

MEDIA RELEASE

225 LIVES SAVED IN JUST 1 MORE MINUTE

- Target 35,000 people to be screened in 2010

Singapore, 1 March 2010 – The old saying, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” is how some people might view their health. Not so for close to 30,000 members of the public aged 50 years and above, who owed it to themselves and their loved ones to take care of themselves, to pick up the Faecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) kits during the Singapore Cancer Society (SCS)’s Colorectal Cancer Awareness Campaign (CCAM) last year.

As a result, 225 lives were saved in 2009 when these individuals made the effort of taking just one more minute of their time to do the FOBT. From today, with the launch of the 9th Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, the SCS hopes to target 35,000 Singaporeans and Permanent Residents in this age group to pick up the free FOBT kits.

The FOBT is a preliminary screening test for cancer of the colon and rectum. The kit detects the presence of non-visible blood in the stool. The FOBT has proven to be an effective screening tool for colorectal cancer which reduces cancer mortality rates.

Results of the 2009 colorectal cancer awareness campaign...

The number of people benefiting from the SCS Colorectal Screening programme has increased by 32.0% from 22,510 in 2008 to 29,710 in 2009. In 2009, 609 individuals with positive FOBT results were referred for colonoscopy, which led to a removal of polyps in 250 of them. Of these, 184 were found to have pre-cancerous polyps. 41 cases of cancer were detected.

Almost all the cancers detected by FOBT screening exercise in 2009 had not spread. Only 1 patient had metastatic cancer. The other 33 had either stage 0, 1, 2 or 3, i.e. they are all potentially curable with surgery. Compared to our usual statistics, FOBT screening does pick up cancers earlier than usual!

Getting to the bottom of things...

According to the Singapore Cancer Registry statistics, for the period 1968 till 2007, the incidence of colorectal cancer diagnosed increased by 28.0% on average by every five-year period. It overtook lung cancer in 2003 to be the top cancer among men and has remained as the second most common cancer among women since 1973. Each week, close to 28 are diagnosed with colorectal cancer and about 12 die from it.¹

“Colorectal cancer is one of the most preventable and treatable cancers, had more cases been caught on early,” said A/Prof Tang Choong Leong, Chairman of CCAM Organising Committee and Senior Consultant Colorectal Surgeon at Singapore General Hospital. “And the only way to protect yourself is to go for regular screening when you reach 50 years old. Most cases start with benign growth (colorectal polyps) in the colon or rectum. These polyps may transform into cancer overtime. When such polyps are detected, they are removed through a colonoscopy and in this way many cases of colorectal cancer can be prevented.”

He added, “When cancer is diagnosed at a later stage, the prognosis decreases by almost 20% at each stage. The patient will have a better survival rate of 90% at Stage I than those with Stage III, who only have a 50% chance. At Stage IV when it has spread to other organs, cure becomes very difficult.”

Just 1 more step to do...

The fact remains that regular screening and early detection saves lives in the battle against colorectal cancer. Mr Robert Hoo, 67, one of the FOBT kit recipients, can attest to this truth. When he took his first FOBT in 2008, benign polyps were detected and removed by colonoscopy and he was required to return a year later for the follow-up screening. During last year’s campaign, Mr Hoo collected the FOBT kits and again the results were positive. SCS referred him to do a colonoscopy. He was diagnosed with Stage I colon cancer then, six months before his scheduled colonoscopy follow-up.

¹ Singapore Cancer Registry, Interim Report, 2003-2007

“I was fortunate to discover the cancer early, which was a blessing in disguise. If I had not picked up the kits, I would not be prompted to do a colonoscopy earlier than the scheduled date.” Mr Hoo said. He pointed out, “If I had waited for another six months, my cancer might have spread and advanced to a later stage. By then, I would require chemotherapy treatment.”

The Society recommends those in the target age group to take the FOBT annually. The free kits are available at 39 selected Guardian Health & Beauty outlets islandwide, 18 polyclinics, SCS satellite centre at the National Cancer Centre Singapore and the SCS clinic at Realty Centre in the month of March (Please refer to Annex 1 for the distribution list). 8 Guardian Health & Beauty outlets will continue to distribute the kits till the end of the year.

In its efforts to heighten awareness of the disease, members of the public can look forward to attend free forums in English, Mandarin and Malay and also pick up the FOBT kits on-site. In addition, for the first time during the campaign, a workshop-cum-talk themed “Surviving Colorectal Cancer – Moving Ahead with Courage and Confidence” will be held especially for colorectal cancer survivors, their family members and caregivers as well as supporters of the cancer cause (Annex 1).

The FOBT is quick, free and it could save your life.

Just 1 more minute is all it takes.

