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Dr Ignatius Mark explains the difference

## EATING DISORDERS

SYMPTOMS, TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

FITNESS IDEAS TO KEEP YOUR HEART PUMPING

WOMEN AND HEART DISEASE WHY FEMALES ARE AT HIGHER RISK



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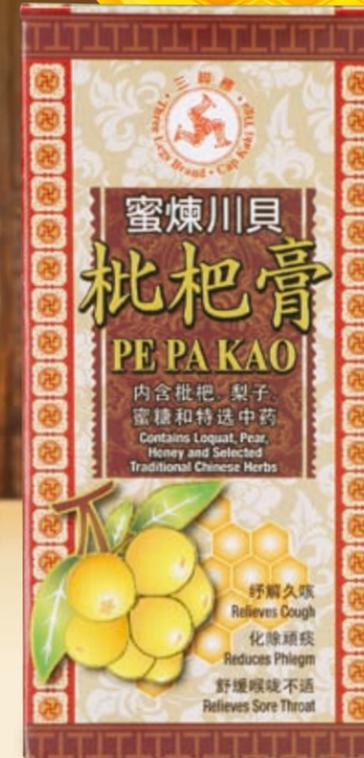
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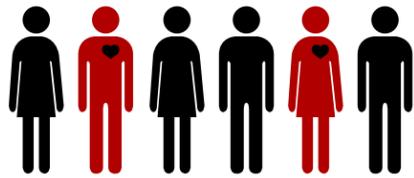
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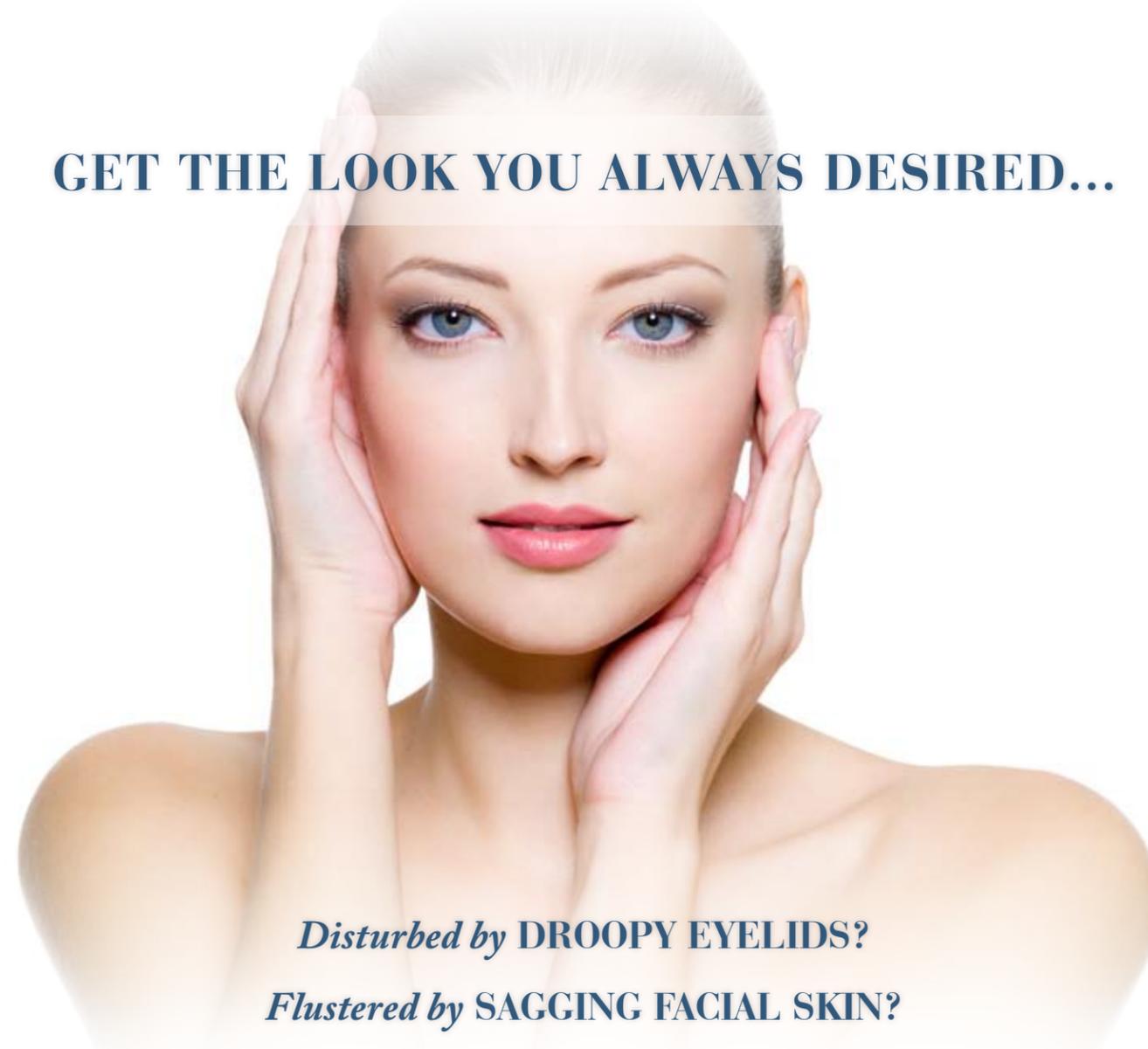


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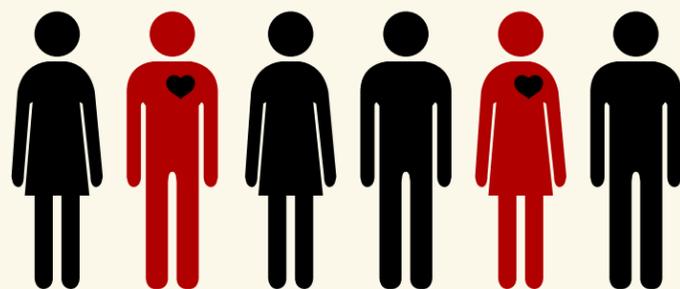
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# Women and Heart Disease

*Understanding your risks and what to look out for...*



♥ Heart disease has long been thought of as a man's disease, with images of a man clutching his heart with his hand and suddenly collapsing, coming to mind. However, women are in fact just as susceptible to heart disease, especially after going through menopause.



**HEART DISEASE AND STROKE CLAIM THE LIVES OF ONE IN THREE SINGAPOREAN WOMEN EACH YEAR.** This is eight times more than breast cancer, often thought to be the biggest killer of women. However, two surveys done by the Singapore Heart Foundation revealed that less than 10% (8% in 2006 and 9% in 2009) of women were aware of this fact. The same survey also revealed that only 12 per cent of women spoke about their risk of heart disease with their doctors, leaving them in the dark and ignorant about their risks and warning signs.

Women, unlike men, tend to experience symptoms not typical of heart disease. This leads to a delay in the seeking of treatment, and ultimately, a case that is more severe, with more damage done to the heart.

♥ In fact, women are twice as likely to die when they develop heart attacks. A recent study released by the Singapore Cardiac Data Bank explored the differences of heart disease in both men and women. It found that women who were hospitalised for heart disease tended to be on average 10 years older than their male counterparts, and also were more prone to having a higher number of co-existing conditions such as depression, increased heart rate and chest pains not commonly associated with the heart.

They also had a higher incidence of risks for heart disease, including high blood pressure, diabetes and kidney failure.

♥ So what should women look out for and are there any ways to prevent heart attacks?

**HEART ATTACKS DON'T ALWAYS COME FROM THE CHEST.** A classic *Hollywood*-style heart attack sees the patient suddenly experiencing chest pains, clutching the heart, and falling to the ground. While this is possible for men, many women tend to experience different symptoms while suffering a heart attack, which may make it difficult for them to identify.

The most classic symptom of a heart attack in women is when they experience uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain in the centre of the chest. ♥ **Some women have described it as having something very heavy pressing down on their chest.**

Another symptom in women is **pain or discomfort in the arms, back, neck, jaw or stomach.** This is one of the most common symptoms, with patients describing it as soreness or aching in these particular areas.

♥ **However, some women do not develop classic chest pain but experience only shortness of breath,**

like they have just run a marathon, when in fact they have not moved at all. Nausea, cold sweat or lightheadedness are all also symptoms of a heart attack and should not be ignored, especially if they persist for an extended period of time. Occasionally, women feel undue tiredness for no apparent reason, or experience epigastric discomfort that they usually attribute to "stomach gas", when in fact, it could be the only symptom of impending heart attack.

*To be continued on the next page...*



## SO HOW CAN WOMEN PROTECT THEMSELVES?

♥ An alarming 27% of respondents in the 2006 Heart Health Awareness Survey by the Singapore Heart Foundation stated that they thought there was nothing they could do to prevent a heart attack.

In fact, there are several things women can do in order to keep their heart healthy at any age.

A key area that women should take note of is **physical activity**. Exercising helps to not only relieve stress, but also increases the amount of good cholesterol in the blood while reducing the amount of bad cholesterol. It has been found that a physically active person is 1.5 times less likely to develop heart disease than someone who maintains a sedentary lifestyle.

**Stress** is another area that women need to manage. It is an unavoidable thing for most women who have to effectively balance work challenges with being able to care for the family and home. While a small to moderate amount of stress has been found to help us perform better, excessive stress, or stress over a prolonged period of time can damage health and has been found to have a significant impact on the risk of developing heart disease.



A report released this year at the World Heart Federation World Congress of Cardiology in Dubai revealed the impact tobacco has on hearts. It is common knowledge that **smoking** can lead to lung cancer, but what most smokers do not know is that it can also lead to an increased risk of heart disease, not only for themselves, but also the people around them.

♥ **By quitting smoking, you allow your body to repair much of the damage done, reducing the risk of heart complications by 50% within a year.** In 15 years, the risk of heart disease will be nearly the same as a non-smoker.

Many women do not think twice about the food they eat. In fact, **diet** can contribute significantly to the risk of developing heart disease. This is why it is important to adopt a heart healthy diet by limiting fat intake, reducing cholesterol, monitoring salt intake, consuming dietary fibre, and avoiding excessive alcohol consumption.

Heart disease is something that can in fact be prevented by being aware and understanding the risks. To understand more about the risk of heart disease, women (and men) should look to speak with their doctors. **HT**

For more information, visit [www.myheart.org.sg](http://www.myheart.org.sg)

*This article was contributed by Dr Chee Tek Siong, Member, Board of Directors, Singapore Heart Foundation, Vice-Chairperson of National Heart Week/World Heart Day 2012 committee*

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**WORLD  
HEART  
DAY**  
SEPTEMBER 29

*Celebrate World Heart Day  
with this wholesome recipe...*

# Bulgur Chickpea Salad

SERVES. 6 - 8

PREPARATION TIME. 40 mins

World Heart Day Campaign **WOMEN AND HEART DISEASE**

## INGREDIENTS.

1 cup bulgur wheat, dry  
2 cups boiling water  
450 grams chickpeas  
(garbanzos), canned, solids and  
liquid (rinsed and drained)  
¼ cup spring onions, chopped  
2 sprigs coriander (cilantro),  
chopped  
1 medium onion, chopped finely  
2 tablespoons mint leaves,  
chopped (optional)  
20 cherry tomatoes, diced

## DRESSING.

6 tbsps lemon juice  
(from 1 lemon)  
2 tbsps olive oil  
½ tsp salt  
1 tsp black pepper

## METHOD.

*In a bowl, pour  
in the dry bulgur  
wheat, followed by 2  
cups of boiling water.  
Cover and leave for at  
least half an hour, or until  
the bulgur swells and softens.  
Drain away any excess water  
and leave aside to cool.*

*In the meantime, prepare the  
dressing by whisking together lemon  
juice, oil, salt and pepper.*

*Add chickpeas, onion, spring onions,  
coriander, mint and cherry tomatoes to the  
bulgur. Pour the dressing over the bulgur  
mixture and stir to coat well. Chill in the  
refrigerator before serving.*

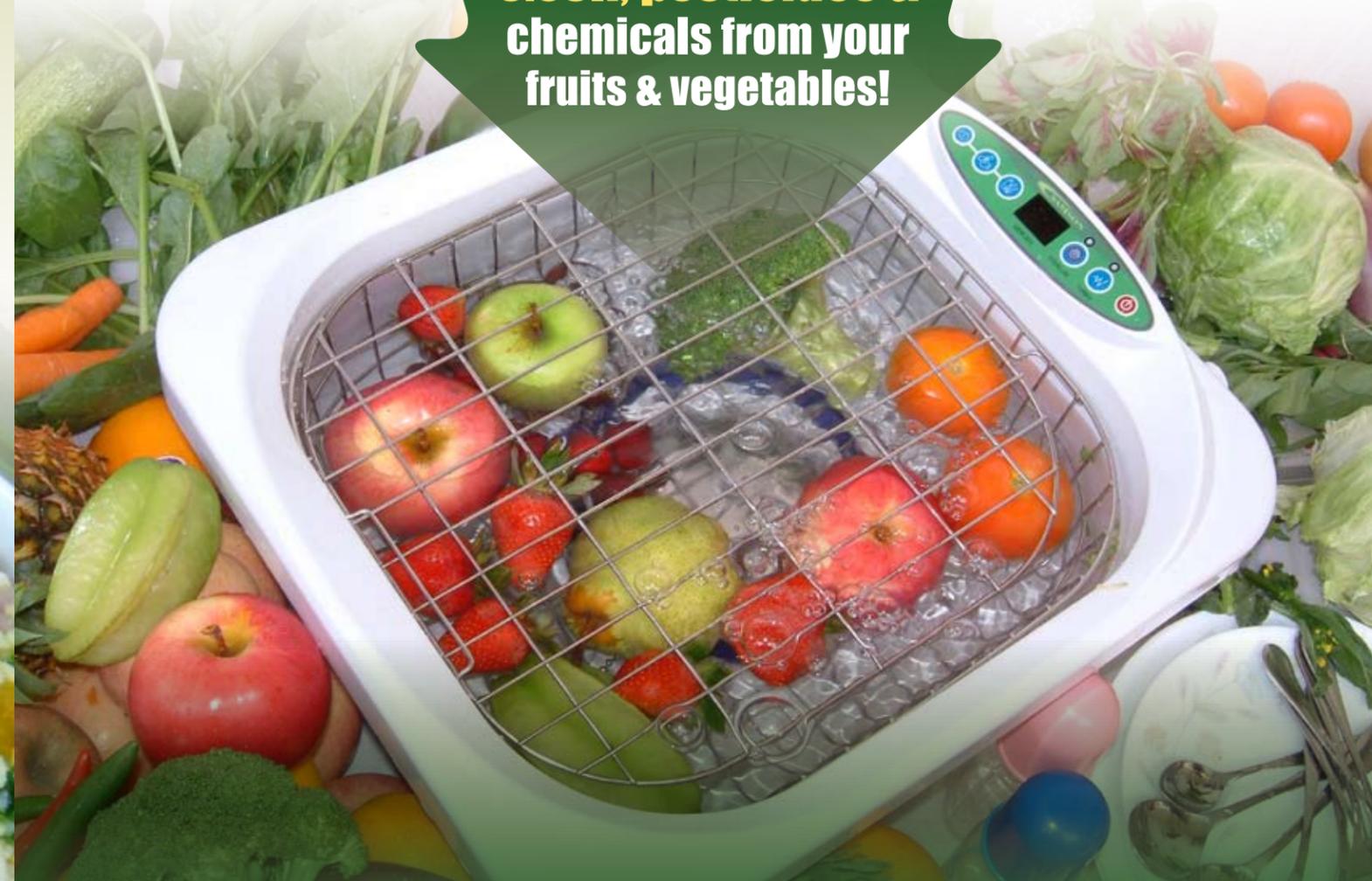
## NUTRIENTS PER SERVING.

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*Courtesy of Ms Lauren Fong Ho, Dietitian & Nutritionist, Singapore Heart Foundation.*



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THE UPPER AND LOWER LAST MOLARS ARE DENTAL IMPLANTS

# Dental Implants and Heart Disease



**Dental implants** are considered now as the closest replacement to natural teeth that are lost due to gum disease or decay. Many patients are now recipients of these “titanium” teeth and enjoy a good “bite” and chewing efficiency where in the past, our grandparents had to endure the mobile dentures and hygiene problems with dental bridges. The improved appearance of dental implants can be remarkable as it simulates the natural tooth emerging from the gums. With the certainty that it will not drop off during eating, it gives the patient the security of not worrying about embarrassing moments when one’s dentures get stuck to the chewy chicken or other foods.

Dentures can now be supported by implants and allow for good retention which will help avoid embarrassment. Most importantly if done correctly, the patient can maintain good oral health as individual implants can allow easier access between teeth, and thus

improving oral hygiene. The durability with good care that can last a “lifetime” will off-set the high initial costs and not surprisingly, many patients are going for this option. (Visit <http://orofacialsurgery.com.sg/practices-and-specialization/dentistry/dental-implants/>)



IMPLANT SUPPORTED LOWER DENTURE

The medical patient with heart problems and other chronic diseases can still enjoy the benefits of these useful dental implants, though there are more potential complications that can arise from surgical care.

Most of these patients with complicated medical histories are being treated by a specialist surgeon. The most common problem with heart patients are due to the medications such as warfarin or aspirin or clopidogrel (plavix) which can promote bleeding during dental implant surgery. In our practice, we will do an assessment of the patient’s cardiac status to reduce the risks of heart attacks and the stopping of such medications with the cardiologist’s input as necessary. Not all patients need to stop the medication as the risks of dental treatment can be very minimal and stopping the medicines may well be more detrimental to the patient from the cardiac point of view.

This is an area which is often dependent on the surgeon’s expertise. I normally would use other local measures such as special suturing methods, and haemostatic measures that can help to decrease the risks of bleeding without stopping the medicines. The other group of common heart problems is hypertension. Such patients will require special management before, during and after the dental implant surgery. Preemptive analgesia and sedation can be important for such patients.

At the same time, some patients may be on drugs to regulate the heart’s rhythm and special anaesthetics is needed during dental implant surgery. I would sometimes put patients on antihypertensives as necessary to minimise blood loss as well as use special procoagulant injections to minimise post operative bleeding. We would usually premedicate such patients to reduce anxiety and optimise cooperation as well as administer long acting anaesthetic injections to promote pain relief. The other common problem with

heart patients is the need for antibiotics to prevent infection of the heart valves for those who had cardiac surgery before, and we keep an updated view of the latest recommendations for such patients.

