HAPPY FEET
step out of danger

MANAGING NEUROPATHY PAIN

LOWER YOUR CANCER RISK

IS EXERCISE WORKING OUT FOR YOU?

MOBILE CLINIC & DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP 2014 SCHEDULES ARE OUT!
www.diabetes.org.sg

SELF-CARE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOPS 2014
Mandarin English Malay
Check out back cover for details

JOIN US FOR DSS FLAG DAY ON 5 APRIL 2014! SIGN UP NOW!
Membership Application

Name: (Dr/Mr/Mrs/Mdm/Miss)

NRIC No.: Age: Date of Birth:

Nationality: Occupation: Sex: M / F

Address: Postal Code:

Marital Status: Language Spoken:

Contact: (H) Email:

MEMBERSHIP FEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ordinary Member</th>
<th>Associate Member (For family member of Ordinary Member)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ $35 (Jan to Dec) ☐ $25 (Jul to Dec)</td>
<td>☐ $10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ $70 (3 years*) ☐ $105 (5 years*)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Free glucometer to newly registered members who sign up for 3 years and 5 years membership.

Amount $ (Cheque/Cash) Bank/Cheque No.: 

(Mail payable to "Diabetic Society of Singapore")

Mail to: Blk 141 Bedok Reservoir Road, #01-1529, Singapore 470141

Signature Date

Benefits of DSS members:

1) Discounted prices for diabetic medical supplies eg test strips, syringes, etc, screening and services at DSS centres.
2) Complimentary copies of the Society’s newsletter.
3) Participate in public forums and workshop at special rates.
4) Enjoy discounts at Unity pharmacies on selected items.
It is very important to learn how to manage your illness when you are sick. Please consult your physician for further advice on diabetes and sick-day management.
World Diabetes Day Singapore 2013, organised by Diabetic Society of Singapore (DSS), was held on Sunday, 10 November 2013, at Suntec Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre. Attendance at the event surpassed all expectations, thanks to the hard work and collaboration on the media coverage between Bayer (South East Asia) Pte Ltd and DSS.

Dr Kevin Tan, Vice President of the Society in his opening speech, urged the public to take advantage of the free HbA1c tests offered this year to find out their control level.

Our WDD theme this year ‘How is your Control? Helping you manage your Diabetes well’ reflects the Diabetic Society of Singapore’s deep interest in helping people manage their diabetes well.

Healthcare professionals - pharmacists, nutritionists, diabetes nurse educators, podiatrists, physiotherapists and eye care specialists - were available at the event to help members and the public to understand diabetes management and care, and encourage them to apply their knowledge.

Guest of Honour A/Prof Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Health, who graced the event, announced that he will be leading a Master Plan. The CHAS scheme also provides middle- and lower-income citizens the convenience of seeking subsidised treatment for their chronic conditions. For example, we have the Integrated Screening Program (ISP) organised by the Health Promotion Board at Community Health Assist Scheme, or CHAS for short, General Practitioner (GP) clinics. To make screening more affordable and accessible, the CHAS has been enhanced to increase the coverage of subsidies for screening tests under the Integrated Screening Program. The recommended tests will be fully subsidised by the government for CHAS patients at CHAS GP clinics. From 1 January 2014, they will also enjoy subsidies for GP consultation charges of up to $18.50 per visit, for their screening and subsequent follow-up consultations, up to two times a year.

For those who have diabetes, good control of glucose levels will enable one to have a normal and productive way of life and reduce complications of diabetes. Good control can be achieved by a combination of compliance to medications and regular checks, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and mentally keeping a positive outlook in life.

Cost wise, diabetic patients are also able to tap on both government subsidy and MediSave for treatment of diabetes, whether in Specialist Outpatient Clinics or at your family doctor. The Chronic Disease Management Programme (CDMP) for chronic diseases, which includes diabetes and hypertension, allows patients to use their MediSave for outpatient treatment.

The CHAS scheme also provides middle- and lower-income citizens the convenience of seeking subsidised treatment for their chronic conditions near their homes at participating GP clinics.

We must encourage everyone, especially those who are overweight, or have a family history of diabetes, and are at higher risk, to go for regular screening for diabetes.