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ANNEX 1

FREE SCREENING FOR COLORECTAL CANCER IN THE MONTH OF MARCH

Distribution Locations 分发地点	Address 地址	Date 日期	Distribution Hours 分发时间
Singapore Cancer Society / 新加坡防癌协会			
Headquarter	15 Enggor Street #04-01 Realty Centre	Mon- Fri (All year round)	8.30am - 6.00pm
Satellite Centre @ NCCS	11, Hospital Road, Level 2	Mon- Fri (All year round – Closed on Wed)	9.00am - 5.00pm
Guardian Stores / 健与美连锁店			
Ang Mo Kio Central	Blk 704 Ang Mo Kio Ave 8 #01-2559	1 Mar – 31 Dec 2010	Operating Hours
Bedok Central	Blk 210 New Upper Changi Road #01-715		
Compass Point	No.1 Sengkang Square #B1-32/33/34/35		
Great World City	1 Kim Seng Promenade #B1-18/19		
IMM	2 Jurong East St 21 #01-57		
Lot 1	21 Choa Chu Kang Ave 4 #B1-26/27		
Suntec City Mall	3 Temasek Boulevard #02-063/065/067		
Toa Payoh	Blk 190 Lorong 6 Toa Payoh #01-578		
Admiralty Place, Bishan Junction 8 Shopping Ctr, Bugis MRT Station, Causeway Point, Centrepoint, City Link Mall, Clifford Ctr, Funan The IT Mall, Geylang Serai (Lion City Hotel), Holland Shopping Ctr, Hougang Central Blk 205, Ion Shopping Ctr, Jelita Shopping Centre, Jurong Point, Northpoint Shopping Ctr, Novena Square, Paragon, Parkway Parade, Plaza Singapura, Raffles Place MRT, Serangoon Garden, Takashimaya, Tampines Mall, Tampines MRT Station, Tanglin Mall, Tiong Bahru Plaza, Vivo City, Warehouse Retail Scheme, West Mall Shopping Ctr, White Sands, Yew Tee MRT Station		1 Mar – 31 Mar 2010	Operating Hours

Polyclinics/综合诊疗所		
Ang Mo Kio, Bedok, Bukit Batok, Bukit Merah, Choa Chu Kang, Clementi, Geylang, Hougang, Jurong, Marine Parade, Outram, Pasir Ris, Queenstown, Sengkang, Tampines, Toa Payoh, Woodlands, Yishun	15 Mar – 26 Mar 2010	9.00am – 1.00pm
Roadshows / 户外活动		
Tiong Bahru Plaza (<i>near taxi stand</i>)	6 & 7 Mar 2010	10.00am – 9.00pm
Lot One	14 Mar 2010	
White Sands	28 Mar 2010	

PUBLIC FORUMS

Colorectal Cancer: Screen for Life

“Just 1 More Minute Could Save Your Life”

Colorectal cancer is the top cancer in Singapore today. Each week, close to 28 are diagnosed with colorectal cancer and about 12 die from it*. The number of deaths could be reduced if the cancer is caught on early by regular screening. Many cases of colorectal cancer can also be prevented by removing pre-cancerous polyps, which may transform into cancer over time.

Date	Time	Language	Venue / Address
13 March 2010, Saturday	1.00 – 3.00 pm <i>(Registration starts at 12.00 pm)</i>	English	Kallang Community Club, 45 Boon Keng Road Nearest MRT: Boon Keng
	3.30 – 5.30 pm <i>(Registration starts at 2.30 pm)</i>	Mandarin	
27 March 2010, Saturday	1.30 – 3.00 pm <i>(Registration starts at 1.00 pm)</i>	Malay	

Forum Topics	Forum Speakers	
	English	Mandarin
BE IN THE KNOW about Colorectal Cancer	A/Prof Francis Seow Choen <i>Senior Consultant Colorectal Surgeon Mt. Elizabeth Medical Centre</i>	Dr Yong Wei Peng <i>Consultant Department of Haematology Oncology National University Cancer Institute, Singapore</i>
SEE THE INVISIBLE signs of Colorectal Cancer	Dr Kam Ming Hian <i>Consultant Department of Colorectal Surgery Singapore General Hospital</i>	Dr Kenneth Koo <i>Registrar Department of Gastroenterology Tan Tock Seng Hospital</i>
LIVE LIFE HEALTHILY what it takes to stay risk-free	Dr Benjamin Chuah <i>Consultant Department of Haematology Oncology National University Cancer Institute, Singapore</i>	Dr Bernard Lim <i>Associate Consultant Department of Colorectal Surgery Singapore General Hospital</i>

*Singapore Cancer Registry Interim Report (2003-2007)

Fee/Registration: Free. For registration/enquiries, call 6421 5804, fax 6221 9575 or email to education@singaporecancersociety.org.sg

CELEBRATING CANCER SURVIVORSHIP

Surviving Colorectal Cancer

Moving Ahead with Courage and Confidence

Colorectal cancer survivors, family members, caregivers and supporters are encouraged to join this event to celebrate cancer survivorship. Be it laughing to better health, drawing up inspirations or enhancing your well-being, you get all the benefits in one sitting! Register for your free place today. Limited seats available.

Date : 20 March 2010, Saturday

Time : 2.00 – 5.00 pm

Venue : Kallang Community Club

Programme Schedule

Time	Activity
1.30 – 2.00 pm	Registration
2.00 – 2.20 pm	<p>My Journey to Recovery <i>Sharing by Cancer Survivors</i> Listen to cancer survivors' stories on their fight against colorectal cancer and lives after recovery</p>
2.20 – 3.20 pm	<p>Putting Laughter into Your Life <i>Experiencing Laughter Therapy with Zaibun Siraj</i> Have a fun time laughing with Zaibun, as she teaches you the way to laugh for better physical and emotional health.</p>
3.20 – 3.45 pm	Tea Refreshment
3.45 – 4.45 pm	<p>Experiencing Art Therapy Engage in the therapeutic experience of creative work, like painting and clay sculpturing. Art therapy can help you gain insights and facilitate the expressions of your emotions, thoughts and hope. It can also calm the mind and reduce stress. You will get to bring home your own art pieces after the event!</p>
4.45 – 5.00 pm	<p>Health-Enhancing Talk You will get tips on maintaining good health and general well-being.</p>

Fee/Registration: Free. For registration/enquiries, call 6221 9578 or email to ashley_wu@singaporecancersociety.org.sg