Most of the authorities now do not recommend routine administration of antibiotics just because of heart valves replacement. Patients that have been given antibiotic tablets to take before surgery may be surprised to know that these may not be necessary as documented by the latest research and studies. There are also co-morbidities such as diabetes that need to be addressed in such patients and there is an increased risk of failures of dental implants. Preoperative infection control is important for such patients and it may be necessary to start antibiotics before the procedure. The surgical skills of the specialist surgeon to minimise trauma and optimal soft tissue handling becomes of paramount importance. Postoperative care with special mouthwashes, debridement and promotion of healthy tissue growth are important aspects in diabetic patients. Generally, most cardiac patients are fit for dental implant surgery. The finer points of management of such patients require the skills of the specialist surgeon ideally with a good understanding of medical problems and medical training. The advances in medical care have enabled many patients to live long lives and certainly should reflect the standard of care in dentistry with suitably trained and qualified practitioners. **HT**



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Dr Victor Fan is one of the two medically qualified Oral and Maxillofacial surgeons in Singapore. His present practice in Gleneagles Medical Centre covers dental implant surgery, dental surgery, and major maxillofacial surgery which includes oral cancer surgery and reconstruction, facial aesthetic and orthognathic surgery. [www.orofacialsurgery.com.sg](http://www.orofacialsurgery.com.sg)



# When the ancient PHILOSOPHER meets the modern SCIENTIST...

A successful marriage between traditional medicine and modern science is not one that is often heard of. After all, the former is an ancient practice that has existed in human societies before the application of the latter to health.

However, a local pharmaceutical conglomerate has proven that such a union is possible with adequate research and some sagacious planning. Established in 1997, MarinEx was the result of a joint collaboration between the Wen Ken Group and Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB).

“After joining the Wen Ken Group in 1995, I wanted to infuse higher levels of Science and Technology into the R&D of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), accessing into the molecular properties of TCM active ingredients, and applying biotechnology to change their molecular size and structure. Following that, to enhance their efficacy, consistency and safety in application,” says Executive Director of Wen Ken, and co-founder of MarinEx, Mr Cheong Wing Kiat.

Incidentally during the 1990s, EDB was aggressively searching for investment opportunities in biotechnology

projects. Being one of the most established TCM groups in Singapore, Wen Ken was invited by EDB to explore biotechnology and TCM related projects in China.

Destiny and perfect timing too played a huge role in the formation of MarinEx. Given Wen Ken’s interest in TCM and the interest of Singapore Bio-innovations (SBI), the biotechnology investment arm of EDB, which came forth with funds to invest, plus the discovery of a marine-based burn cream product by Qingdao Ocean University, Singapore Shandong Business Council congregated all parties to form MarinEx in 1997.

MarinEx then went on to sign a technology transfer agreement with the Qingdao Ocean University, a reputable university in marine biotechnology, to transfer the rights to develop, produce, market and distribute the marine-based burn cream product.

The company first kicked off making its products using Chitosan, a water-soluble fibre-like substance derived from natural Chitin, found in fungi, as well as shells and skeletons of crabs prawns and crustaceans. Discovered in 1859, it was not until the 1970s that scientists discovered the health boosting properties of Chitosan.

MarinEx’s Head of R&D, Mr Young Siew Wah, a Western-trained pharmacist equipped with strong knowledge in TCM, has also started working diligently with international researchers on other more marine-based active ingredients and chitin derivatives –N-Acety-Glucosamine (NAG), Glucosamine and Collagen.

Upon its inception, the initial offerings by MarinEx were a range of marine-based health supplements - Anti Fat, Anti-Cholesterol, Colon-Care & JointMate Glucosamine. In recent years, it has additionally launched a range of functional food products and supplements which are beneficial for bones, joints and

skin health - OsteoMilk, OsteoSoy, both enhanced with collagen and milk calcium, pure marine nano collagen, OsteoMate Calcium L-Threonate (plant-based calcium) and soon to be launched plant-based glucosamine. MarinEx targets consumers who are mainly those in their 30s and above, health conscious and those who want better bones, joints and skin health.

Among the products offered, the flagship product of MarinEx is JointMate, a formula which helps to maintain healthy joints and cartilage. The product consists of crystalline Glucosamine Sulphate - a chitin derivative, and a water-soluble single amino molecule. It can be absorbed quickly to reach the cartilage matrix, where it stimulates the metabolism and growth of cartilage cells and forms healthy cartilage layer at joints. MarinEx also has been selling its JointMate glucosamine at health chain stores and doctors’ clinics in Hong Kong for many years.

MarinEx currently supplies to over 30 million JointMate glucosamine capsules annually to government hospitals, polyclinics, general practitioners and specialists’ clinics, pharmacies, health and personal care chain stores in Singapore alone. MarinEx manufactures its products in Singapore and Malaysia. All ingredients used by MarinEx have been well-researched, clinically tested and supported with scientific evidence from established organisations.

As with every organisation that needs to be fortified with a unique selling point to stay ahead of the game, MarinEx positions itself as specialist in marine-based active ingredients, and uses only well-researched ingredients to formulate, manufacture and market a limited range of products, focusing on bone, joint and skin health. The company ensures its finished products comply with relevant and strictest manufacturing and product quality standards - GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices), HACCP, Halal and Health Certifications - in Singapore and internationally. HT

# MarinEx®





MarinEx JointMate

# Take charge of your joints with *MarinEX JointMate*

Our joints are the point

where two bones meet.

Joints are also aptly called the “nuts and bolts” of our musculoskeletal structure as they hold our bones together, and allow the movement of the otherwise rigid skeleton.



chondrocytes to repair the damage. Glucosamine is one of the raw materials used to form new cartilage in the body. It has been proven in several clinical studies to help ease symptoms of osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and as well as other disorders associated with a breakdown of the cartilage regenerative process.

MarinEx JointMate contains premium grade glucosamine sulphate, extracted from the shells of shellfish. With a purity level of above 98%, this formula is one of the purest in the industry. Formed in 1997, JointMate is the flagship product of MarinEx. JointMate is produced in easy to digest capsules.

Each capsule contains 500mg of crystalline Glucosamine Sulphate. Glucosamine Sulphate is a chitin derivative, and a water-soluble single amino molecule. It absorbs fast to reach the cartilage matrix, where it stimulates the metabolism and growth of cartilage cells and forms healthy cartilage layer at joints. Both products help in fast and effective relief of joint discomfort, muscular pains, strains, backaches and minor pains associated with arthritis. **HT**

*MarinEx JointRub Glucosamine and MarinEx JointMate Glucosamine Sulphate are available at all major Chinese medical halls and selected supermarkets, pharmacies, health and personal care chain stores.*

Joint pain is an almost inevitable outcome of ageing, coupled with wear and tear of joints. A strain, a fall, repeated heavy use or even an old injury to the joint can start a cycle of events that will lead to progressive degeneration of the joint. Cells, called chondrocytes help to repair and regenerate the joint cartilage as it wears away.

Glucosamine, synthesised in the body from glucose, provides the building blocks necessary for

# Yes, many Glucosamine products are not up to standard.

## Our standard ✓

Recently, a competitor pointed out that many Glucosamine and Chondroitin products were not up to standard. It quoted a University Alberta, Canada, study showing 13 out of 14 Glucosamine products contained less than 82% of their label claims.

We can't speak for others - but our standards are high. And most brands on the market don't come near.

At MarinEx Pharmaceuticals (Singapore) Pte Ltd., every batch of our Glucosamine goes through a series of stringent tests that surpasses even WHO standards. No “simple checks” for us.

Only product that has a purity rating 98% or more is released to you, the public.

We at MarinEx jealously guard our reputation as a world leader in **Glycoscience** research and production

Over the years, we've refined our product through a heavy investment in research and development to a point where MarinEx Glucosamine Sulphate - because of its superior purity and structure - is readily absorbed by the joints to hasten cartilage production and joint pain relief more effectively than most other well-known brands.

Which is why few can reach our standards.

### MarinEx Glucosamine Sulphate For Healthy Joints and Cartilages

Singapore's Very First Glycoscience Biotechnology Company  
Buy Singapore Product



60 capsules

180 capsules

Developed and quality controlled by:



### MarinEx Pharmaceuticals (Singapore) Pte Ltd

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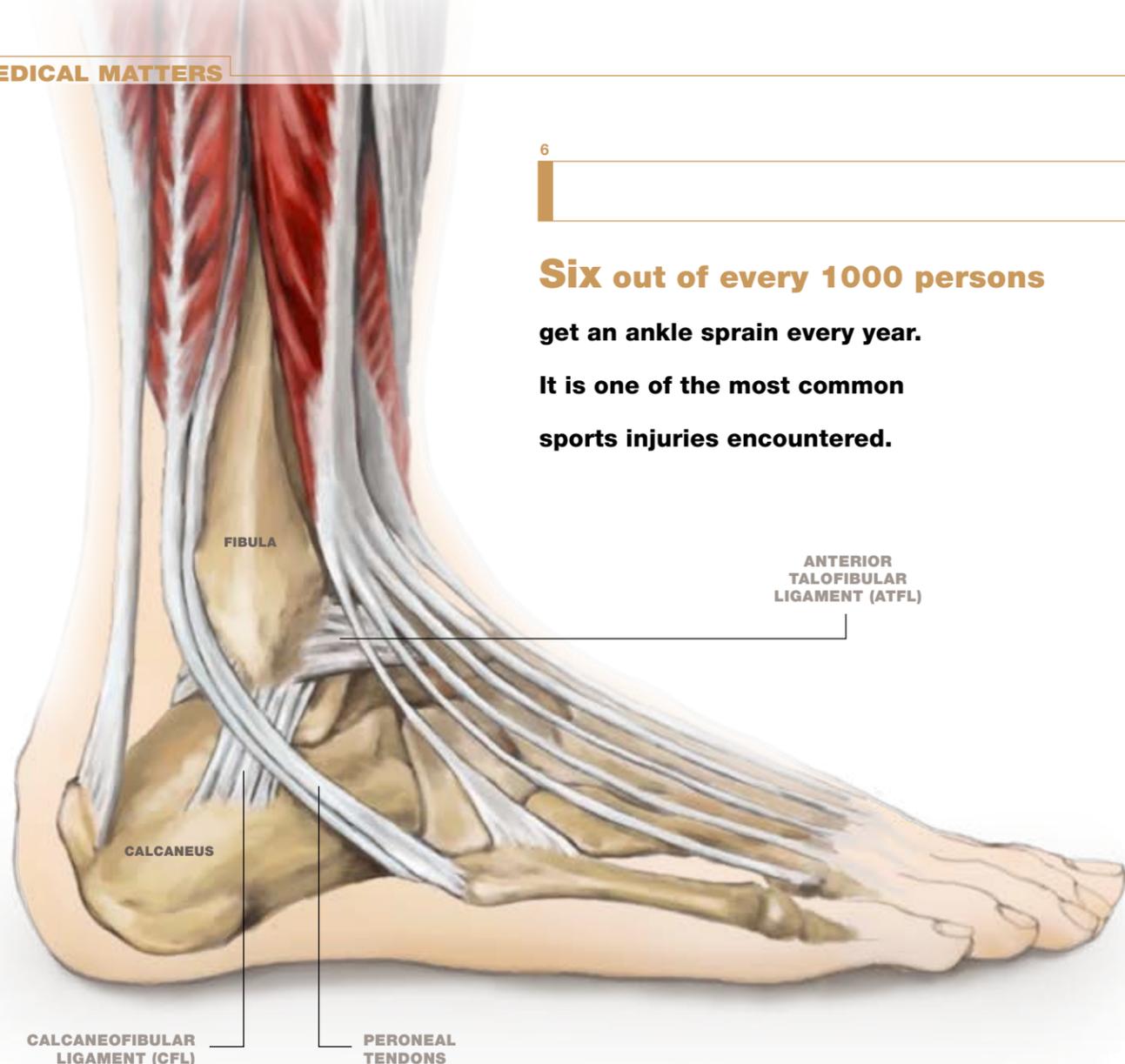
“The biomedical specialists who care for your health naturally”

Available leading pharmacies, hospitals, clinics and medical halls.

**Six out of every 1000 persons**

**get an ankle sprain every year.**

**It is one of the most common sports injuries encountered.**



# Ankle Sprains and Instability

Ankle sprains account for 12% of sports injuries in schools and 11% of all football injuries. While the majority of ankle sprains recover without long-term implications, up to 30% give rise to residual pain, and 20% result in an unstable ankle.

## The Anatomy and Mechanics of an Ankle Sprain

An inversion injury is the most common mechanism by which an ankle is sprained. In this situation, the ankle rolls inwards while the toes are pointed downwards towards the ground. In a mild injury, ligaments are stretched but not torn. In more severe injuries, one or more ligaments can be torn. In an inversion ankle sprain, the most commonly torn ligament is the anterior talofibular ligament or ATFL. In addition, the calcaneofibular ligament or CFL may also be torn.

The most commonly understood function of a ligament is to keep the joint stable (mechanical function). The ligament prevents the joint from moving in directions it is not designed to, and also keeps the range of motion of the joint within normal limits. What is less commonly appreciated is that the ligament also has a sensory function. In

the example of an ankle, as the ankle starts to roll over, the ligament tightens and nerve signals are sent to the nervous system to alert it that an ankle sprain is about to occur. Nerve impulses are then sent to the appropriate muscles (peroneal muscles) to contract, in order to prevent an ankle sprain.

Unlike some ligaments of the knee which have no ability to heal, ankle ligament tears do routinely heal.

However, healing usually results in a ligament which is elongated and too lax to serve its mechanical function effectively.

The sensory function is also impaired resulting in disruption of the ligament.

## Treatment for an Ankle Sprain

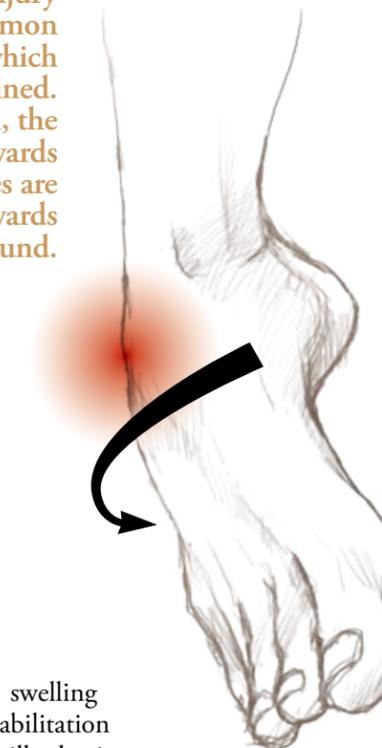
With inversion as a mechanism of injury, besides an ankle ligament injury, fractures around the ankle or foot may also result. When a healthcare professional is consulted after an ankle sprain, he or she will assess for the likelihood of a fracture and if this is suspected, X-rays may be necessary.

Once it has been ascertained that the sprain has resulted only in a ligament injury, immediate treatment is with RICE therapy:

- Rest**
- Ice**
- Compression**
- Elevation**

These measures reduce swelling and inflammation at the injury site. Early return to daily activity has been found to reduce the duration of rehabilitation necessary before resumption of sports. As such, unless pain and swelling preclude walking, immobilisation in a cast and the use of crutches is usually avoided.

An inversion injury is the most common mechanism by which an ankle is sprained. In this situation, the ankle rolls inwards while the toes are pointed downwards towards the ground.

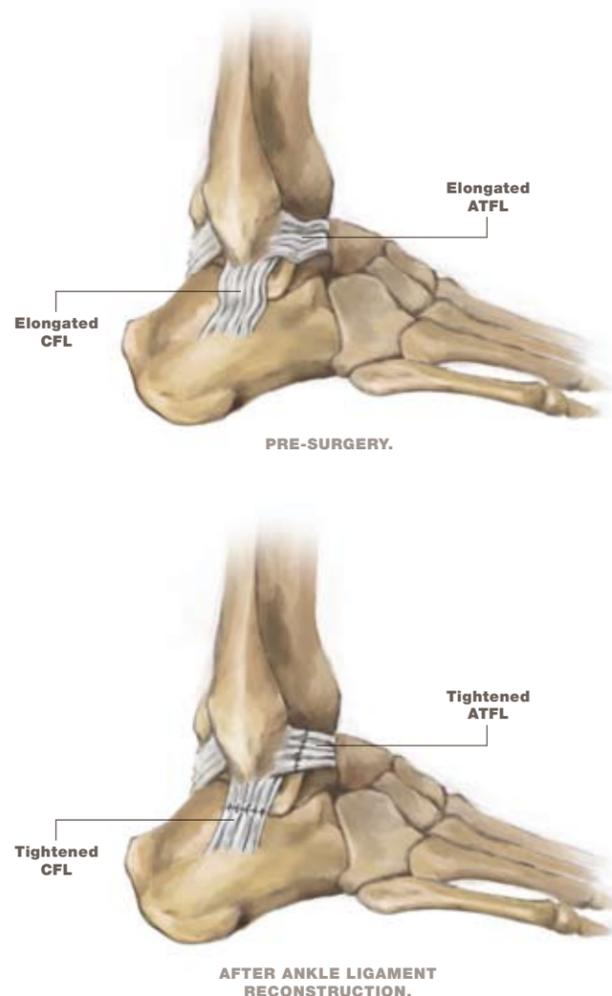


An inversion ankle sprain.

Once initial pain and swelling has been managed, rehabilitation with physiotherapy will begin. Bearing in mind the mechanical and sensory function of ankle ligaments, physiotherapy focuses on restoring these. For the mechanical function, strengthening of the peroneal muscles allows to compensate for lax ankle ligaments. In order to restore the sensory function, balance training is instituted.

Once satisfactory rehabilitation has been achieved, return to sports with a brace or ankle taping is allowed. The function of the brace or tape is two-fold. Firstly, these devices prevent the ankle from excessive range of motion which may predispose to an ankle sprain. The second role is to augment the sensory function of the ankle ligaments. Information regarding the position of the ankle is transmitted to the nervous system through the skin as the brace or tape heightens the skin's ability so sense ankle motion as different areas tighten with different ankle positions.

Approximately 80% of people who suffer ankle sprains return to their chosen sport at the pre-injury level. The remaining 20% continue to have ankle instability and suffer frequent sprains despite adequate physiotherapy. This group would benefit from ankle ligament reconstruction (ankle stabilisation).



### Ankle Ligament Reconstruction

Many different methods have been described for ankle ligament reconstruction. The method usually employed is termed an “anatomic reconstruction” as it recreates the position of the native ATFL and CFL, usually using the actual ligaments themselves. This method gives the best outcome in terms of ankle stability and ability to return to sports.

Recalling how ankle ligaments heal in an elongated fashion, surgery aims to shorten the ligaments to the original length.

The stretched-out ligament is divided in the mid-portion and stitched in a shortened position with the ends overlapping each other.

After surgery, the ankle is protected first in a plaster cast then a walking boot for a total of six weeks. This is the time it takes the shortened ligament to heal. Following this, physiotherapy is started with a protocol similar to that of an ankle sprain to restore the mechanical and sensory function of the ankle. Return to sports is expected, usually, in three months.

### Conclusion

The majority of ankle sprains recover without long-term consequences. Some persist to give chronic ankle instability and recurrent sprains. For this group, ankle ligament reconstruction is an effective method of stabilising the ankle to allow return to sport. **HT**



**Dr Lim Kay Kiat**

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 FRCSEd (Orthopaedics) – Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh (Orthopaedic Surgery)

Dr Lim Kay Kiat is an orthopaedic surgeon with a subspecialty in Foot and Ankle surgery. He has a special interest in sports injuries. After completing his undergraduate education and postgraduate training in Orthopaedic Surgery, Dr Lim, as a fellow in the University of Toronto, underwent subspecialty training at St Michael’s Hospital in Toronto, Canada. Dr Lim treats a wide spectrum of foot and ankle disorders. He counts among his many patients, elite athletes active on the international sporting scene. *Synergy Orthopaedic Group* [www.sog.sg](http://www.sog.sg)

## Do

- Tape or brace an ankle that has recovered from an ankle sprain on return to sport as this reduces the risk of further injuries.
- Seek medical attention for an ankle that is unstable or if you experience frequent ankle sprains. Recurrent ankle sprains may result in cartilage damage, which is a precursor to ankle arthritis.

