehensive functional assessments and health coaching!

Find out more about Active Health:

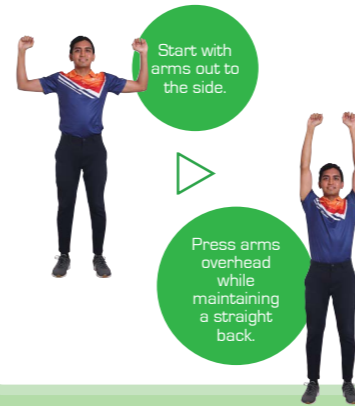


7 EXERCISES TO GET YOU STARTED



1 SHOULDER PRESS

This exercise targets your shoulder muscles



2 STANDING SAMURAI SLICE

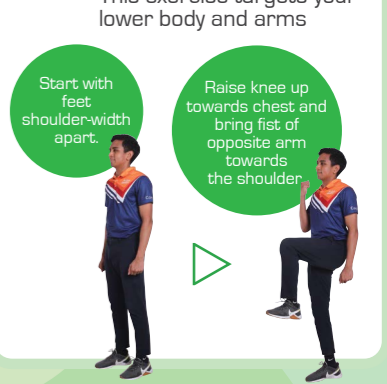
This exercise targets your core



Repeat exercise from the opposite side.

3 STANDING HIGH KNEE WITH BICEP CURL

This exercise targets your lower body and arms



Repeat exercise from the opposite side.

4 HIP ABDUCTION-ADDUCTION

This exercise targets your lower body, arms and hips



Repeat exercise from the opposite side.

5 LEG CURL

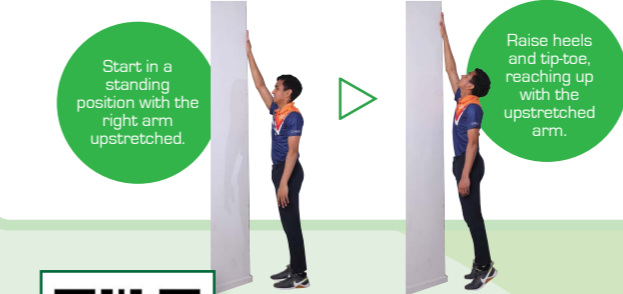
This exercise targets your hamstrings



Repeat exercise from the opposite side.

6 CALF RAISES WITH FINGER CRAWL

This exercise targets your lower body and motor coordination



7 SIT TO STAND

This exercise targets your lower body



Scan the QR code to learn more on how you can turn your void deck, park and the fitness corner into our own Fitness Trail.



3 Steps for referring patients to Ang Mo Kio Specialist Clinic

Here's a comprehensive chart listing the steps to refer **non-subsidised patients and patients under the Community Health Assist Scheme (CHAS)** to Ang Mo Kio Specialist Centre (AMKSC).



Step 2 CONTACT

**Appointment Hotline AMKSC:
6554 6500**

- 1 Advise which clinic you are referring your patient to



- 2 **For CHAS/ non-subsidised referrals**
Email referral documents to
AMK_Specialist_Centre@ttsh.com.sg**



*To ensure that your patients are seen promptly at AMKSC, triaging may be conducted by our staff. Our staff will get back to you with an appointment date within 3 to 5 working days.

**Please retain a copy of the documents for reference purpose. We thank you for your kind understanding.

Step 1 PREPARE

Before You Contact AMKSC

- 1 Get patient's full name, NRIC, date of birth and contact number.

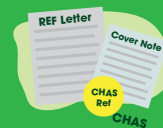


- 2 Check if patient has CHAS/MG/PG card.



- 3 Prepare documents:

For CHAS referral:
(i) CHAS Cover Note and
(ii) Referral Letter



For non-subsidised referral:
(i) Referral Letter only



Step 3 INFORM

Inform patient after confirming appointment details*

- 1 Inform patient of AMKSC's address (723 Ang Mo Kio Ave 8 Singapore 560723), date and time of appointment.



- 2 Remind patient to bring all necessary documents for their appointment.