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WORLD DIABETES DAY SINGAPORE 2013

HOW IS YOUR CONTROL?
HELPING YOU MANAGE YOUR DIABETES WELL

Early detection is the crucial initial step in the management of diabetes. In many patients, diabetes is not detected until the late complications of the disease arise.

By Rodiah Hashim

WORLD DIABETES DAY
SINGAPORE 2013

HELPING YOU MANAGE YOUR DIABETES WELL

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Excerpts from A/Prof Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim’s speech at WDD 2013...

Diabetes affects 1 in 9 adult Singaporeans, and as high as 1 in 3 for those over 60 years of age...

In Singapore, about half of all people with diabetes are unaware of their condition. So we must encourage everyone, especially those who are overweight, or have a family history of diabetes, and are at higher risk, to go for regular screening for diabetes.

The Diabetic Society of Singapore is well placed to educate and increase awareness of the risks of developing diabetes, and prevent or delay this condition from occurring. The Diabetic Society of Singapore has always been helping diabetics to improve the management of their diabetes. It has made available free testing of Glycosylated haemoglobin, commonly called HbA1c, which is a measure of blood sugar control. In addition, you can avail yourself to the screening for eye complications and foot problems which are a perennial feature of World Diabetes Day events as well as the counselling on how to manage your diabetes.

I am encouraged by the Diabetic Society of Singapore’s service over the past 42 years for patients with diabetes and their families. The Society has strived to improve these patients’ lives by imparting diabetes self-care skills, financial support to the needy with diabetes and subsidised counselling, testing, screening and purchase of glucometers and strips to help in control of their condition. The Society has grown to its current complement of three Diabetics Education and Care Centres and a mobile clinic to widen its outreach in Singapore. We hope that its outreach will continue to expand to enable more of us in Singapore to benefit.

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**DSS kept itself very busy in the heartlands with health screening programs, self-management workshops and forums and talks. Here are some of the events held between October and December 2013. Look out for similar events in 2014. DSS mobile clinic schedule is also now available at www.diabetes.org.sg**

**Health Screening**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>06-Oct-13</td>
<td>World Mental Health Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carnival at Jurong Spring Community Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-Oct-13</td>
<td>Mental Resilience Day @ Bukit Batok East Community Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-Oct-13</td>
<td>Healthy Lifestyle Fare 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>at Toa Payoh Central Community Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>16-Nov-13</td>
<td>Sikh Welfare Council - SNEC Welfare Day at Sikh Temple</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Towner Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>01-Dec-13</td>
<td>Health Screening</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>at Church of St Mary of the Angels, Bukit Batok East</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Public Forum Eye-ducation**

A public forum by Singapore National Eye Centre (SNEC) supported by DSS was held at the SNEC auditorium on 14 September 2013.

Ms Crystal Lee, a DSS Diabetes Nurse Educator, spoke to a crowd of 100 participants, together with consultants from SNEC about:

- Diabetes Management
- Diabetic Retinopathy
- Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)
- Floaters & Flashes.

**Health Talks Diabetes Self-Care Management Workshops (Mandarin)**

Self-Care Management Workshops in Mandarin for the Tsao Foundation continued from September to November 2013 at the following venues:

1. 3, 10, 17 and 24 Sep 2013 at AWWA Kreta Ayer
2. 1, 8, 22 and 29 Oct 2013 at THKSAC@Telok Blangah
3. 4, 11, 18 and 25 Oct 2013 at Kreta Ayer SAC@Kukoh
4. 5, 12, 19 and 26 Nov 2013 at CCNSAC Ang Mo Kio Ave 10

New workshop dates in 2014 are now available. Log onto www.diabetes.org.sg or check the back cover of this issue for details.
Diabetes Support Group’s last event for 2013 was held on Saturday, 23 November 2013. The event kicked off at 3.25pm in DSS HQ's Activity Room where pre-blood glucose readings were executed for all 20 participants.

Juliana, DSG team leader led the group exercise with a CD provided by Health Promotion Board called “Fabulous”. It provides guidance on how to enhance our flexibility, balance, and strength. ‘Fabulous’ offers two different routines – Indoor and Outdoor. Each routine comprises four levels of intensity.