## Don't

- Ignore a severe ankle sprain especially if walking is difficult. It could be an indication of a problem more severe than a ligament tear, for example an ankle fracture.
- Resume sports without adequate recovery and rehabilitation following an ankle sprain. This could lead to long-term problems such as pain and recurrent sprains.

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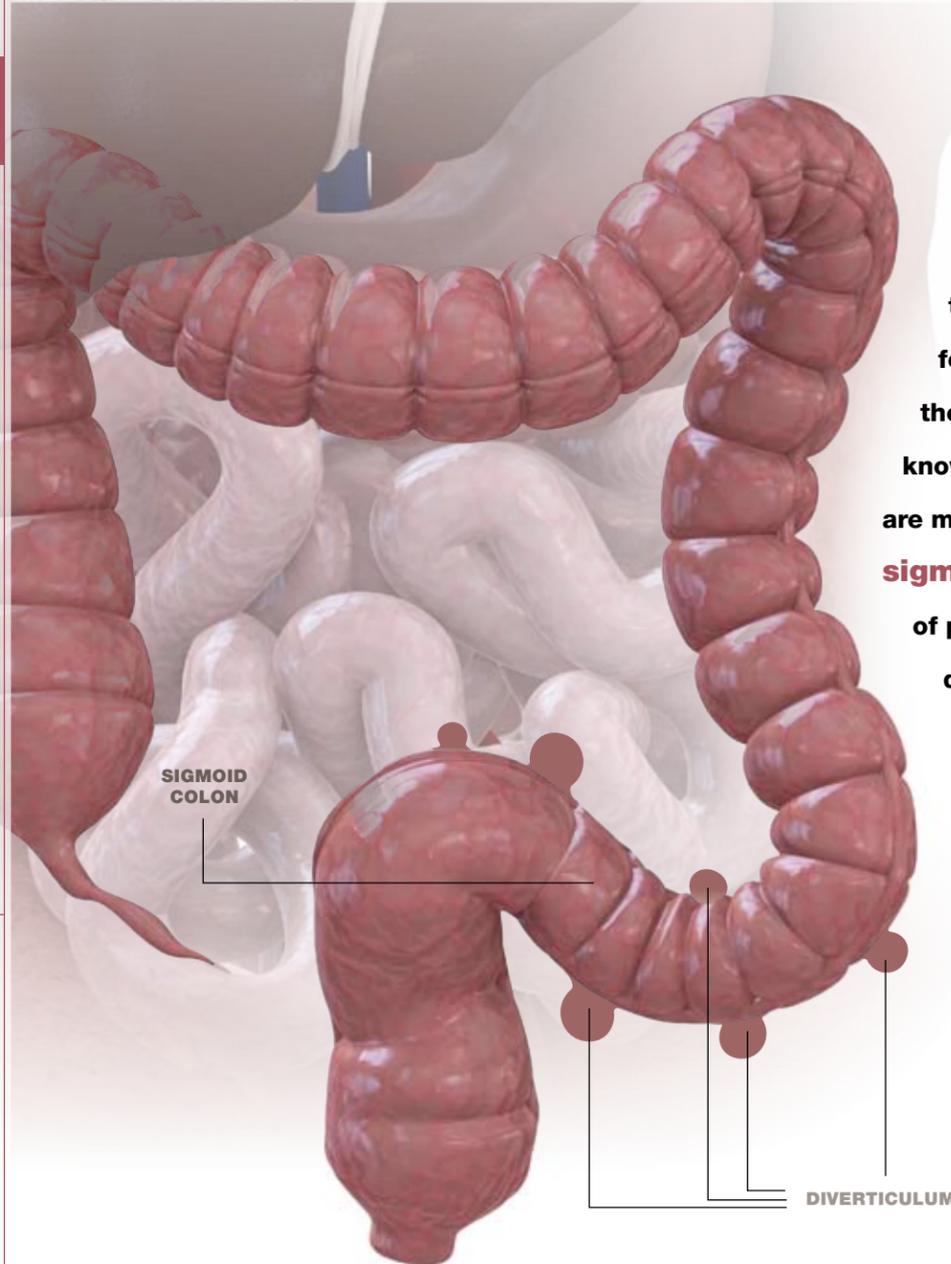


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**Diverticular disease** is a condition that affects the colon. It involves the formation of out-pouches in the colon. These pouches are known as **diverticulum**, and are most commonly found in the **sigmoid colon**. For majority of patients with diverticulum, diverticular disease is actually a benign condition that presents no real problem. However, for a small minority of patients, complications may occur.

# Diverticular Disease of the Colon

The first complication could be in the form of diverticulitis when diverticulum become inflamed. Patients with diverticulitis present with low abdominal pain. Often, diverticulitis is self-limiting and can be treated with antibiotics accompanied by bowel rest. Many patients also do not have a second episode of inflammation

after treatment. Unfortunately, a small proportion of such patients face recurrent inflammation which may worsen to infection. These patients will experience abdominal pain and fever. Pus may form around the infected area of the colon and perforation may occur. Such patients should seek medical help immediately as it is an emergency.

The second complication is bleeding of the diverticulum when blood vessels in the diverticulum rupture. Patients with bleeding diverticulum may pass out stale blood and blood clots.

**In some cases where there is severe bleeding, patients could pass out fresh blood. This condition could also be life-threatening and requires urgent medical attention.**

Although the exact cause of diverticular disease is unknown, chronic constipation and a low-fibre diet may be a contributing factor to the development of the disease. The risk of diverticular disease also increases with age.

### What are the symptoms of diverticular disease?

Patients with diverticulosis may not have any symptoms. Some patients complain of bloating and blood in stools. Diverticulitis presents itself in the following symptoms.

- Pain in the lower abdomen
- Fever
- Blood in stools

### How can diverticular disease be treated?

There is no exact treatment for diverticulosis. It is only when complications in the form of diverticulitis occur that treatment is required.

Mild cases of diverticulitis can be treated with oral antibiotics. However, in severe cases of diverticulitis, patients may require hospitalisation and intravenous antibiotics, and antispasmodics for treatment.

For every attack of diverticulitis, the patient will face a higher chance of a recurrent infection. When repeated episodes of diverticulitis occur, the doctor may recommend surgery to remove the part of the colon with diverticulum.

In cases of bleeding diverticulum, patients may require blood transfusion. Bowel rest is also recommended. Likewise, if bleeding is severe or if there are recurrent episodes of bleeding, surgery may be needed to remove the diseased part of the colon.

### What are the available surgical treatment options for diverticulitis?

#### Laparotomy

More commonly known as open surgery, laparotomy requires a cut of more than 15cm along the abdomen. However, laparotomy has some disadvantages such as a slower recovery, longer hospital stay and a longer scar.

#### Laparoscopic Surgery

Key-hole surgery is a modern surgical technique in which operations in the abdomen are performed by two or three instruments inserted through small holes in the abdomen with the help of a small fibre-optic camera inserted through the umbilicus. This type of surgery is gaining popularity amongst patients as they would experience less pain and faster recovery as compared to traditional open surgery, and both procedures are comparable in improving survival rates for patients.

### How can I prevent diverticular disease?

As the exact cause for diverticular disease is still unknown, there is no definitive prevention method.

**However, a well-balanced diet with adequate fibre intake may prevent formation of diverticulum. HT**

**Dr Ng Kheng Hong**  
 Consultant Colorectal and General Surgeon  
 MBBS (Singapore), MMed(Surgery),  
 FRCS(Edinburgh), FAMS(General Surgery)



Dr Ng Kheng Hong is a colorectal and general surgeon who has a very keen interest in robotic-assisted surgery and championed the use of robotics in various surgical disciplines. He also avidly explores the use Single Incision Laparoscopic Surgery in various general surgical procedures, like appendectomy, cholecystectomy, hernia repair and colorectal cancer surgery. He is one of the pioneers in the use of this technique in colorectal surgery. To date, Dr Ng has published more than 30 scientific papers in peer-reviewed medical journals. [www.khngsurgery.com.sg](http://www.khngsurgery.com.sg)

# Sinus and Nose allergy, What's the Difference?

**Many people often say that they have 'sinus' when what they mean is that they have a problem with their nose; typically a blocked and runny nose. This is technically not correct.**

The sinuses or more accurately, paranasal sinuses are hollow air spaces in the facial bones that open into the nose.

The sinuses are lined by the skin of the nose and this skin secretes mucus which flows out of the sinus through narrow openings and drain into the nose. Normally, there is a thin film of mucus that is constantly being cleared from the nose. This mechanism helps to keep the nose clean. However, in certain situations like infection or allergy, there is excessive mucus production which results in a runny nose.

With allergy, our immune system becomes oversensitive. Our immune system is responsible for protecting our body against harmful germs, compounds and cells. If any germs enter our body, the immune system will mount a response to fight it. It can recognise harmful cells or organisms and mount a response specific to the type of cell or organism.

**However, with allergy, the immune system mistakenly identifies something harmless as harmful and mounts a response when it should not.**

Much like it has developed a faulty targeting system. This unnecessary response is called an allergic reaction. This reaction can take place in many places in the body. When this reaction takes place in the nose, symptoms appear there and this is called nasal allergy or Allergic Rhinitis.

**What are the causes of allergy? The things that can cause allergy are called allergens.**

Most allergens involved in allergic rhinitis are inhaled. However there may be some people who develop nasal symptoms on ingesting allergens in the food as well. Some common inhalant allergens are house dust mites, cockroaches, pollen, animal dander and fungi.

Several allergens have cross reactivity. This means that the protein coat on the allergen may be similar to another allergen.

**What are the symptoms of nasal allergy?**

There are many symptoms associated with nasal allergy and not all patients have all the symptoms. In fact, some patients with nasal allergy may even get used to their

symptoms and accept that as a normal part of their lives. Most of these symptoms are also not exclusive to nasal allergy; these can overlap with other nasal conditions like sinus infection (sinusitis).

- Nasal congestion or blocked nose
- Runny nose
- Post-nasal drip (which may cause throat irritation)
- Sneezing or itchy nose
- Itchy eyes
- Loss of smell
- Mouth breathing

Symptoms can vary from mild, infrequent to severe and occurring daily. Symptom severity can vary with exposure to allergens and irritants. For example, if one is allergic to specific pollens, the symptoms will get worse during exposure and if it is seasonal, then the symptoms occur only during certain times of the year. In tropical countries, most allergies are perennial or year round.

If there are other symptoms like recurrent bleeding, predominantly one sided symptoms, coloured mucus, a blocked nose without other nasal symptoms or non-responsiveness to treatment, there may be other conditions present. An Ear Nose Throat specialist's opinion should be sought.

**What are the consequences of an untreated nasal allergy?**

Untreated nasal allergy can decrease the quality of life in several ways. Severe symptoms in the day can affect daytime performance. It can also affect sleep which may in turn cause daytime symptoms.

**Untreated nasal allergy is also associated with higher risk of uncontrolled asthma, sinus infections and middle ear problems.**

In children, uncontrolled nasal allergy can increase the risk of adenoid and tonsil enlargement. This can cause obstruction to breathing and a condition called Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA) which can affect the child's physical and mental growth. Children with OSA may be hyperactive in the daytime and have poor concentration. This can affect their learning ability and performance in school. On the long term in severe cases this can cause cardiovascular problems.

Chronic nasal obstruction from nasal allergy may lead to mouth breathing. During the formative childhood years, chronic mouth breathing interferes with the normal facial growth. This results in a smaller jaw in adulthood and can affect the facial appearance. A smaller jaw also causes a small upper air passage and this increases the risk of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea.

**What will the doctor do to assess nasal allergy?** The diagnosis of nasal allergy is made on clinical grounds. An ENT specialist can use a flexible instrument called a nasopharyngoscope to look inside the nose. This is done under local anaesthesia in the clinic setting. This is not painful and can even be tolerated by cooperative children. Allergy tests such as either a skin prick test or a blood test, can help to identify the allergens responsible for causing the allergy. This result may be different for different people depending on the allergens that they are sensitive to. In selected cases, a Computed Tomography(CT) scan of the sinuses may be needed to exclude other nasal conditions.

**How is nasal allergy treated?** There are multiple treatment options for nasal allergy. Patient education is important because this condition is chronic and patient involvement is crucial for good control. Environmental control of allergens can help reduce symptoms. There are several types of medications that can be used to provide symptom relief. These can be oral medications (pills or syrups) or nasal sprays. Nasal steroid sprays are safe and effective in controlling the allergic reaction and are usually the first line medications to be used in chronic cases with frequent symptoms. Most commonly used oral medications are anti-histamines and decongestants which help to dry the nose and relieve congestion. Surgery is reserved for treating nasal obstruction which is unresponsive to treatment with medications.

**What is the cure for allergy?**

**Allergy tends to improve as one gets older but that may take many years. Immunotherapy is one option to provide a possible cure.**

This involves introducing the allergens into the body at controlled doses starting out at a very low dose and escalating it upwards slowly so that the body builds tolerance towards the allergen. This may take three to five years of treatment. Immunotherapy can be given in weekly injections or daily oral sublingual instillations.

**What is the aim of treatment?** The aim of treatment is to prevent complications from allergic rhinitis and to improve the quality of life and daytime functioning for the patient. **HT**



**Dr Mark Hon Wah Ignatius** is a consultant ENT surgeon, and director of sleep services in Ascent Ear Nose Throat Specialist Group. His special interests include the treatment of snoring, obstructive Sleep apnoea, sleep disorders, nasal obstruction, thyroid lumps, and cancers of the head and neck region. [www.ascentent.com](http://www.ascentent.com)



**What are eye infections?**

Eye infections are eye diseases caused by bacterial, viral or other microbiological agents that cause your eyes to become red and swollen.

**Types of eye infections**

Conjunctivitis (pink or red eye) is the most common eye infection. It is an inflammation of the conjunctiva which is the outer lining of the eyeball that extends to the inner surface of the eyelids. It is usually due to an allergic reaction, or a viral or bacterial infection.

A sty is another common condition that occurs when an infection occurs in the hair follicle of your eyelashes. It normally looks like a small pus filled boil or a pimple. If the infection of your eyelid is more severe, the condition is known as preseptal cellulitis, or an eyelid infection.

Keratitis is a serious infection of the cornea. It may develop very quickly and can lead to ulceration, scarring and loss of vision.

**Causes**

• **Improper contact lens care is the most common cause of this condition**

- Viruses
- Bacteria
- Allergies
- Chemicals entering the eye
- Foreign objects in the eye
- Trauma to the eye

**Symptoms**

You may experience one or more of the following symptoms:

- Persistent Itching
- Flaking of the eyelids
- Discomfort of the eyes
- Blurring of vision
- Watery eyes
- Eye discharge
- Eye pain
- Swelling of the eyes or eyelids, and the surrounding tissue

**Preventing eye infections**

Eye infections usually occur because of contact with viruses or bacteria.

To prevent these harmful agents from entering your eye, follow the guidelines below:

- Wash your hands before and after touching your eyes or face.
- Avoid sharing eye make-up and change eye make-up every six months
- If you have an existing eye infection, avoid using any eye make-up or wearing contact lenses until the infection clears up.
- Practise good contact lens care and never share contact lens equipment, containers, or solutions.
- Do not share towels, linens, pillows, or handkerchiefs.
- Wear eye protection when in the sun, wind, heat, or cold to prevent eye irritation.
- Wear safety glasses when working with chemicals.
- Avoid exposing your eyes to contaminated water.

**Treatment**

You should see your eye doctor to determine the cause of your eye infection and get advice on the best course of treatment. In some cases of conjunctivitis, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications and antihistamines may be prescribed. Some patients with persistent allergic conjunctivitis may also require topical steroid drops.

Eye infection cases need treatment with antibiotic eyedrops, especially when non-viral causes are involved. Cornea infections or ulcers may even require hospitalisation. **HT**

Reference – Singapore National Eye Centre

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## MEDICAL MATTERS

# THD Procedure Eases the Misery of Piles

**Approximately half the population will develop hemorrhoids (or piles) at some point in their lives. Conventional surgery for chronic piles is often painful. THD (Transanal Hemorrhoidal Dearterialisation) – a new procedure for piles promises less postoperative pain and faster recovery.**

### What are piles?

'Anal cushions' are a complex of blood vessels lying just beneath the tissue lining the anal canal. These cushions are part of normal human anatomy and are thought to aid in defecation and maintaining continence.

With chronic straining during bowel movements, this complex of blood vessels can become dilated, swollen and inflamed. These swollen, engorged anal cushions are called hemorrhoids (or piles).

The lining of the anal canal over these blood vessels becomes thinned out resulting in bleeding during bowel movements. As the piles enlarge, they may protrude out of the anus.

### What are the symptoms of piles?

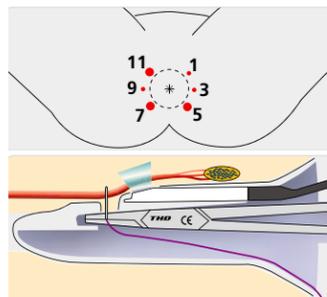
- Bleeding
- Itching or irritation of skin around the anus
- Lump or swelling around the anus
- Pain/discomfort

### What are the causes of piles?

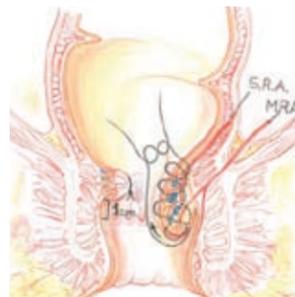
Swollen veins in the anus (hemorrhoids or piles) are thought to develop due to increased pressure in the pelvis and rectum. Factors that may cause this increased pressure include –

- Straining during bowel movements
- Sitting for long periods of time in the toilet
- Chronic constipation
- Pregnancy





**DEARTERIALISATION:** identification and Doppler-guided selective ligation of the terminal branches of the superior rectal artery



**MUCOPEXY:** repositioning of the anal cushions in their anatomical site by folding the mucohemorrhoidal prolapse

**What are the treatment options for piles?**

The treatment selected would depend on the severity of piles. Available treatment options include –

- **Medication**
- **Rubber band ligation**  
Several tiny rubber bands are placed around the base of a pile to cut off its circulation. The hemorrhoid withers and the rubber band falls off within days. This procedure is especially effective in controlling/reducing bleeding from piles.

• **Injection sclerotherapy**

A chemical solution is injected into the pile tissue to shrink it.

• **Surgical procedures**

If medication and less invasive procedures are not successful in relieving symptoms, surgery may be necessary. Surgical procedures performed for piles include –

**HEMORRHOIDECTOMY (hemorrhoid removal)**

This involves surgical removal of hemorrhoids. Hemorrhoidectomy is the most effective and complete way to remove hemorrhoids. The main drawback of this procedure is that it is painful and recovery may take a month or two.