We combined some of the indoor and outdoor exercise and had a great workout for one hour or so. Workout bands were distributed to all participants to teach them the ropes of resistance and stretching exercises. Diabetic nurse educator Ling Ying helped in managing the video program.

After the workout and some snacks, we gathered for the group sharing facilitated by Juliana. Each took turns to introduce about him/herself and his/her medical history, and share tales of coping and diabetes management. We later adjourned for some dinner at a coffee shop.

WE’D LOVE TO SEE YOU AT OUR NEXT MEET ON 15 FEBRUARY. TAKE A WALK WITH US. EAT WITH US AND FIND OUT HOW FUN AND HELPFUL IT CAN BE TO SHARE STORIES AND IDEAS ON HOW TO MANAGE YOUR DIABETES.

### 2014 DSG Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>MEETING POINT</th>
<th>TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WALK CENTRAL CATCHMENT NATURE RESERVE (MACRITCHIE)</td>
<td>Saturday, 15 February</td>
<td>Marymount MRT</td>
<td>9am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALK SOUTHERN RIDGES - FROM MARANG TRAIL TO CANOPY WALK</td>
<td>Saturday, 29 March</td>
<td>Harbourfront MRT</td>
<td>5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALK @ GARDENS BY THE BAY N MARINA BAY</td>
<td>Saturday, 26 April</td>
<td>Marina Bay MRT</td>
<td>5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTHY EATING CUM MEET N SHARE @ DSS BEDOK</td>
<td>Saturday, 10 May</td>
<td>Bedok DSS</td>
<td>11.30am</td>
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<tr>
<td>WALK PASIR RIS PARK</td>
<td>Saturday, 24 May</td>
<td>Pasir Ris MRT</td>
<td>9am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALK TAMPINES ECO GREEN</td>
<td>Saturday, 21 June</td>
<td>Tampines MRT</td>
<td>9am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALK ADMIRALTY PARK</td>
<td>Saturday, 19 July</td>
<td>Woodlands MRT</td>
<td>5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALK LABRADOR NATURE RESERVE - WALKING TRAIL</td>
<td>Saturday, 23 August</td>
<td>Labrador Park MRT</td>
<td>9am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALK CHANGI POINT COASTAL WALK</td>
<td>Saturday, 20 September</td>
<td>Bedok MRT</td>
<td>5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALK BUKIT BATOK NATURE PARK</td>
<td>Saturday, 18 October</td>
<td>Bukit Batok MRT</td>
<td>9am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTHY EATING CUM MEET N SHARE @ DSS BEDOK</td>
<td>Saturday, 15 November</td>
<td>DSS Bedok</td>
<td>11.30am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALK SINGAPORE BOTANIC GARDENS</td>
<td>Saturday, 29 November</td>
<td>Botanic Gardens MRT</td>
<td>9am</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### I want to make a donation today:

- **Name:**
- **NRIC/Passport No.:**
- **Address:**
- **Postal Code:**
- **Contact No.:**
- **Home**
- **Office**
- **Mobile**
- **Fax**
- **Email**

Please indicate amount and mode of payment:

- **Amount paid:** $
- **Cash/Cheque**
- **Cheque No.:**

*Cheque to be made payable to Diabetic Society of Singapore. Kindly address all cheques to: Diabetic Society of Singapore Blk 141 Bedok Reservoir Road #01-1529 Singapore 470141

Donations are tax exempted. Cash donations can be made personally at our office at the above address. THANK YOU!
HAPPY FEET

Diabetic patients are more likely to be admitted to hospital with a foot ulcer than with any other complication of diabetes.

This is because diabetes may cause poor circulation and reduced feeling in the feet. It is important to understand how foot problems develop and how they can be prevented or detected early to avoid foot ulcers and amputation.

SOYJOY, made from whole soy and real fruits, is a Low GI food. Eat SOYJOY to get Low GI benefits, thus improving your health by its functional benefits of soy.