**STAPLED HEMORRHOIDOPEXY (hemorrhoid stapling)**

Specially designed surgical staplers are used to block blood flow to hemorrhoidal tissue. Stapling generally causes less postoperative pain and allows patients to return to work earlier compared to conventional hemorrhoidectomy

• **THD or Transanal Hemorrhoidal Dearterialisation is a relatively new procedure for the treatment of piles that promises less postoperative pain and minimal downtime following surgery**

**What is THD?**

The THD (Transanal Hemorrhoidal Dearterialisation) procedure offers a minimally invasive surgical approach to treating hemorrhoids.

THD uses a Doppler probe to locate the terminating branches of the hemorrhoidal arteries (these are arteries which supply the complex of vessels within the piles).

**Once the artery is located with the Doppler probe, the surgeon uses a suture to tie and cut off the arterial blood flow to the hemorrhoidal plexus of vessels, causing the piles to shrink.**

In cases where there is significant prolapse (ie. the piles protrude out of the anus), the surgeon may perform a suture hemorrhoidopexy to repair the prolapse by ‘lifting’ excess hemorrhoidal tissue back to its original anatomical position.

The entire procedure is performed without excision or removal of any tissue so that there is minimal post-operative pain or discomfort. The THD procedure takes approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete and is usually performed as a day surgery procedure.

Many studies have confirmed that the THD procedure is effective in the treatment of piles, particularly when the predominant symptom is bleeding. THD may not be the ideal procedure in cases where prolapse is severe. Most studies show that THD patients suffer less post-operative discomfort and earlier return to work compared to other surgical techniques for piles. **HT**



**Dr Eric Gan**

Dr Eric Gan is a consultant surgeon at Mount Elizabeth Medical Centre. He has a special interest in minimally invasive, upper GI (esophageal & gastric) & cancer surgery. After completing postgraduate training in surgery, Dr Gan was a Fellow in gastric cancer surgery at the National Cancer Centre in Tsukiji, Tokyo. He also spent a year as Research Fellow in hepatobiliary surgery at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Centre in New York City. Dr Gan is Director of Bridge Bariatrics, a clinic specialising in bariatric (weight loss) surgery for the treatment of severe obesity. [www.bridgebariatrics.com.sg](http://www.bridgebariatrics.com.sg)

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# Doctors, Up close and personal...

As Hippocrates once said, "Wherever the art of medicine is loved, there also is love of humanity." As medicine evolves, so do the people who practice it. In this issue, we talk to five prominent doctors who share a common motivation to do their utmost for those who seek their expertise. Above all, they also tell us their secret recipes for success and excellence! **HT**

HEALTHYTIMES JUL - SEP 2012 • ISSUE 51

## Why did you choose this field of medicine?

This is a field of medicine where the main focus is to make people happy. As we only work on healthy people, we can't really call them patients, rather friends. This is very true as most of our patients end up as friends over the years. A work environment with friends and our job is to make them happy – wouldn't that be anyone's dream job?

## What motivates you about your job?

Seeing happy patients inspires us. Patients are our best teachers as no one is exactly the same as another person. So, we are always kept humble and motivated to do our best for each and every person.

## What are some of the misconceptions about this field?

It is not glamorous or fancy. Almost anyone can come and improve his/her features and confidence. The key is to enhance and beautify, not to create an artificial being. It is meant to contribute overwhelmingly to the person's happiness factor, and not just empty his/her pocket.

## What does it take to excel in this field?

There are so many factors needed to excel, other than the usual ones like knowledge, skill, experience, etc. To me, the most important two factors will be humility and an aesthetic eye. Humility to learn from patients and from any doctor is especially important as the field is rapidly advancing, changing to becoming less invasive with more fine work. There will be countless tips to do a better job if one is open. An aesthetic eye is another key to success as much of the work is simple surgery but how it is crafted, to what proportions - isn't that very much like the work of an artist?

**Dr Donald Ng**  
Aesthetic Physician  
Alaxis Medical & Aesthetic Clinic



**Dr Victor Fan**  
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon  
Medical-Dental Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery



## Why did you choose this field of medicine?

Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery is a unique discipline in that in many western developed countries, a specialist in this field has to have both dentistry and medicine qualifications and training. In Singapore, it is still very much a dental specialty though I am probably the first Singaporean who had completed the full double qualification training programme from the UK.

As a medically qualified oral & maxillofacial surgeon, it is a special niche to be able to deal with oral diseases in medically compromised patients. The field is also very exciting as it encompasses a wide scope of treatment procedures with a fair mix of emergencies (eg - facial fractures) and elective surgeries from routine dental oral conditions such as dental implants, wisdom teeth removal to complicated oral facial reconstructive surgery such as oral cancer resection and reconstruction.

## What motivates you about your job?

To me, it is a privilege to be able to look after a patient who had entrusted his/her care to me. In my field, I see the routine dental patients (implants, wisdom teeth) or the facial aesthetic surgeries (such as jaw realignment surgery, square jaw corrections etc). Treating such patients gives me the satisfaction of getting them better with their smiles. For the patients who are more seriously ill, fighting alongside with them during their treatment (such as surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy in oral cancer patients) can be a humbling experience. Many of these patients and their families would eventually become close friends. It is really the multi-faceted nature of the field and the ability to help so many different types of patients that gives me the motivation to constantly improve in my practice.

## What are some interesting facts in this field that others may not know?

Many dental conditions or the state of oral health will impact on the general "medical" well-being of the patient. Pregnant ladies with poor oral health can face the risk of premature labour and babies born to such patients may "inherit" her caries and poor dental health. There are already established studies relating heart diseases and diabetes with poor oral health.

Dental diseases such as decayed teeth can give rise to sinus infection and facial abscesses. Oral cancer is the number one cancer in the Indian subcontinent and surviving the disease is directly related to early diagnosis. The Oral & Maxillofacial surgeon is a specialist who is trained to treat oral cancer and is an expert on conditions as oral ulcers, salivary gland diseases and facial pains.

## What does it take to excel in this field?

Just like in all fields of medicine, hard work and discipline is needed. The training path can be long as medical qualification becomes necessary to allow for complete care of the compromised patient and this will mean extra years of undergraduate training. A good sense of aesthetics is important for the cosmetic part of the discipline and manual dexterity is essential as surgery inside the mouth or micro-vascular surgery can be quite difficult with butter fingers.



## Why did you choose this field of medicine?

As a junior doctor, I rotated through quite a few medical specialties before finally deciding to become a surgeon. I don't regret not jumping straight into a career in surgery early on: each rotation gave me a chance to see doctors working in different fields, each specialty contributing to patient care in a unique way.

I chose surgery in the end for many reasons. I enjoyed learning anatomy and an intimate knowledge of anatomy is what allows surgeons to cut safely and confidently. I liked working with my hands: I felt like this allowed me to be physically involved with the healing process. Surgery is also a field where difficult decisions need to be made both before and during procedures. The surgeon doesn't always have the right answers but I saw how my surgical mentors worked together with teams of doctors to come up with a rational, 'best' solution to difficult problems. There is a surgeons' mantra that goes 'Choose Well, Cut Well ... (and your patients) Get Well'. I thought that was how I wanted to practise medicine.

## What motivates you about your job?

Surgeons are acutely aware of how the decisions we make and our performance in the OR can affect patient outcome. Small human errors may have disastrous consequences.

On the other hand, I know that there are many things my team and I can do that can greatly improve the chances of things going well.

All surgeons are passionate about their work and we are motivated by the constant quest for improvement and the chance to do better for our patients.

## What are some of the misconceptions about this field?

Many people think that good surgery is all about the surgeon's 'hands', his innate dexterity and how swiftly he performs a procedure. In reality, surgical technique needs to be learned and painstakingly acquired through years of training. Modern surgery has little to do with swashbuckling panache but is performed carefully, deliberately and methodically. Speed and efficiency are only achieved when you have well-trained teams of professionals, working together and anticipating each other's moves.

## What does it take to excel in this field?

Hard work, dogged persistence in times of adversity and the will to succeed for our patients.



**Dr Eric Gan**  
General (Upper GI),  
Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgeon  
Bridge Bariatrics – the weight loss surgery clinic, Eric Gan Surgery



**Dr Leslie Kuek**  
Plastic Surgeon  
Leslie Kuek Plastic Surgery



## Why did you choose this field of medicine?

I chose plastic surgery because it allowed me the ability to use medical science to create, to correct deformities and finally, to enhance and beautify people who are otherwise normal. That's a challenge that excites me.

## What motivates you about your job?

Every patient presents a unique set of problems and sometimes you have to think 'out of the box' in order to provide a solution to their problems. I get a great deal of satisfaction when my patient tells me that what I have done for them has changed their lives for the better.

## What are some of the misconceptions about this field?

- Everyone can be made to look like their favourite celebrity or movie star.
- People think that the perfect result is always attainable and will happen overnight.
- Miracles are the norm rather than the exception.
- Anybody who claims to be an aesthetic doctor is automatically a plastic surgeon.

## What does it take to excel in this field?

Passion, perseverance, creativity and an eye for detail.



**Dr Elias Tam**  
Aesthetic Physician  
EHA Clinic



## Why did you choose this field of medicine?

I enjoy helping my patients feel good about themselves. Aesthetic treatment improves not just the looks, but also the self-esteem and psychology of each one of us.

## What motivates you about your job?

Waking up each morning knowing that I'm about to make a difference to someone's life today. It gets better when my patients feel great after the treatment. It's like endorphins after exercise. I feel great at the end of each day!

## What are some of the misconceptions about this field?

Aesthetic practice is not as easy as some may opt to believe. It requires knowledge and skills to achieve good results. While some may think that it is perfectly normal to live with bad acne, scars, pigmentation, a bald head and other imperfections, the truth is that first impressions count, and our looks do affect our self esteem and performance in life. It is not realistic trying to change one's face to that of a movie star, but we can always make it look better and more pleasant.

## What does it take to excel in this field?

It takes both nature and nurture. One must first be good with his hands and appreciate beauty. The next is to have a life-long pursuit for new knowledge and improvement in skill.



# Managing Body Scars

**Everybody** desires perfect skin and good body contours. Skin flaws or severe body scarring may have devastating psychological and emotional effects on a person. Some scars can be camouflaged by clothing or skilful make up, but others cannot be. Some scars can be itchy, painful and even functionally restrictive.

**W**e would also like to ask – **what is a scar?** A scar is actually the product of the biological process of wound healing and repair in the external skin and internally in any other body organ. It is the fibrous tissues which have replaced the normal tissues after accidents, burn injuries or surgical incisions.

**Scars are the result of collagen fibres forming – if they are minimal and arranged orderly, it would be a good linear scar.**

In keloidal scars, there is a massive proliferation of collagen fibres which instead of being arranged in a single linear direction, have resulted in a very hazardous and disorderly manner. Therefore, the scar is pushed out of the skin to become undesirably visible. Each individual will respond differently to an injury. Some merely develop a minor line while others would develop severe keloids. In general, the whites tend to form good scars, while the darker races and Asians are more prone to severe scarring. In addition, the special anatomical sites like the chest, shoulder, arms and back are more susceptible to developing unwanted scarring.

## Different types of scars

- 1. Hypertrophic scars** – These are raised lumps noticed on the skin caused by overproduction of the collagen in the skin.
- 2. Keloidal scars** – These are the more severe forms resulting in large overgrowth of hard lumps on the skin. They are often reddish when immature but will in due time become whiter or blend into the surrounding skin colour when they mature. As long as they remain reddish, itchy or painful they can enlarge.
- 3. Atrophic scars** – These are sunken depressions in the skin and appear pitted as in post-acne and chicken-pox scars. In some surgical scars, skin infections or severe accident the scars may also become depressed. These are caused by loss of support of the fat or muscles below the skin.
- 4. Stretch scars** – These are often caused by sudden and rapid expansions of the skin due to pregnancy, adolescent growth spurts or even a rapidly growing tumour. In very minor cases, they would improve when the provoking cause is removed. Individuals affected are often distressed to experience such drastic changes to their once beautiful and flawless skin.

## Possible treatments

- 1. Prevention of scar formation** – For those who have been confirmed with a great tendency to form bad scars, it is important to prevent themselves from accident. When they are going for surgery, it is important for them to make known of this tendency to their surgeons and appeal to them for extra care and gentleness in their surgeries and to take special post-operative prophylactic preventions.
- 2. The application of non-ablative lasers** as prophylactic control of scar is found to be beneficial. This can be further enhanced by applying a thin silicone topical coat over the scars. In the past, bulky silicone sheets had been used but are now being gradually phased out because it is very difficult to apply them. It is more convenient to apply

a thin coat of silicone film either in the form of spray or topical gel twice or more daily. Topical steroid applications had not been scientifically shown to be effective, and for some may provoke allergic reactions or injuries to the skin. The use of steroid injections into developing or established scars is found to be useful but must be in limited doses and at intervals of three to six weeks. Vitamin E cream is found to be ineffective in the prevention or control of keloid but is good for fading darkly pigmented scars.

- 3. Surgical excision** of established scars may not help especially in the chest, shoulder, arms or back. It may often aggravate the size and severity of the original scars. For scars outside these anatomical areas there may be a recurrence of 40 to 50%. Surgical excisions are useful in the correction of established contractures causing limitations of joint movements. These removals are often combined with multiple z-plasties to break the tightness of the scars. Sometimes, in very large scars especially after extensive burns causing restrictions or hindering development of anatomical structures during growth, full thickness skin grafts (FTSGs) would be required for the reconstruction.

Scars in any forms are an unwanted sequel from accidents, burns, infections or even surgery. It may be itchy, painful, unsightly or even functionally disabling. It is often difficult to correct and may be a prolonged process to restore. Even with all the best possible medical assistance there is still a tell-tale residual flaw or possibility of recurrence. For surgery, it is important to select experienced surgeons who are known to be meticulous and gentle in handling anatomical structures and the skin. This must also be accompanied by the best post-operative care to ensure an ideal environment for healing.

Finally, it must be stressed that prevention, avoidance or minimising injuries is the goal to keep away scars. **HT**



**Dr. Yeap Choong Lieng**  
Plastic Surgeon

**Dr Yeap Choong Lieng** is a graduate of the Medical College of the University of Singapore. He was Consultant Plastic Surgeon and Deputy Head of the Department of Plastic Surgery at the Singapore General Hospital, until he resigned to start his private practice at the Mount Elizabeth Medical Centre/Hospital. Dr Yeap actively keeps pace with the latest developments in the field of Aesthetic Surgery and goes on yearly teaching trips to under-developed countries to educate surgeons on reconstructive surgeries. [www.dryeaplasticsurgery.sg](http://www.dryeaplasticsurgery.sg)

Singapore has a hot climate throughout the whole year and excessive sun exposure triggers more pigment production.

**Melasma** is more common amongst women, especially those with a more tanned complexion as well as those with hormonal disorders such as Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome, Menopause, Peri-Menopause Thyroid Problem or are pregnant or on hormonal treatment. Those who take oral contraceptives, also tend to develop melasma. Too much exposure to sun can also lead to this problem as we all know that the UV rays from the sun darken our skin.

It appears as a symmetrical light or dark brown patch on the cheek, and sometimes over the nose bridge, upper lip and forehead as well. For those due to a reaction to contraceptive pills, the melasma may disappear after cessation of

# Pigmentation

Skin pigmentation disorders affect the colour of the skin. Some pigmentation disorders affect just patches of skin. Others affect your entire body. Dr Elias Tam explains further.

**Pigmentation problems** can be divided into **hypo-pigmentation** (loss of pigment) or **hyper-pigmentation** (excess pigment). However, most of the pigmentation issues that I have come across tend to be focused on hyper-pigmentation.

## Common Causes

The most common hyper-pigmentation problems that I deal with on an almost daily basis are **melasma**, **solar lentigenes**, **Hori's naevus** and **freckles**.

the pills. For those who are pregnant and suffer from this condition, take heart as it often lightens after delivery. For the rest, it may be a persistent condition that requires long term care to control it.

**Solar lentigenes** are due to excessive sun exposure over a period of time, that result in brown spots of approximately 1-to-3 cm that are well demarcated.

**Freckles** are a common skin condition in fair skin with small flakes of superficial pigmentation. While most of the other types of hyper-pigmentation

mentioned occur later in life, freckles often start at a very early age and affect most family members. It often appears less during winter months or when one avoids sun exposure.

**Hori's naevus** may appear similar to freckles over the cheek, but is due to a cluster of melanocytes (pigment cells) forming in the dermis layer (deep). It is more common in people of Oriental origin and treatment is more difficult compared to freckles.

## Prevention

Firstly, patients should always apply sunblock, even if indoors, as sunlight is able to penetrate through the windows. It is also important to re-apply sunblock every two to four hours as the efficacy is halved every two-hours. There is also the additional option to take 'oral sunblock' which works by using super-antioxidants targeted at the skin to reduce the damage of the sun.

If you are taking hormonal therapy for contraception or menopausal symptoms, you may need to discuss it with your doctor to consider changing the medication. It is important to adopt a healthy lifestyle to reduce stress as the stress hormone, cortisol, may aggravate pigmentation.

**Sufficient hydration for the skin is also important as dryness will contribute to the further deterioration of the skin condition.**

Simple application of moisturisers and a deep hydrating mask are beneficial.

Avoid using harsh cleansers as it may further irritate the skin and cause more pigmentation.

## Selecting a cream for home use

**As mentioned above, sunblock** is a crucial step in one's daily beauty regime. Instead of just looking at the SPF number, the duration of the efficacy is more important. The minimum SPF is 15. Any higher SPF does not offer much higher protection. Since the efficacy is halved every two hours, a sunblock of SPF30 would last about two hours while one with SPF50 would last about four hours. Australia has adopted a different system which requires a sunblock to state the duration of efficacy instead of just the SPF number, hence reflecting more accurately the efficacy of the product in terms of duration.

**For moisturisers**, select one with hyaluronic acid for hydration and dimethicone to lock in the moisture. Additional ingredients that are good for pigmentation include Vitamin C and E (anti-oxidant), Vitamin A (stimulate skin metabolism) and nicotinamide (reduce excess blood vessels that is thought to aggravate the pigmentation in melasma).

## Treatments available for pigmentation

**The first and most important step is to get a correct diagnosis, as this will determine the treatment selected.**

Depending on the type of pigmentation disorder, various treatments and lasers may be used. For melasma, a combination of topical treatments and IPL or Q-Switched Nd:YAG laser may be useful. It's a long term condition that requires long term care. Various combinations have been proposed and the response is varied between individuals.

For pigmentation due to sun damage, various options to resurface the skin and remove the blemished area are available. IPL, lasers and chemical peels are effective options. Fractional lasers are very popular as they can resurface the skin with minimum downtime. Freckles respond well to treatment like chemical peels, IPL or laser. The condition does however return when exposed to the sun.

Hori's naevus is treated with Q-Switched Nd:YAG laser with longer intervals between sessions. Multiple sessions are required to lighten it.

## Are results permanent?

It is important to understand that the skin and melanocytes are live cells and respond to various irritations by producing more pigments as a protective mechanism. Depending on the underlying cause, the various pigmentations may remain well controlled or may recur again. It is therefore, important to have a skin care regimen that is suited to your skin type with sufficient sun protection and avoidance. **HT**



**Dr Elias Tam Tak Chuen**

M.B.B.S. (Singapore), G.D.F.M. (Singapore), G.D.F.P. Dermatology (Singapore)

Dr Elias Tam graduated from the National University of Singapore in 1993. He is a Fellow of the International College of Surgeons and one of its 30 Additional Governors. Dr Tam keeps himself updated on the latest aesthetic procedures through his participation in both regional conferences and seminars. [www.cha.com.sg](http://www.cha.com.sg)

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**Dr Elias Tam Tak Chuen**  
M.B.B.S. (Singapore), G.D.F.M. (Singapore),  
G.D.F.P. Dermatology (Singapore),  
Fellow of International College of Surgeons,  
Governors of ICS

### MEMBERSHIPS

- Fellow of International College Of Surgeons (Council Member of Singapore Section, International Governor)
- Asia Association of Hair Restoration Surgeons (Membership Committee Member)
- International Society of Hair Restoration Surgery (Member)
- Anti-aging & Aesthetic Medicine Society of Singapore (Co-founder, Head of Training, EXCO)

### SEMINARS/ CONFERENCES LECTURED AND CONDUCTED

- 9th – 11th Sept 2011 – Aesthetic Asia 2011 (Marina Sand Singapore)
- 24th 26th June 2011 – Asia Association of Hair Restoration Surgeons Meeting 2011 (Bangkok)
- 20th – 21st October 2010 – 37th World Congress/ 61st Annual Conference of ICS – Aesthetic Symposium at Manila
- 27th-29th May 2010 – WOSAAM 2010 at Jakarta
- 25th April 10 – Advanced techniques for Dermal Filler (AAAMSS)
- 24th March 10 – Advanced techniques for HA filler (Taiwan)
- Myface Cadaveric Workshop 2010 ([www.myface.com.sg](http://www.myface.com.sg) Hands – on training course) on Aesthetic Procedures at Singapore General Hospital 4-6th March 2010 – Course Director & Faculty Member
- 13th Dec 09 – Advanced Techniques for Fillers (Kuala Lumpur)
- 2nd-4th October 09 – Philippine Academy of Clinical & Cosmetic Dermatology Conference (Workshops on Chemical Peeling & Fillers)
- 26th September 09 – Lecture on Sexually Transmitted Diseases for General Practitioners (Men's Health Society of Singapore)
- Oct 08 – Update on the latest innovation of Dermal Fillers (AAAMSS)
- Jan 08 – Certificate of Aesthetic Medicine (AAAM) – Singapore, Speaker
- August 07 – 3rd Asia Pacific conference on Aesthetic Medicine – Singapore, Speaker
- March 07 – Certificate of Aesthetic Medicine (AAAM) – Jakarta, Speaker/Trainer
- March 07 – Basic course in BTXA (Innogene Kalbiotech) – Jakarta, Speaker/Trainer
- Advanced course in BTXA (Innogene Kalbiotech) – Jakarta, Speaker/Trainer
- Jan 07 – Certificate of Aesthetic Medicine (AAAM) – Singapore, Trainer

## BEAUTY

# Non-surgical or minimally invasive Facelifts

**This has** to be one of the most common questions put to doctors in the aesthetic practice – “I want to have a tighter face, it’s become more loose and sagging. What can you do, please? But, I don’t want to cut. I am too young (or too old) to consider cutting.”

Fortunately, there are a whole range of possible options separate from a facelift where a long incision at the front of the ear is not needed. Our aim is to lift and tighten but with no long incisions. Small incisions or injections are fine as long as no one can see it after; there must be almost no risk of scarring. This is the typical Asian request as indeed we are much more prone to visible scarring than Westerners.

So, back to the options. We start from a fully non-surgical approach, no cutting, no injections, just placing some device on your face; we can use either radiofrequency or ultrasound to heat up and tighten the tissues. Is it painful? Well, definitely, to be sufficiently effective, sufficient amount of energy needs to be given to penetrate deeply through the skin into the deep tissue in sufficient amounts to have a visible result. So we have to increase the power. But it is tolerable with some numbing cream and possibly a sedative injection.

There are mainly two options for this. **Thermage** uses radiofrequency and **Ulthera** uses ultrasound energy. Which is better? There is no study comparing these two and I doubt there ever will be such a study. The results may be immediate to a small extent but full results take one to two months to appear and they last about one to two years. It is often a yearly affair for patients who like this option.

Next option – **injections**. No incisions still, just injections, and you guessed it – we are talking about threads. There are now several types of threads and a combination of such threads when used with skill can often give dramatic results. There are basically two types – threads that anchor the tissues either with barbs, cones or knots and threads that are smooth, where they do not anchor the tissue, and are just placed in to stimulate collagen around it. These are the popular PDO threads from Korea.

Another concept you might like to know is that for anchoring threads, you have free lying ones and ones that are attached to an area above the ear or temples and from there the tissues are lifted and suspended. The procedure is generally very simple to perform and in most cases, there are little complications and side effects. The results can be rather dramatic immediately. It settles after one to two weeks and looks very natural. The patient resumes normal activities after a day. But like all minimally invasive procedures, it lasts for only about two years. But, because there is very minimal downtime and risk, patients don't mind repeating the procedure or some portion of it on certain areas of the face that has become loose with time. The key reminder for patients lie in selecting doctors who are familiar with the brands or types of threads that they use as it's quite a simple procedure. But like all easy procedures, there are so many small tips here and there which can make or break a good result.

The last option we will discuss uses a novel approach to deliver energy to tighten the face. When we address the deeper tissues, we are mainly talking about a layer of thin fibromuscular tissue called the SMAS. In most surgical facelifts, the aim is also to tighten and lift the SMAS. Below the SMAS, are the facial muscles and that is usually kept intact to ensure normal facial expressions. The SMAS is just below the skin and its fat layer. So, if we can heat the skin and also the SMAS directly by placing a probe / small cannulae directly into that layer, we can deliver the energy much more efficiently and get much better contraction. This is true and both radiofrequency and laser energy have been applied in this fashion.

Facetite is a machine that uses radiofrequency while Accusculpt uses laser energy. The procedure involves numbing the area to be treated with local anaesthesia and making one to two injections each side at the corners of the face where it cannot be seen. The probe is inserted between the skin and the SMAS and

energy is given at small doses. The procedure is quick and rather simple. Results may take several weeks to appear as there would be some amount of swelling for one to two weeks.

This is also a relatively safe procedure with minimal bruising and the results may be close to the real surgical method, just that it's slightly more invasive and requires a surgeon who is familiar with the tissue planes of the face. Again there is no study comparing this technique with threads.

More and more patients ask for non invasive or minimally invasive facelift procedures and there is indeed many more such procedures performed than a typical facelift. Even facelift operation is moving away from a deep plane and more invasive approach to one that is simple and merely lifts or tightens the SMAS. "Least invasive" is indeed becoming the catch phrase of modern facial aesthetic procedures. **HT**

**Dr. Donald Ng**  
MBBS (Singapore),  
Diploma of Dermatology  
(University of Cardiff, Wales, UK)



Dr Donald Ng is an experienced physician with great interest in cosmetic medicine and surgery. He constantly looks for better and more effective treatments with a network of doctors. To this endeavour, he has taken formal fellowship training and board examinations in cosmetic medicine and surgery. In addition, he has travelled all over Asia and trained with the best in the field. He has also trained in liposuction in Belgium, Italy and Canada. Dr Ng does not train in any reconstructive work, only cosmetic work.

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# THE PLASTIC SURGEON SPEAKS.....

“

*You only have one body and you have no spare parts. So obviously, you want to get the best person for the job.*”



Dr Leslie Kuek  
Plastic Surgeon  
Leslie Kuek Plastic Surgery

**FROM CLEOPATRA'S ERA** till now, the quest for beauty has been a never ending one. Cosmetic surgery, or plastic surgery, might seem like the best alternative to exercise and diet when it comes to shaving years off your appearance or improving your physique. As with any surgery, though, plastic surgery has risks and limitations. Dr Leslie Kuek, one of Singapore's most eminent names in plastic surgery talks about his unique encounters over the years, and what one needs to know when considering going under the knife.

**Can you begin by explaining the difference between plastic and cosmetic surgery?**

There is a lot of misconception and people don't really understand the difference between the two terms. To put it in perspective, cosmetic surgery is a part of plastic surgery as a subspecialty. When we talk about plastic surgery, we refer to two branches of plastic surgery. The first is reconstructive surgery, where we deal with people with congenital problems, cancers, burns and accidents and so on. The other branch is cosmetic or aesthetic surgery, and this is a natural offshoot of plastic surgery as plastic surgeons are the ones who are trained to create normality out of abnormality. So, when you talk about cosmetic surgery, it truly is a branch of plastic surgery.

**In recent times, we have heard about many mishaps that happen during plastic surgery. What should patients do to prepare for a procedure?**

I would say there are two parts to this – the medical and consumer parts. With the medical part, in my opinion, I think over the years, the lines have been blurred between who should do cosmetic surgery and who should not. At the end of the day, cosmetic surgery is surgery. So, who should do surgery? The answer is – surgeons who are properly trained to do it.

On the consumer side, how does the consumer know where to find the right person to do the job? If you want to do a brain surgery, you seek a neurosurgeon. If you have a heart problem, you look for a cardiac surgeon. Similarly, for cosmetic surgery, you look for the best person trained for the job.

Consumers have to ask questions like – What is his expertise? What is his background and training? Has he received the right training for the procedure that I am asking him to do? Patients should also ask to see the work that the doctor does. That's very important. Aesthetic and cosmetic

surgeries are very visual fields. You are seeing the effects of the surgery right in front of you.

Unfortunately, a lot of patients don't view themselves with a big deal of regard in terms of choosing the right service provider. You only have one body and you have no spare parts. So obviously, you want to get the best person for the job. If it's botched, it's botched. It's very difficult to re-do or reconstruct a botched job. So, do your due diligence.

**See more than one doctor if necessary, talk to friends, do your research. You don't want to do something that you'll regret later on.**

**What are some of the more common concerns you are being approached with?**

Well, when you talk about cosmetic surgery, we divide it into two groups of people – the young and the mature. These two groups have their own unique concerns. The young usually want to improve upon certain features they are not happy with. Commonly, some of the things we do are creating a double eyelid fold, nose and chin enhancement, correcting ears that stick out too much. We also do breast enhancement surgery and liposculpture. These are the concerns of the younger generation.

For the older generation, the issues are related with ageing. As you age, your tissues become loose; your features start to change. Then, they come to us for rejuvenation treatments like facelifts, tummy tucks, eyelid lifting. These are the concerns of the older generation. Then, you also have facial pigmentation problems. It affects both men and women; more so for women.

**Any word of advice for someone considering plastic surgery as an option...**

It goes back to what I said earlier about choosing the right doctor for what you are looking for. Be realistic in your expectations. I think that's the key take-home message.

**You are regarded as a pioneer in this field. Has there been an occasion where you have had to refuse a surgery?**

Yes, of course. One has to almost develop a sixth sense in this kind of job, to be able to determine which kind of patients will be genuinely helped by you, and which kind of patients, no matter what you do will never be happy or satisfied. Those are the kinds of patients you should not operate on.

Secondly, there are cases where what the patient is asking for is simply beyond your ability. It's just physically not possible to create what they are asking for. Thirdly, there are patients with requests that are out of this world. I have had a patient write to me before saying he wants a total body change. To me, that is someone who does not know what he wants. He is just not happy with himself at all. If that's the case, no matter what we do, he may never be happy. These are the kinds of patients you have to be a bit more careful in dealing with. You may have to counsel them and if you feel that what they are asking for is not appropriate, then you must have the courage to tell that you can't help them. **ET**

# Eczema Blues

**Eczema affects 1 out of 10 persons at some point in their life, and it can be present in all age groups. Atopic eczema is the commonest type of eczema. However, there are many other types of eczema as well.**

The term “**eczema**” is used interchangeably with “**dermatitis**” and refers to skin inflammation. Eczema is one of the commonest causes of dry, sensitive skin. This is an itchy, red inflamed rash and the affected person scratches persistently. Almost everyone who has eczema experiences similar unpleasant symptoms. The following are some of the other types of eczema.

## Seborrhoeic Dermatitis

This is most commonly seen in babies and clears by the time they are about two months old. It also occurs in younger adults, and is seen on the oily areas of the body like the scalp, face, groin, upper chest and back.

Seborrhoeic dermatitis is either not itchy or just mildly itchy. There is a greasy, yellow scaly rash on the affected areas. When the scalp is affected, dandruff is seen.

## Discoid Eczema

It presents with itchy, scaly coin-shaped patches which tend to blister and ooze. It is common on the arms and legs of young adults.

## Asteatotic Eczema

This form of eczema is due to extreme dryness of the skin, especially on the arms and legs of elderly people. It presents with an itchy, scaly red rash that looks like “cracked tiles”.

## Venous Eczema

It is commonly seen in the elderly and people with varicose veins on the legs. The pooling of blood in the leg veins due to gravity leads to this form of eczema.

## Available Treatments

**Treatments commonly prescribed for eczema include moisturisers and topical steroids.**

Topical steroids are useful in reducing the inflammation. They are safe if used appropriately. Some possible side effects of prolonged use of steroids include skin thinning and atrophy. This may occur with prolonged and inappropriate use

of topical steroids. Doctors will be able to advice on the appropriate use of the topical steroids.

More recently, steroid-free topical medications have been developed and are available for the treatment of eczema. Oral treatments for eczema include oral antibiotics when the skin is infected. Antihistamines are commonly prescribed to reduce the itch. In severe cases of eczema, other treatment options such as phototherapy or systemic immunomodulators may be indicated. Doctors will advise accordingly.

## Atopic Eczema/Dermatitis

Atopic eczema is a very common skin condition. It presents with dry, itchy and inflamed areas of the skin. The term “eczema” is used interchangeably with “dermatitis” and refers to inflammation of the skin. Atopic eczema is also known as Atopic dermatitis. Atopy is a term used for the tendency to develop a group of hypersensitivity disorders, namely eczema, asthma or hay fever, due to a genetic predisposition.

Atopic eczema commonly presents during infancy and childhood, but can also occur for the first time in adults and it affects both sexes equally. In infants, common areas affected include the face and outer aspects of the limbs. During childhood, it usually affects the skin folds such as the elbow bends, back of knees and neck. Eczema may also occur around the lips, the eyes and other parts of the skin.

## Causes

**The cause of atopic eczema is not fully known. However, it is said that genes play an important part as atopic eczema often runs in families.**

Alterations in the immune system are also thought to play a part in the development of eczema. In addition, the skin barrier in atopic eczema is impaired, leading to dryness and susceptibility to bacterial and viral skin infections.

## Cure for atopic eczema

At present, there is no cure for atopic eczema. However, the skin condition can certainly be improved and controlled with good skin care and use of appropriate medications.

**In general, the eczema tends to improve as the child gets older and 50% may clear in the teens. However, the eczema may still occur on and off, even in adulthood.**

## Caring for the skin

The following are important in the skin care of people with atopic eczema.

- 1. Avoid scratching, rubbing and picking the skin.** This aggravates the eczema and may also lead to unsightly pigmentation, open wounds and scars.
- 2. Avoid irritating soaps and detergents.** Soaps used should include gentle soaps or soap substitutes.
- 3. Moisturise the skin frequently.** Moisturisers do not cause thinning of the skin and should be applied liberally and frequently. The best time to apply moisturizers is right after a bath. Remember to apply moisturisers after swimming.
- 4. Certain clothing material such as woollen fabric and linen often irritate the skin,** and materials such as cotton are more comfortable for the atopic skin.
- 5. When in a dry or cold environment, it is important to keep the skin well moisturised** to prevent aggravation of the eczema. 

Reference – National Skin Centre (Singapore)

# Taking the *Itch* out of Yeast Infections

**Statistics say** that almost all women will have a yeast infection at least once during their lifetime. Some are more prone to them than others and seem to keep getting them over and over again.

Although yeast infections can happen almost anywhere on the body, they are most common in the moist areas such as the vagina. Yeast infections can happen to anyone, even the healthiest of individuals.

So what exactly is a yeast infection?

“Yeast infection is an infection caused by the organism, *Candida albicans*, that can affect up to 70% of premenopausal women,”

Says Dr Tan Wei Ching, Senior Consultant, Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Singapore General Hospital. A type of yeast that lives in the mouth, throat, intestines and genitourinary tract of most humans and is usually considered to be a normal part of the bowel flora, *Candida albicans* is the cause of 80 to 90% of vaginal yeast infection cases.

## Symptoms

According to Dr Tan, a vaginal yeast infection causes vulval soreness, vulval itch or external dysuria (painful urination). Some women will also experience thick, white ‘cottage cheese-like’ odourless vaginal discharge. These symptoms are more likely to occur during the week before menstrual period.

## Risk factors

While it is said that in most women, there is no underlying health problem that leads to a yeast infection, the risk of developing a vaginal yeast infection can be increased by a number of medical and lifestyle factors. “Predisposing factors include prolonged use of oral contraceptive pills, antibiotics and immune-suppressants such as steroids and the presence of conditions such as diabetes and

pregnancy, as immunity at these times is altered. Others believe tight fitting jeans and nylon underwear also contribute to the risk factors,” says Dr Tan. As yeast infections can be transmitted between partners, Dr Tan also emphasises on the need to abstain from sexual intercourse until a known infection is treated.

“10 to 20% of women of reproductive age harbour *Candida* yeast without symptoms and no treatment is needed. However, women should seek medical attention if they present with any of the symptoms stated above, especially if there has been no response to over the counter medications.”

## Diagnosis and Treatment

Not all itchiness can be alluded to yeast infections. Symptoms of a yeast infection may be similar to other illnesses, so it's important to consult a doctor to be sure. Vaginal yeast infections are diagnosed by doing tests on discharge taken with a vaginal swab. If a yeast infection is confirmed, medical treatment includes topical and/or oral antifungal therapy with an 80 to 95% successful cure rate, or antifungal pessaries (vaginal inserts).

## Recurrence

Vaginal yeast infections usually occur as sporadic episodes, but can recur frequently and may bring about chronic persistent symptoms. “Recurrence is defined as four or more episodes of symptomatic infections per year and affects less than 5% of healthy women of reproductive years. Risk factors such as diabetes and other chronic illnesses as well as prolonged use of steroids have to be excluded. Treatment includes initial intensive therapy followed by weekly or monthly maintenance therapy for up to six months,” explains Dr Tan.

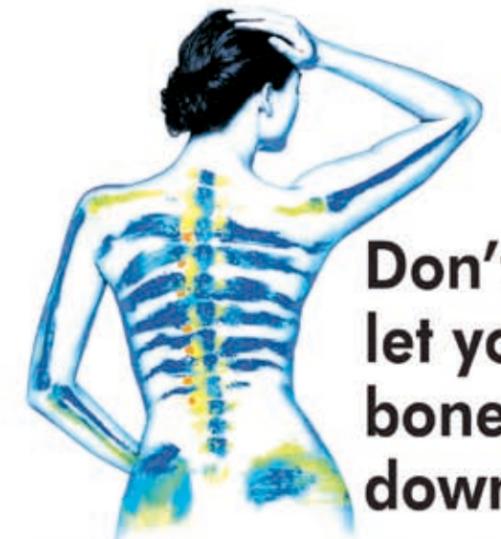
## Prevention

Although yeast infections are rarely dangerous, simple steps can be taken to prevent them from occurring in the place. Dr Tan advises women to dry the genital area after bathing, wear cotton underwear and avoid tight fitting synthetic clothing and local irritants such as perfumed products and powders. “In terms of diet, some believe regular intake of yoghurt or probiotics can help to prevent yeast infection, although they are probably less useful once the infection has occurred.” **HT**

By Puvanes Balakrishnan in consultation with Dr Tan Wei Ching, Senior Consultant, Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Singapore General Hospital

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# Explaining Eating Disorders

**Eating disorders can have serious health ramifications for those who suffer from them. In Singapore, the number of patients suffering from eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia has risen sharply in recent years, and doctors are taking a holistic approach to their treatment.**

“Eating Disorder (ED) is a psychological illness. There is no one main cause but it is more of a combination of factors including genetics, family types, personality types and media.

**In these vulnerable individuals, all it takes is a precipitating factor (external stress and comments from others) to trigger an ED.”**

Says Dr Lee Huei Yen, Director, SGH Eating Disorders Programme and Senior Consultant, Department of Psychiatry, Singapore General Hospital (SGH).

ED can be classified in three different ways – **Anorexia Nervosa (AN)**, **Bulimia Nervosa (BN)** and the rest fall into a category called ‘**Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified**’ (EDNOS) such as binge-eating disorder.

## Symptoms

Eating disorders symptoms vary with the particular type of eating disorder. With anorexia nervosa, there is an obsession with food and being thin, sometimes to the point of deadly self-starvation.

Dr Lee says the typical tell-tale signs include–

- **Feeling fat or overweight despite dramatic weight loss**
- **Preoccupation with weight, food, calories, fat grams, and dieting**
- **Refusal to eat certain foods (e.g. fried food, carbs), progressing to restrictions against whole categories of food**
- **Anxiety and intense fear about gaining weight or being fat**
- **Denial of hunger**
- **Development of food rituals (i.e. eating foods in certain orders, rearranging food on a plate, cutting up food into tiny pieces)**
- **Consistent excuses to avoid mealtimes or situations involving food**
- **Extreme concern with body weight and shape**
- **Withdrawal from usual friends and activities**

- **Loss of menstrual periods in girls and post pubescent women**
- **Excessive, rigid exercise regimen**

## Treatment

**Treating ED is a unique process. According to Dr Lee, there is no “one” procedure that SGH sticks to, as every patient is different and treatment needs to be individualised.**

“However, we do take the multidisciplinary approach to treatment of ED. Therefore, we have a multidisciplinary ED team including psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, dieticians, social workers, occupational therapists and physiotherapists.”

SGH currently offers outpatient, inpatient and day patient programme for ED. All new patients are assessed by psychiatrists in the outpatient clinics where a complete history is taken together with a physical examination and blood investigations.

Outpatient treatment is suitable for those whose weights are not too low, medically stable and fairly motivated to get well. Most patients will be referred to the dietician who will provide dietary advice. SGH also works together with paediatricians from KK Hospital who run fortnightly clinics to see some of its younger ED patients with medical complications in SGH.

Patients deemed suitable will also be referred to the psychologist for more in-depth psychotherapy or the family therapists if there are any family issues. Medications are only useful if there is bingeing or if there are any co-morbid psychiatric conditions such as depression / anxiety or obsessive compulsive disorder.

Patients may need inpatient treatment if they are medically unstable (i.e. weight too low, heart rate too slow) or not responding well to outpatient treatment. Patients who get well enough to be discharged would frequently continue on to the day programme.

## Prevention

As most eating disorders start in adolescence, parents have the best shot at helping to prevent them from occurring. Ms Tina George, Psychologist, Department of Psychiatry and Ms Janet Phang, Psychologist, Behavioural Medicine Unit, SGH share the following tips.

- **Parents can help a child build up more resilience towards ED by improving their self-esteem and body-image through various ways.** Try to create a ‘weight-neutral’ environment – neither promoting thinness nor obesity.
- **Parents can also help by creating a healthy eating environment at home and modelling that behaviour.** Healthy eating would mean eating a wide variety of food. Sometimes, parents hammer it into their child that sugar and sweets and fries are BAD. No food is bad – just have everything in moderation. Eating sweets everyday is bad, but not eating sweets throughout your entire life is also bad. Parents should try and strike a balance in between.
- **Early recognition of ED and its symptoms is vital.** Parents must seek early treatment if they suspect their child has ED. Research shows that those who are most likely to recover and have a good prognosis are those who seek treatment early – before the illness has a chance to become so entrenched in the person’s life.

## Staying on Track

**“Relapse rates for eating disorders are quite high, ranging from 30 to 40% within about one year of treatment,” reminds Dr Lee.**

“Patients need longer term follow-up to prevent relapse. We also encourage them after recovery to continue eating regularly, avoid skipping meals and to eat a variety of food. In addition, we also help them to gradually adjust back to school or work. So, they find somewhere else to focus their attention rather than being fixated on food and weight issues.” **HT**

*By Puvanes Balakrishnan in consultation with Dr Lee Huei Yen, Director, SGH Eating Disorders Programme and Senior Consultant, Department of Psychiatry & Ms Tina George, Psychologist, Department of Psychiatry and Ms Janet Phang, Psychologist, Behavioural Medicine Unit, Singapore General Hospital.*

# Losing those last 5 Kilos...

**Losing those last 5 kilos can be a challenge for many men and women who are looking to slim down and reach their ideal weight. Most of the time when people hit this wall, all of their progress, hard work and positive feelings seem to be forgotten or replaced with frustration and self-defeating thoughts of “waiving the white flag” or “throwing in the towel”.**

It can be frustrating battling those last stubborn kilogrammes, but there are a few simple steps one can take to overcome this wall of stubbornness and reach the finish line. However, these steps do require a little bit of thinking, some serious re-evaluating, a pinch of patience and a sprinkling of willpower.

**Goals...**

The first step in battling those last 5kgs is to reevaluate one's goals. Often times, people set goals that are unrealistic or unhealthy. Losing weight is arguably the most popular health and fitness goal

but it usually comes attached to an unrealistic time frame or unhealthy means of weight loss.

It's universally recommended that people lose one to two pounds per week in order for the body to properly adjust to the weight loss and to learn the proper methods for maintaining the weight loss. All too often, people allow their impatience and desperation to overpower what's healthy and sensible when trying to lose weight.

Additionally, dieters should focus more on losing body fat than what the scale says. A leaner body is healthier than a lighter body. More health risks are

associated with those who have an above average percentage of body fat than those who might be slightly overweight.

**Diet...**

Losing weight is 80% diet and 20% exercise. So, the next step in battling those last 5 kgs is to thoroughly re-examine the diet. There are several areas in a diet that can be tweaked, modified, or cleaned up to blast away the last stronghold of kilograms. Body fat is arguably the most stubborn part of the body and dieters need to pull out all of the stops to reach their ideal weight.

To lose roughly one half of a kilogramme, a dieter would need to cut 3,500 calories per week through the combination of diet and exercise. Start by double checking the amount of calories consumed in a day. This would require using a food journal to write down everything consumed including calories, fat, protein, carbohydrates, sodium, cholesterol, fibre and more.

When dieting, keeping a food journal is a must. Food journals track everything that's consumed so that dieters can analyse the data and make the necessary changes. Those last 5kgs are all about analyzing the data and making changes.

After checking the daily caloric intake for possible ways of cutting calories, take a look at the following areas of the diet for possible changes:

**SODIUM** *too much sodium can cause additional water weight and bloating. Sodium intake should be below 500mg per day.*

**FIBRE** *consume at least 25 grams of fiber per day. Fibre helps to flush out the system and can provide a feeling of fullness, which might help with any late night cravings.*

**FAT** *double check the amount of fat that is being consumed within the diet. Choose fat-free foods and eliminate the “extras” like salad dressing and egg yolks. Shaving off 10 grams of fat can cut almost 100 calories from the diet.*

**WATER** *water has many vital benefits for the body, especially when dieting. Water can help to speed up the metabolism, provide a feeling of fullness and aid in the digestion of fibre.*

**WHOLE FOODS** *stick with whole foods like fruits, vegetables, fish, poultry, and eggs. Avoid processed foods as they usually come with many undesirable elements like high amounts of sugar, sodium, and unhealthy fats.*

**PORTION CONTROL** *avoid eating huge meals throughout the day. If it's bigger than one's fist then it's probably too much of one serving.*

**FREQUENCY** *eat five to six small meals per day. This helps to increase the metabolism and cut down on hunger attacks or late night cravings.*

**LATE NIGHT CARBS** *make sure to cut-off the consumption of carbs in the late afternoon or early evening. The body has a habit of storing the carbs and turning them into body fat, especially in the evenings or overnight when people typically are less active.*

**Exercise...**

If the goals are healthy and the diet is as clean as possible, then one should re-evaluate their workout program for possible changes. Like with the diet, individuals must keep a workout log to monitor their progress and make necessary changes. Over time, the body grows accustomed to the physical stress placed upon it through exercise. This is why individuals need to gradually increase the stress load so that the body can keep making positive progress.

There are several easy ways to increase stress loads in order to continue making progress and to lose those last 5 kgs.

**DURATION** *increase the duration of exercise. This could help to burn off a few extra calories.*

**REST TIME** *reduce the rest time in between sets or exercises. This will keep the body moving and burning calories.*

**SOMETHING NEW** *instead of the typical running or cycling, try an aerobics class like Zumba. This could be the key to shocking the body and breaking through the plateau. This can also make working out more exciting.*

**EXERCISE SELECTION** *when weight training, choosing exercises that work multiple muscle groups or body parts at the same time can help burn more calories.*

**INTENSITY** *pick up the intensity. Instead of a casual stroll around the block, make it a jog or ride the bike. Increasing intensity can increase calorie burn.*

Before participating in any diet or exercise programme, check with a doctor to ascertain that these are safe and healthy for you. **HT**

By Rick Rockwell

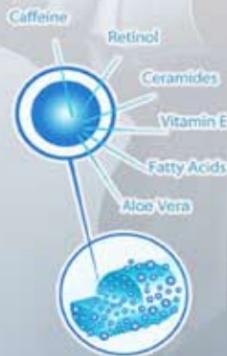




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- > Redensifying effect\*
- > 76% Slimming Efficacy\*

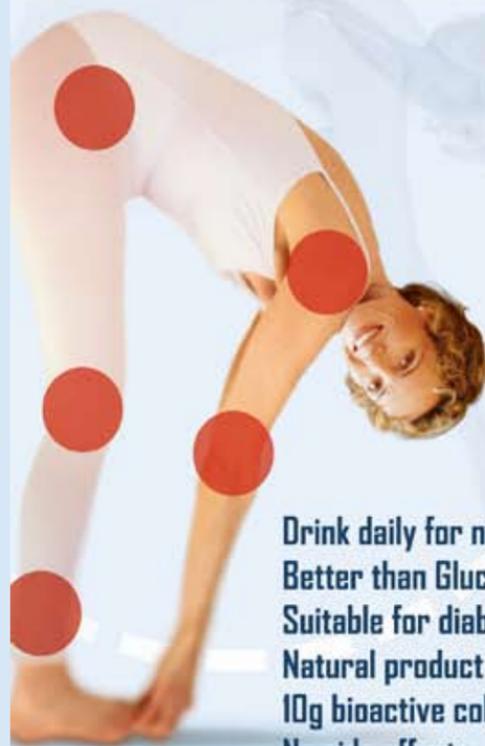
\*Clinical and sensorial test undertaken by independent lab

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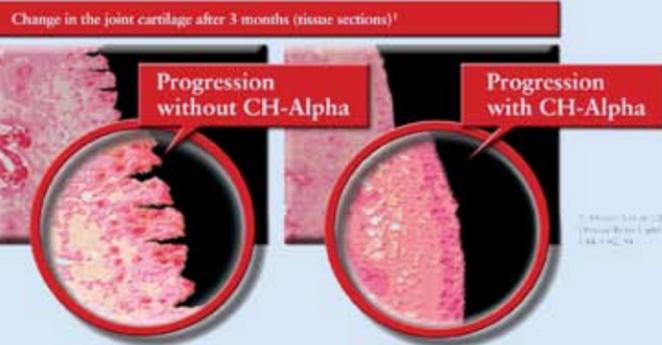
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**FITNESS**

**WORLD  
HEART  
DAY**  
SEPTEMBER 29

# Keeping the Heart Fit and Fab...



**Most people overlook** the fact that the heart is the most important muscle in the body. An unhealthy heart can lead to numerous health conditions that range from moderately serious to fatal. Heart disease is the number one killer of men and women in the United States and is one of the biggest threats to adults all over the world. However, changing one's lifestyle can help to improve the overall quality of life and combat heart conditions like heart disease. In addition to a healthy diet and stress management, exercise is the best way to improve one's heart health.



Like other muscles of the body, the heart needs consistent exercise to improve its overall strength and effectiveness. This can be accomplished by participating in a regular aerobic workout programme that meets the recommended physical guidelines.

### Physical Activity Guidelines...

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and The American Heart Association have released the following recommendations to maintain a healthy heart and prevent heart disease.

#### For Adults under the Age of 65

- Do *\*moderately intense cardio* 30 minutes per day, 5 days a week.
- Or do *vigorously intense cardio* 20 minutes per day, 3 days a week.
- Do 8 to 10 strength-training exercises at least once a week:
- 8 to 12 repetitions for each exercise.
- At least one set for each major muscle group.

#### For Adults over the Age of 65

- Do *\*moderately intense cardio* 30 minutes per day, 5 days a week.
- Or do *vigorously intense cardio* 20 minutes per day, 3 days a week.
- Do 8 to 10 strength-training exercises at least once a week.
- 10 to 15 repetitions for each exercise.
- At least one set for each major muscle group.
- Perform exercises in a seated position if at risk of falling.
- Focus on exercises that will improve balance and range of motion.

*\*Moderately intense can be defined as an intensity level that causes one to break a sweat and raise the heart rate. 30 minutes is a duration based on the average healthy adult.*

### Caution...

Before beginning any exercise programme, one should take the following cautions into consideration.

- Consult with a medical professional before beginning any exercise program to assure safety.
- Individuals already suffering from heart conditions should get medical clearance before exercising.
- If taking any medications for heart issues, seek medical advice to fully understand the potential side effects and how they might impact an exercise program.
- Individuals should seek advice from a medical or fitness professional on what the appropriate target heart range is based on their level of conditioning, age, gender and other genetic factors.

### Aerobic Exercise...

Aerobic exercise, also called cardiovascular exercise or “cardio”, is the best form of exercise for improving one’s heart health. Aerobic exercise can be defined as any exercise that overloads the heart and lungs by working large muscle groups in a continuous and rhythmic manner. Some entities, like the famed Mayo Clinic, add that aerobic exercise involves the usage of both one’s arms and legs.

There are many aerobic activities that one can participate in from walking to playing sports. Here are some of the most common aerobic activities.

-  **WALKING**
-  **RUNNING**
-  **CYCLING**
-  **ELLIPTICAL**
-  **SWIMMING**
-  **AQUA AEROBICS**

### Aerobic Exercise Benefits...

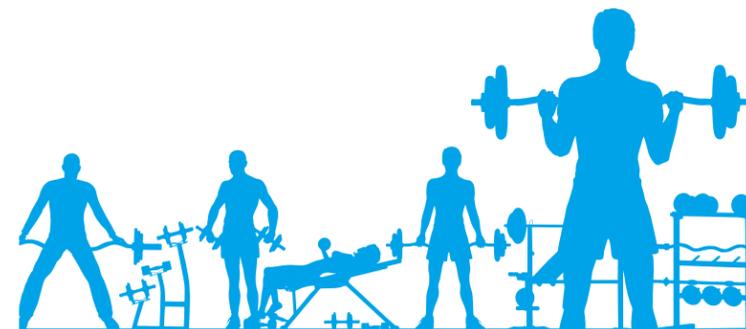
There are numerous benefits from participating in a consistent aerobic exercise program. Some of these benefits include: weight loss, improved cholesterol levels, improved blood pressure levels, improved mental health and much more. Additionally, aerobic exercise has the following benefits for the heart.

**STRONGER HEART** A stronger heart can pump more blood, thus providing oxygen to the body in a more efficient and faster manner.

**LOWERS RESTING HEART RATE (RHR)** A healthy heart will require less beats per minute when resting. This lessens the amount of work a heart needs to do throughout the day.

**RECOVERY** A healthy heart can improve one’s recovery time after exercising or participating in other physical activities.

**PREVENTION** A healthy heart helps to prevent heart conditions like heart attacks, clogged arteries and more.



**TARGET HEART RATE (THR)** The THR is a range of intensity that is required to improve one’s heart health and aerobic endurance level. As mentioned earlier, individuals should perform cardio exercises for 30 minutes at a *\*moderate intensity level* or 20 minutes at a *\*vigorous intensity level*.

*\*Moderate intensity is roughly 50% to 85% of one’s MHR and vigorous intensity is roughly 80% to 95% of one’s MHR.*

### Aerobic Exercise Guidelines...

There are a few guidelines for participating in an aerobic exercise program. These guidelines are designed to effectively, efficiently, and systematically improve one’s heart health. In fact, they are based on various aspects of one’s heart rate.



**MAXIMUM HEART RATE (MHR)** MHR is the maximum number of times a heart beats per minute. An easy formula for figuring out one’s maximum heart rate is “220 - age”. However, this formula isn’t completely accurate for all age groups. A more accurate formula is “206.9 - (0.67 x age)”. Maximum heart rate is used to help determine one’s appropriate intensity level.

**RESTING HEART RATE (RHR)** RHR is the number of times a heart beats per minute when resting. The average adult may have a RHR of 60 to 100 beats per minute. A healthy heart can improve one’s resting heart rate. The RHR is used to help determine one’s appropriate intensity level. The best time to check one’s RHR is first thing after waking up by taking their pulse.

There are two other methods for computing one’s target heart rate zone. These methods involve determining one’s oxygen consumption or their heart rate reserve. However, they are much more complex and require specialized equipment or complicated formulas.

Before beginning an aerobic workout, one should warm up for 5 to 10 minutes and then do some light stretching.

### Conclusion...

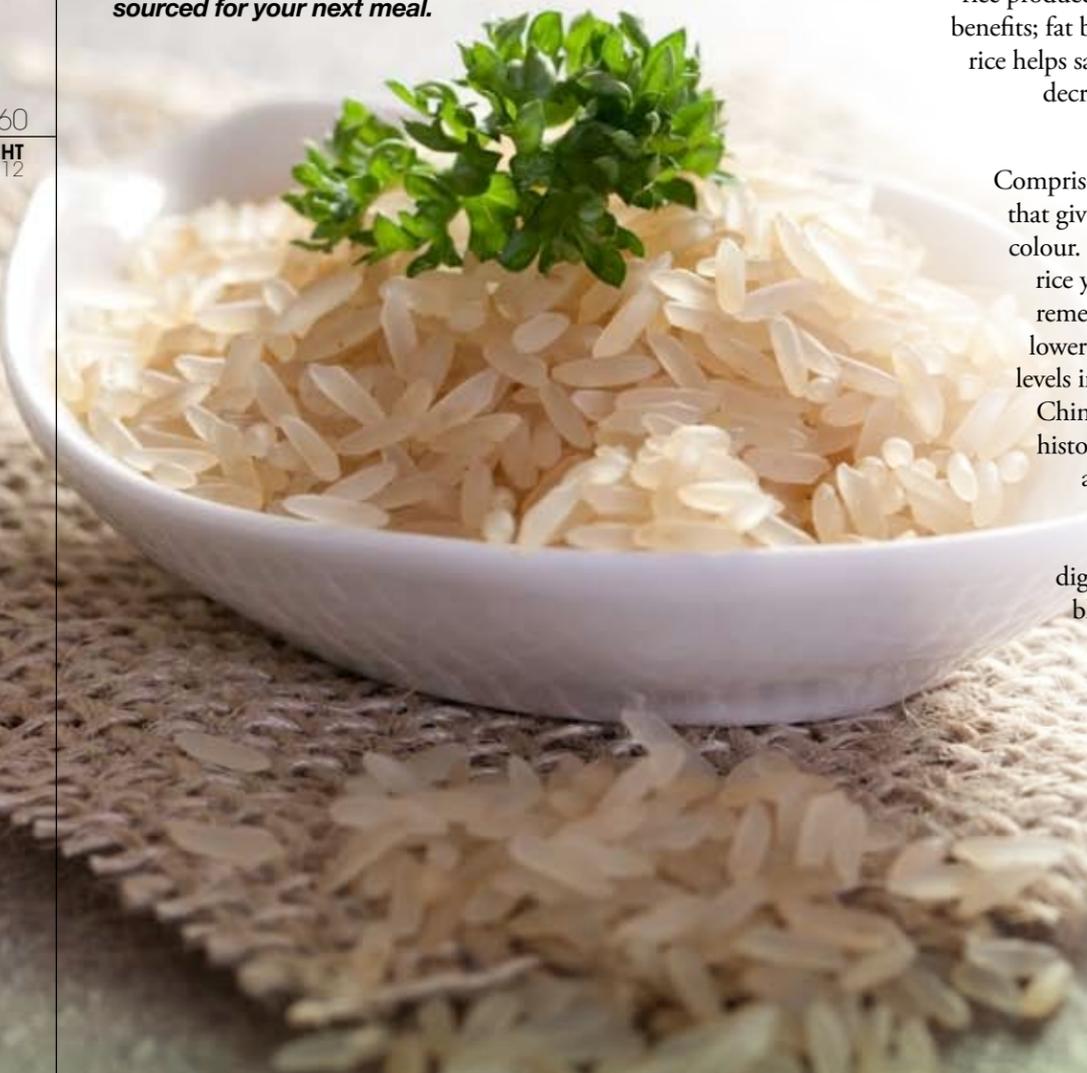
Participating in a structured and consistent aerobic exercise program will not only improve various health aspects like body weight and cholesterol levels, it will also directly impact one’s overall heart health. It is imperative that individuals strive to improve their heart health so that they may live a more active and longer life. **HT**

By Rick Rockwell

# Rock on with Rice!



**In the world of cereals, rice and wheat share equal priority as leading food sources for humankind. Rice is a staple food that feeds nearly half of the world's population, although it is more so associated with the Asian diet. Health benefits of rice include providing fast and instant energy, good bowel movement, stabilising blood sugar levels and is an essential source of vitamin B. Scientists believe there are 140,000 varieties of cultivated rice. We look at a few which are packed with integral nutrients and can be easily sourced for your next meal.**

60  
HT  
12

## Know your Rice...

### White Rice

White rice is the name given to milled rice that has had its husk, bran, and germ removed. This alters the flavour, texture and appearance of the rice and helps prevent spoilage and extend its storage life. After milling, the rice is polished, resulting in a seed with a bright, white, shiny appearance. The milling and polishing processes both remove important nutrients.

### Brown Rice

When feeling sluggish, reach for brown rice as a source of energy. Brown rice has more than 80% of your daily value of manganese, which gives you energy from both carbs and protein. Manganese also helps synthesise fatty acids, which keeps your nervous system in working order. The fibre in brown rice produces the one of the best health benefits; fat burning! The fibre in brown rice helps satisfy appetite and therefore decreases chances of overeating.

### Red Rice

Comprises a variety of anthocyanins that give its bran a reddish maroon colour. Red rice, also known as red rice yeast, is an over-the-counter remedy that has a reputation for lowering "bad" blood cholesterol levels in individuals. In traditional Chinese medicine, red rice has a history of naturally dealing with a variety of health concerns, ranging from increased blood circulation to better digestion to eliminating blood blockages. The history of red rice dates back to its origin in China, as far back as the Tang dynasty of A.D. 800.

### Black Rice

Comes with a black coloured bran layer due to its unique anthocyanin combination and these anthocyanins cause black rice to turn into a deep purple colour when cooked. Black rice, like brown rice, retains the bran cover that is removed to make white rice. Like many other dark red, purple, or blue foods, black rice contains great levels of antioxidants, making it a great cancer-fighter. It also helps in boosting memory and keeping heart disease at bay.

### Wild Rice

Although it is called "wild rice," this product is actually the seed of a type of marsh grass that is native to the Great Lakes area, including northern Minnesota, and it comes with many health benefits. Wild rice is high in potassium and phosphorus. It is gluten-free, high in fibre and protein, folate, B vitamins (niacin, riboflavin and thiamin), calcium, iron and vitamin E.

## More than just a carb...

### Blood Pressure

As rice is low in sodium, it is considered best food for those suffering from high blood pressure and hypertension.

### Dysentery

The husk part of rice is considered as an effective medicine to treat dysentery. Traditional medicine believes that rice considerably increases appetite, cures stomach ailments and indigestion problems.

### Skin Care

Medical experts say that powdered rice can be applied to cure some forms of skin ailments. In India, rice water is prescribed by ayurvedic practitioners as an effective ointment to cool inflamed skin surfaces.

### Heart Disease

Rice bran oil is said to have antioxidant properties that promote cardiovascular strength by reducing cholesterol levels. **HT**

61  
HT  
12

## Fried Brown Rice with Cranberries

### INGREDIENTS.

4 cups Mee Farm Sook Thai Fragrant Brown Rice  
2 medium organic carrots diced into cubes  
3 stalks organic celery diced into cubes  
1 fresh corn cob  
½ cup Yuan Hao Dried Cranberries  
¼ cup Organic Pine Nuts  
2 stalks Spring Onion (chopped)  
2 ½ tsp Grapeseed Oil  
½ tsp United Nature Organic Black Pepper Powder  
½ tsp United Nature Organic White Pepper Powder  
½ tsp Sea Salt

### METHOD.

Cook brown rice in rice cooker (use 1.2 cups of water per cup of rice).

Stir fry the carrots first with 1 tbsp of grapeseed oil. Add celery, corn nibs and pine nuts and continue to fry for a minute. Remove from pan.

Use 1 ½ tbsp of grapeseed oil to fry the rice.

Add in the vegetables and pine nuts. Sprinkle in white & black pepper powder.

Garnish with dried cranberries and spring onions before serving.

Recipe courtesy of United Nature

## Khao Hom Khum Yaay (Grandmom's Brown Fragrant Rice)

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### INGREDIENTS.

30 ml thickened cream  
60 ml soy milk  
2 eggs, beaten  
2 teaspoons brown sugar  
4 tablespoons caramel syrup  
60 grams almond slices/flakes, lightly toasted

### METHOD.

In a pot, add the cream and soy milk and heat. Add in the beaten eggs and stir for about 5 minutes consistently until the mixture turns smooth.

Add in the brown sugar and 3 tablespoons of caramel syrup and continue stirring for another 2 minutes until caramel is well dissolved. Strain the mixture into 4 heat-proof bowls and steam for 25 minutes.

Once the custard pudding is set, sprinkle some toasted almond flakes on top and drizzle the leftover caramel syrup over the custard. Serve immediately.



Caramel Soy Custard Pudding with sliced Almonds

WORLD HEART DAY  
SEPTEMBER 29

### FOOD & NUTRITION

## It ain't **hard** to eat your way to a **healthier heart**

Many of us adopt a low carb diet or load up on high fibre foods to aid our digestive system, and trim some body fat. With World Heart Day approaching in September, why not incorporate some foods that promote a healthy cardiovascular system as well into our daily eating habits? The "Caramel Soy Custard Pudding with sliced Almonds" and "Fish and Pear Vermicelli Soup" are two special heart-healthy dishes which the whole family can savour. Here is a look at some of the best foods that are essential for heart health which can be found easily at your nearby supermarket.

### SOY MILK

Soy milk is a great alternative to milk and goes well with oatmeal or whole-grain cereal. You can also replace milk when making a fruity or chocolate smoothie for a guilt-free treat. As soy milk is a good source of soluble fibre and contains a flavonoid called isoflavones and other vitamins such as B-complex, niacin, folate, calcium, magnesium, potassium and phytoestrogens, it can help to protect against heart diseases by lowering low density lipoproteins (LDL) or what most people know as "bad" cholesterol.

### ALMONDS

Almonds and nut varieties like macadamia and walnuts contain a high quantity of monounsaturated fats and antioxidants. It also has a good amount of magnesium which helps relaxes your veins and arteries, lessening resistance and improving the flow of oxygenated blood and nutrients throughout the body. When consuming almonds, it is most beneficial to eat them whole with their skin on.

**INGREDIENTS.**

- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 shallot, crushed
- Handful of fresh Chinese parsley, chopped
- 2 fillet red snapper fish (cut into pieces)
- 2 cups fish stock
- ½ cup water
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 2 packets vermicelli noodles (bee hoon), soaked in hot water
- ½ teaspoon light soy sauce
- 1 Chinese pear, cut into 6 pieces
- ¼ cup dried wolfberries
- 1 fresh tomato, cut into quarters

**METHOD.**

In a heated pot, add in the sesame oil and sauté the garlic, shallot and half of the chopped Chinese parsley until fragrant. Then, add in the fish and fry. Next, pour in the fish stock, water, salt and pepper. Simmer for 15 minutes on low heat.

Place the vermicelli noodles, pear and wolfberries in and cook for another 10 minutes then add in the light soy sauce to taste. Continue to simmer for another 3 minutes.

To serve, first arrange the vermicelli noodles in the middle of a serving bowl and then with a strainer, spoon the soup over and place the rest of the ingredients on top.

Garnish with the remaining Chinese parsley and fresh tomatoes. Serve immediately.



**Fish and Pear Vermicelli Soup**

**FOOD & NURTITION**

**OLIVE OIL**

Olive oil is abundant with a health-promoting fat called monounsaturated fats which can reduce “bad” cholesterol. Try to select the Extra Virgin or Virgin varieties as they are less processed as compared to normal bottled olive oil. When cooking, also consider substituting butter with olive oil for a heart-healthier option.

**OILY FISH**

Oily fish like sardines and salmon are rich with omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants which boost a healthy heart by decreasing high blood pressure levels and also reduce inflammation throughout the body. Having two servings per week has been said to lower the risk of heart attacks by one-third.

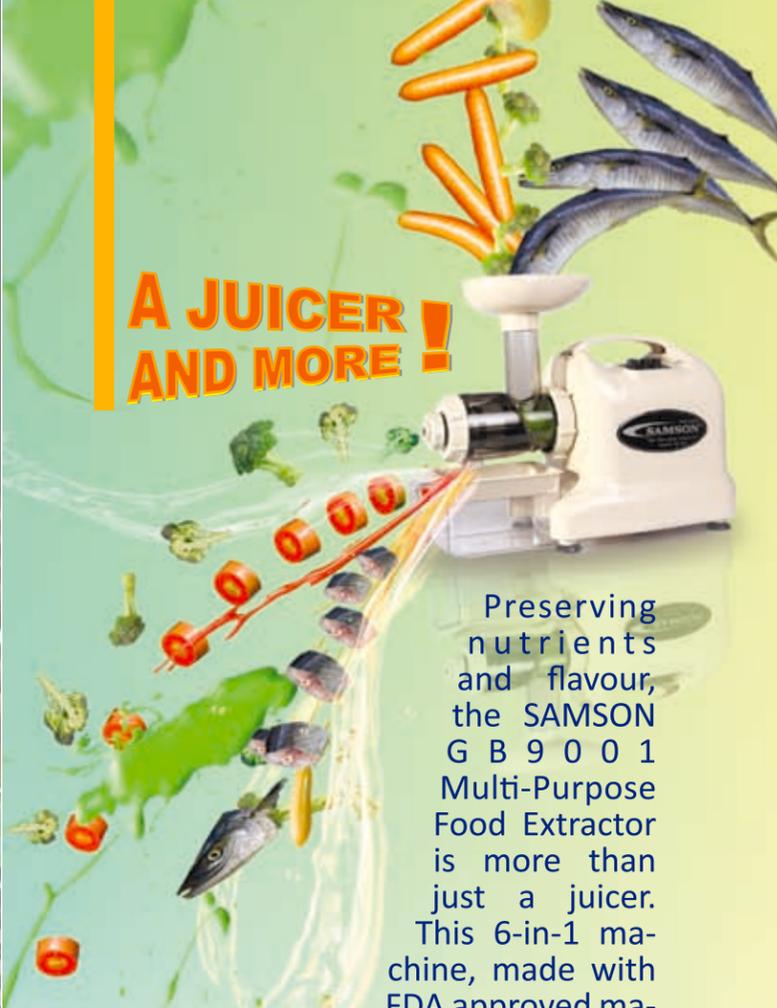
**SPINACH**

Spinach contains a good source of potassium which is a good defence against hypertension. It also contains folate, which reduce levels of homocysteine, a blood component and inflammation marker that can damage blood vessels, and it may also help blood vessels relax, hence improving blood flow. Spinach is such a versatile ingredient you can enjoy them fresh in a bowl of salad greens or even use them in pastas or breads. **HT**

Recipes by Irene Jansen.  
www.culinaryadventures.com.sg



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seated most of the day. The American Journal of Preventive Medicine says the risk is still substantial even if women “engage in physical activity after a sedentary day at the office.” Interestingly, this finding doesn’t apply to men who work at desk jobs!

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics have encouraged women to take occasional breaks from their seats, stretching for some minutes, walking around the workplace, personally delivering office documents to office mates instead of faxing or emailing and standing up while using the phone. Taking walks or hitting the gym during lunch break can also do the trick.

Apart from inactivity, it’s important to know some risk factors for diabetes such as obesity, older age, family history, gestational diabetes history, race or ethnicity. **HT**

## Women who sit for four to seven hours daily have a higher risk for Type-2 Diabetes

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics reported that women who sit for four to seven hours a day are at higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

In more developed countries, most of the workforce work eight hours daily at desks and remain

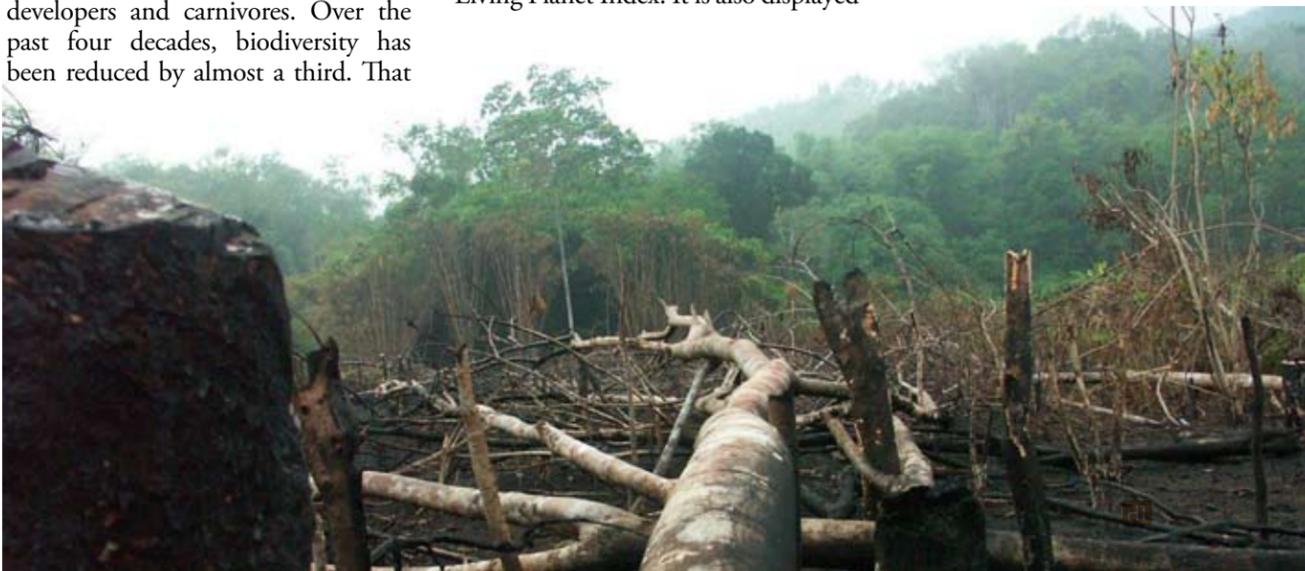
## Global Biodiversity Down 30% in 40 Years

An exhaustive study of over 9,000 populations of 2,688 species of animals indicates that global biodiversity is on a severe decline. Although the environmental movement began in 1970, the consciousness has not been raised sufficiently amongst poachers, developers and carnivores. Over the past four decades, biodiversity has been reduced by almost a third. That

figure has doubled--61%-- in the tropics, where rain forests house many species that disappear before scientists can discover them.

Global residents can look up their country and geographical region in the Living Planet Index. It is also displayed

per country income, proving that high-income countries are consuming a disproportionate amount of resources and that the low-income countries suffer the greatest losses. The major causes of this loss are from altering natural habitat for development, excessive exploitation of plants and animals, and pollution from industrial and agricultural sources. **HT**



## BMI can be misleading?

The body-mass index or BMI is widely used to measure obesity. BMI assesses your weight in relation to your height. It is well known that obese persons or those with a higher than normal percentage of body fat are at high risk of developing heart diseases, hypertension, diabetes and other serious chronic diseases.

Studies show that BMI as a measure for obesity and body fat can be misleading. Athletes due to their increased muscle fat can have higher BMI and therefore be labeled as obese. This notion of BMI as the ideal measurement of weight as normal or obese makes mistakes in taking the prevalence of obesity. Prevalence of obesity among population groups is an important tool in public health policy formulation.

Here’s evidence that BMI isn’t a crucial way of determining body fat and its relationship to chronic illnesses. A research published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology conducted on coronary artery disease patients concluded that there is no direct association of BMI with mortality but central obesity correlates with a higher mortality.

These finding shows that there’s a better way of measuring body fat. Experts say that a better way is through waist measurement, measurement of leptin hormone levels in conjunction with BMI and a skinfold test at three specific areas of your body. Knowing an accurate measurement of your body fat can help you manage your weight and other lifestyle factors. **HT**

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## A look at the ingredients

list on any beauty product can be alarming – filled with long chemical names you are not familiar with (and with even more secretly left off the list), they certainly are not natural. Ingredients like parabens have been said to cause horrific side-effects such as breast cancer.

If you want to avoid absorbing chemicals like lead into your body, one option is to seek out organic or natural products. Although fortunately, many traditional companies are signing on to the pledge of producing safer products. Yet, organic products still tend to cost up to double their conventional counterparts, and even those still often contain petrochemicals and preservatives.

The solution may be to grow your own produce in your backyard, or seek out an appetising display at your nearest grocer's. Think natural....freshly picked, squeezed and applied natural beauty straight from Mother Nature's garden.

Cooks know that there is nothing more satisfying than whipping up your own concoctions. The best part? You know exactly what you put into the mix, so no hidden and dangerous surprises. It's all part of the pampering process, starting by hand-picking the ingredients and ending by relaxing in your own creation of natural beauty bliss.

To keep it simple, let's start with just some easily available fruits and vegetables. While tropically grown, they are available in nearly any supermarket worldwide. With just one fruit, you have a solution for every body part, from head to foot. So clear away all those bottles, and create your own personal spa.



### BANANA

#### Face

For both pimply youths and wrinkly elders, bananas have very beneficial anti-bacterial and anti-aging properties.

**Anti-bacterial face mask:** Mash a ripe banana until very creamy, adding milk and oatmeal if desired (breakfast leftovers?). Apply to a clean face. Wait for about 20 minutes, until completely dry, then rinse off.

#### Hair

A mashed banana mixed with yogurt has a consistency very similar to your standard conditioner, and does the same trick.

**Conditioner:** Mash a ripe banana, adding yogurt if desired. Apply to scalp and hair and leave on for at least 20 minutes, or up to an hour, then wash hair.

#### Body

Bananas have high levels of potassium, which stimulates new skin growth. So slough off old skin with this scrub, and enjoy fresher, youthful skin.

**Scrub:** Mash a ripe banana and add enough sugar (about a spoonful) to make a thick paste. Massage on skin, then let paste dry and rinse off.

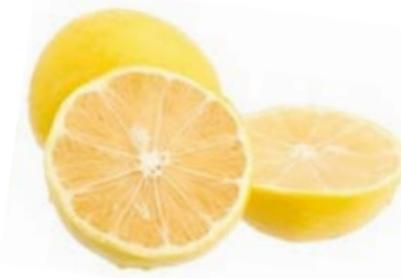
#### Feet

In arid climates or for overworked feet, moisturising bananas will soothe and hydrate dry feet.

**Peel:** Mash a ripe banana. Apply on dry areas of feet, leave on for about 10 minutes and then rinse off (for this and other rinses, try alternating between warm and cold water).

Since the recipes call for mashed banana and just the juice of the lemon, use any overripe or slightly bruised or damaged fruit for your beauty treatments, and save the better quality fruits for consumption. **Waste not, want not!**

### LEMON



#### Face

Lemons are citrus fruits, and their citric acid is a natural astringent. By removing excess oil on your face, you can fight acne breakouts.

**Astringent:** Squeeze some lemon juice (can be stored in glass jar for several days). Apply to face. Let set for 10 minutes, and wash off.

#### Body

Lemon juice can lighten the skin, without solar activation, to fade away freckles and age spots.

**Lightener:** Slice a lemon in half. Apply to spotted or darkened areas for 10 minutes. Then, add some granulated sugar for an additional body scrub in the shower.

#### Feet

Cleanse with lemon, scrub with sugar and moisturise with olive oil.

**Foot scrub:** Mix half a cup of sugar, two tablespoons of olive oil, and juice from half a lemon. Massage onto feet, concentrating on rough spots, and rinse off.

### AVOCADO

#### Hair

After too much fun in the sun, the tropical avocado can undo the damage.

Mash a ripe avocado and apply to hair, sealing in moisture with a plastic wrap for 15 minutes. Then, rinse out as normal.



### CUCUMBER

#### Eyes

Refreshingly cool, cucumbers can refresh tired eyes, reduce under-eye puffiness and moisturise the skin.

Slice two cucumber rounds and rest on top of each eyelid, while waiting for a face mask to dry.



### TOMATO

#### Face

The acidity and vitamins found in tomatoes are natural acne medication, and shrink big pores, too.

Mash a tomato, or use a tablespoon of tomato juice with a few drops of lime juice. Apply to face, then rinse off after at least 15 minutes.



Healthy skin and hair come from a healthy diet. So enjoy the full benefits of these fruits and vegetables by eating the best of the crop, and using the surplus harvest or slightly damaged produce for your personal pampering recipes. **HT**

By Carrie Hibbard

Sources:  
The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics. <http://www.safecosmetics.org/>  
The Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep Cosmetic Database. <http://www.ewg.org/skindeep/>  
Tiptonary by Mary Hunt. ISBN-10: 0805401474.

# Taste Asia Pacific @ Singapore

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*A well known brand of healthy food offerings since 1996, Xongdur products are inspired by the quest for a "Pure and Spiritual Diet". All Xongdur food-items are produced from Thai agricultural products that are completely free from chemical fertilisers and pesticides of any kind. Xongdur uses selected reliable sources which provide organic raw materials of consistent quality.*

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# Creative Reuse for Magazines

**Magazines, arriving** month after month, can quickly pile up. Prevent pack-rat syndrome and put the magazines to good use after a read-through by following these tips that include the basic three Rs – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, plus a fourth R just for magazines – **Re-read.**

## REDUCE

**Save a tree** and prevent excess magazines from getting published in the first place.

### E-magazines

With the massive movement to make everything, even the Encyclopaedia Britannica, available only virtually, nearly all magazines now offer an electronic version that allows their publication to be read on their website or in the form of a downloadable PDF.

### Ban junk

Store catalogues, direct mail publicity and other junk mail waste innumerable paper and water resources on unsolicited recipients. Opt-out by contacting the clearing houses or registering in Do Not Mail databases.

## RE-READ

Share the gift of literature by **passing it on** once you're done.

### Group subscription

Your circle of friends is likely to share similar interests as you. Consider signing up for a joint subscription, and circulating the magazine amongst friends.

### Community read

Offer to donate appropriately-themed magazines to your local doctor's or dentist's office, beauty parlour, residential homes or schools.

## REUSE

An artistic touch can convert excess trash into **funky crafts for yourself or friends.**

### Gift wraps

Old newspapers are the standard ecological gift wrap, but glossy magazines make a much prettier package.

### Bows

Cut long, thin strips and fold them back in a petal-pattern to create a multi-hued bow.

### Cards

Sturdy magazine covers can be easily cut and folded into envelopes for gift cards.

### Presents

All the following ideas make great gifts by themselves!

### Roll

**Jewellery:** Cut magazines into long, thin triangles and roll up into paper beads to make earrings, bracelets and necklaces.

**Curtain:** Clip the beads together vertically with paper clips to make a beaded curtain.

**Mobile:** String along the beads and hang in a mobile. Or instead of beads, curl long strips of paper with a scissor's edge to create a mobile with serpentine streamers.

### Wind

**Coasters:** Wind strips in a spiral to create coasters for cups. For frequent entertainers, nail them to a long plank at the centre of the table, spray with chalkboard paint and write names of visiting guests in chalk on their respective coasters.

**Pots:** Wind strips into three-dimensional baskets or plant pots, with the help of a solid starter base like a round lid.

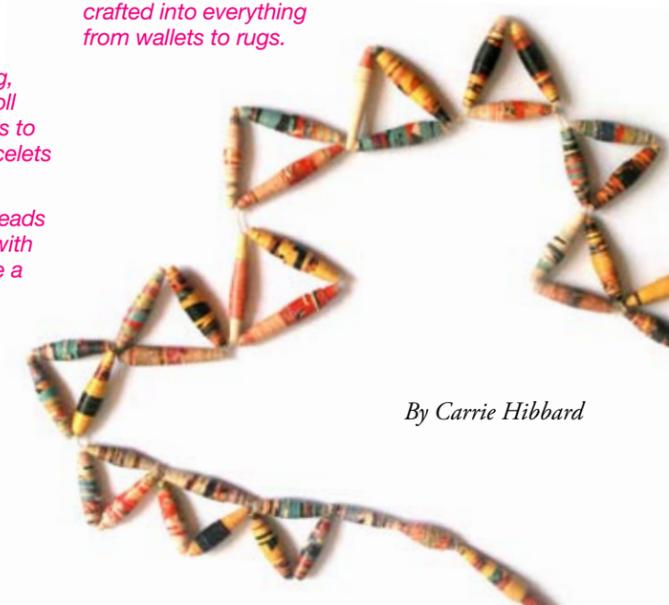
### Weave

Rectangular strips are patiently woven into chains, which can be crafted into everything from wallets to rugs.

## RECYCLE

After they've been re-read, re-gifted and re-used, magazines can be easily recycled.

Magazines are commonly accepted at most recycling facilities and community recycling programmes. 



By Carrie Hibbard



# HEALTH-POSITIONED FOOD & BEVERAGES *Asia*

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Held in conjunction with:



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Led by **Rupert Sutton**, CEO, Exigo Marketing, Japan

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- What are the needs and perceptions of consumers for food and beverages with health claims?
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- What are the industry best practices in marketing your product benefits to consumers?
- How should you launch and position your products for brand success?

[www.nutrafood-bevasia.com](http://www.nutrafood-bevasia.com)

REPLY FORM	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, please send me a brochure on: <b>Health-Positioned Food &amp; Beverage Asia</b> 5 - 7 September 2012, Hong Kong SkyCity Marriott Hotel	<input type="checkbox"/> I am unable to attend this time but please put me on your mailing list.	P46198HT
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## NEWS

# Aesthetic doctor partners local artiste to pay it forward



For World Peace! Dr Elias Tam (far left) with Hagen Troy (centre) at Hai Sing Catholic School.

In his efforts to make a valuable contribution to society, local aesthetic physician, Dr Elias Tam of EHA clinic recently paired up with home grown international composing artiste, Hagen

Troy, to spread the message of making the right choices. Dr Tam was invited as guest speaker at Hai Sing Catholic School to participate as a guest speaker in the "The Choice is Mine" showcase, where he delivered a motivational speech.

The showcase is part of the "We Love, We Hope, In Unity" initiative that has been ongoing since 2010. The programme has successfully helped many students to have a clearer perspective of situations and realise how crucial making the right choices in life is. To date, the programme has been presented at Pasir Ris Crest Secondary School, Ping Yi Secondary School, Hai Sing Catholic School, Broadrick Secondary School, Bukit Panjang Secondary School and Xinmin Secondary School.

Dr Tam who also does free tattoo removal for prisoners as part of the Yellow Ribbon campaign said, "I think it is a privilege to be able to help someone in a way they cannot do for themselves. It is a special and meaningful gesture." HT

HealthyTimes

JUL - SEP 2012 • ISSUE 51



SNEAK PREVIEW  
of the next issue

## World Diabetes Day (WDD) is celebrated every year on November 14.

It was created in 1991 by the International Diabetes Federation and the World Health Organisation in response to growing concerns about the escalating health threat that diabetes now poses. From 2009 to 2013, the theme for the campaign is Diabetes Education and Prevention.

**ANNOUNCEMENT:**  
**The contest winners from Healthy Times issue 50 will be announced on [www.healthytimes.com.sg/blog](http://www.healthytimes.com.sg/blog)**

## PRODUCT FEATURE

# Juicy goodness of MARIGOLD 100% Juice



MARIGOLD 100% Juice is pure juice with full 100% Juice content, and nothing else. With none of the other additives, MARIGOLD 100% Juice has met the stringent criteria in terms of no added sugar from the Health Promotion Board and certified as a Healthier Choice product.

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MARIGOLD 100% Juices are conveniently packed in 1L for families' enjoyment at \$2.15 and 6 X 250ml packets at \$4.25 for individuals on the move.

Available in hypermarkets, supermarkets, minimarts and provision shops. Drink your fruits today!

# Coping with Premies

**A premature or pre-term baby** is one that is born before the 37th week of pregnancy. It used to be that all babies that weighed less were considered premature, but now, doctors have realised that it is not the weight, but the time spent in the mother's womb.

**B**ecause they are born too soon, many of the biological systems of premature babies, such as those involving the lungs and liver are not developed enough to function properly on their own.

This can result in jaundice or breathing difficulties, after they are born. Thus, they need more care.

Many hospitals now have a special section for premature babies, like intensive care nurseries where specially trained nurses care for them under the supervision of neonatologists, doctors who specialise in treating newborns.

Parents who give birth to premature babies usually fear for the life of their newborn. Some premature babies do not get past their first month, so the stress and emotional trauma these parents face are far greater than one can imagine.

## Concerns facing Parents

- A lot of times, parents are highly frustrated by not being able to care for their newborns. Because of their vulnerability, they are unable to leave the intensive care nurseries. These babies are also not able to breathe and suck as soon as those babies that reached full term.
- **Parents sometimes feel angry, wondering why their baby was born prematurely, or they may blame themselves and experience intense guilt.**

Mothers of pre-term babies often experience erratic mood swings for months after delivery. Feelings of depression and worry interchange frequently with happiness and relief.

- Fathers have their share of problems, too. Aside from dealing with their own worries, they are the prime source of comfort and support for their wives who are often physically and emotionally drained.
- The need for emotional support continues after the baby is brought home. While there is joy and relief, there are also ongoing pressures and worries. As pre-term babies are biologically younger and less developed than full-term babies, they require more attention and feedings.
- In addition to other forms of stress, research indicates that parents find the crying of pre-term babies more irritating than that of full-term babies.

With all these in mind, it is very important for parents to learn how to cope and communicate their needs to professionals.

## Coping Mechanisms

- Parents should learn how to calm their babies, because that will in turn provide parents with a better time in taking care of them. One of the simplest and most effective calming techniques is swaddling, which involves wrapping a baby securely from shoulders to feet with a small blanket or sheeting. Some parents are not comfortable with restricting their baby's movements. But, even if done for a limited time, swaddling helps the baby feel secure.
- Communication is very important between husband and wife, as each of them will be feeling different emotions that may be conflicting. If they do not talk about their thoughts and fears, the other party might end up feeling lost and neglected in the midst of both sides focusing all their attention on the baby.
- Understand that you should not compare your baby with those that reached full term. Premature babies tend to look more mature, sluggish and tend to respond slower. Accept

these differences and understand that these do not indicate that your baby will grow up to be any lesser than any other child, premature or not.

- Doctors now know that the sooner babies and parents make contact with each other, the better for both. Babies, even the sick and tiny ones, seem to benefit from the stimulation derived from human contact. Pre-term babies appear to gain weight more readily when they are touched, talked to and held. Parents who spend more time with their babies in the hospital also end up being more comfortable caring for them at home.
- When the baby is strong enough, parents can learn to handle and feed their baby in preparation for the days ahead when they will bring him home. Likewise, the parent's involvement in their baby's care often has an encouraging effect on hospital staff. It has been observed that nurses tend to respond more favourably to babies whose parents are actively interested in caring for them.
- If you cannot find anyone to talk to, there are always options like help-lines and support groups. They are always helpful and usually provide round-the-clock assistance.

**Bottling up your fears and emotions will only result in you possibly lashing out on your premature baby and other family members.**

To be able to care for your baby with utmost patience, you will need to resolve any negative feelings you are experiencing. **HT**





# Aesthetics Asia 2012 delivers an international exhibition with four world class congresses

Dear Industry Practitioner,

It gives us great joy and pleasure to invite you to the 4th edition of Aesthetics Asia Exhibition and Congress, held in conjunction with Aesthetic Dentistry 2012, at the prestigious Marina Bay Sands, Singapore on 13-15 September 2012.

Aesthetics Asia has evolved into Asia's most prestige aesthetic congress and exhibition and has established itself as a major event for the aesthetics industry in Singapore and across the Asia Pacific.

In 2012, our scientific committee has ensured the program has an increased number of international key opinion leaders, sharing their wealth of knowledge and experience across the aesthetic sectors.

From now until 2016, the overall Asian aesthetic market will grow by an impressive 18.1% per year, outpacing gains in all other world regions. Aesthetics Asia remains a distinctive channel for regional and international companies to penetrate the Asian market and for Asian aesthetic professionals to come together and learn of new ways to maximize skills and put them into practice.

In 2012 we are excited to announce the launch of the Aesthetic Dentistry Exhibition and Congress, in association with the Aesthetic Dentistry Society Singapore (ADSS), Association of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons (Singapore) (AOMS) and Association of Orthodontists, Singapore (AOS). The scientific committee has gathered world-class dentists to this progressive multidisciplinary meeting with the main goal to impart dentistry excellence to each participant through a practical and interactive educational format, featuring new aesthetic procedures, products and technologies.

The Aesthetics Asia 2012 congress program will cover 4 core tracks:

- **Aesthetic Plastic Surgery**  
TST Triangular Meeting
- **Anti-Aging Medicine**
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- **Aesthetic Dentistry**

Aesthetics Asia will also host workshops from leading practitioners to illustrate the latest techniques and products. With a diverse, content-packed program lined up, we are confident the congress will be a rewarding and enriching experience for one and all.

We look forward to welcoming you to Aesthetics Asia 2012!

Best regards,  
The Aesthetics Asia team

For more information about Aesthetics Asia 2012, please call + 65 6517 6893 or visit [www.aestheticsasia.com](http://www.aestheticsasia.com)

For more information about IIR Exhibitions Pte Ltd, please visit [www.iirx.com.sg](http://www.iirx.com.sg).

For more information about Singapore Association of Plastic Surgeon, please visit [www.plasticsurgery.org.sg/](http://www.plasticsurgery.org.sg/)

For more information about Aesthetic Dentistry Society Singapore, please visit [www.adss.org.sg](http://www.adss.org.sg)

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# Post Show Report

10 - 13 MAY 2012

Jakarta Convention Centre - Senayan



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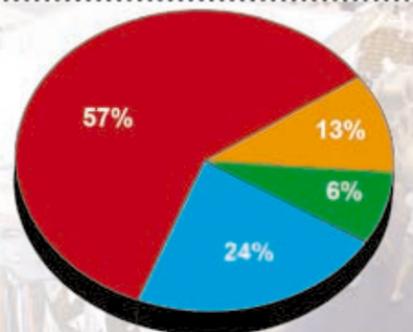
- Beauty, Cosmetics, Herbal Products • Plastic Surgery • Laser Surgery • Equipment & Instruments For Plastic and Laser Surgery
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Date : 10 - 13 May 2012 (4-days exhibition)  
 Venue : Jakarta Convention Centre - Senayan  
 Exhibition Hours : 10.00-19.00 WIB  
 Exhibition Area : 3.126 sqm

Total Exhibitors : 105 Exhibitors from 14 countries  
 Foreign : 45 (from China, Thailand, India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, Taiwan, Canada, Australia, Switzerland, USA)  
 Local : 60 (Represented overseas principals & distributors)

Total Visitors : 5,485 Visitors  
 Local : 4,993 Visitors  
 Foreigner : 492 (Jerman, Malaysia, Switzerland, USA, India, Japan, China, Taiwan, Hongkong, Singapore)

Program : 10 - 13 May. Brihama Competition (Bridal, Hair and Make up)



■ General Management ■ Top Management  
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**VISITOR PROFILE**

Top Management	24 %
General Management	57 %
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