Healthy Eating with Low GI, Snack Right with SOYJOY

SOYJOY comes in five delightful flavours: Hawthorn Berry, Raisin Almond, Apple, Cacao Orange and Banana.

Available at Major Supermarkets and The Diabetic Shops.

For more information, please visit: www.fairprice.com.sg or www.diabeteshop.com.sg

For more info please visit: http://www.soyjoy.com.sg/
How can diabetes affect your feet?

If it is poorly controlled, diabetes can damage nerves and blood vessels. Nerve damage is called neuropathy.

There are three types of neuropathy, and all of them can affect your feet:

1. Sensory neuropathy
   This affects the nerves from the skin, bones and muscles to the brain and affects how we sense temperature and pain. It is the most common form of neuropathy and can lead to a loss of feeling and an inability to sense pain. This can mean that you might develop a blister or minor burn without realising it, which, if not treated properly, could become infected or develop into an ulcer.

2. Motor neuropathy
   This affects the nerves responsible for sending messages to the muscles about movements, such as walking. If the nerves supplying your feet are affected it could cause your feet to change shape. Your toes may become clawed (curled) as your arch/instep becomes more pronounced or the arch may ‘fall’ causing flat feet. This can cause the bones in your foot to fracture (break) when stressed.

3. Autonomic neuropathy
   This affects the nerves which control activities such as sweating and temperature regulation. Damage to these nerves may affect your sweat glands, reducing secretions and making your skin dry and hard. If not looked after, the skin may crack and become prone to infection.

Signs of an infection on the skin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>White skin will usually be bright pink or red; brown or black skin may become darker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>The infected area may throb and be very painful (though this may not be the case if you have neuropathy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swelling</td>
<td>The infected area may be puffy and appear swollen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>The pain and swelling may mean that it becomes difficult to move the infected area (though this may not be the case if you have neuropathy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>The infected area may feel hot to the touch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pus</td>
<td>The area may be weeping a yellow/green matter called pus; this consists of dead cells and micro-organisms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Circulation

Diabetes may also affect the blood circulation by causing the arteries to become ‘furred up’ (atherosclerosis). This can affect all the major blood vessels, especially those supplying the feet.

Without a good blood supply, you will have problems with cuts and sores, which do not heal very well, and as a result of poor circulation, you may also suffer from cramp and pain in your legs and/or feet.

If your diabetes is poorly controlled, you run greater risk of poor circulation and the problems associated with a poor blood supply to your feet. High blood pressure, a high fat content in your diet and, in particular, smoking, all increase the risk of poor circulation.

What are the danger signs?

Swollen areas, changes in the colour of your skin or a slow-healing wound could indicate poor circulation, an infection, the early stages of an ulcer, or gangrene. Foot ulcers can be treated successfully, especially in the early stages. If they are left untreated, the risks of infection are high. The earlier the treatment, the more successful the outcome is likely to be.

Pain in the feet and legs should never be ignored. Your body is telling you that there is a problem. Even painless sores can be very serious and should not be ignored. Sores and cuts that do not heal are important danger signs. Seek immediate advice. Your diabetes may not be well controlled, you may have an infection or your circulation may have worsened. All of these can be successfully treated if discovered early.

Check your feet every day

If you notice any of the danger signs you should make an appointment with your doctor or health centre. Do not try to treat injuries, corns or other foot problems yourself. Seek professional help. Avoid using corn removal plasters because they contain acid which can cause the skin to break down.

**SEEK HELP IF:**
- you notice any of the foot health danger signs.
- you have had diabetes for many years and have never had your feet checked.
- you find it difficult to check or care for your feet.
- you have any questions about caring for your feet.

Why is sensitivity important?

Sensitivity is an important way that the body can alert you to other problems. Sensations, like sharp pain or throbbing, can tell you when you may have damage to a part of your body. In the case of feet, pain could be due to a burn, blister or cut and because you feel it you can take prompt action and appropriate treatment.

If sensation is impaired you may not realise if minor damage has occurred. If left unknown and untreated, the risk of infection is increased. Infections and ulcers are also painful – but not if that part of the foot also lacks sensation.

Knowing that you have impaired sensitivity requires you to rely more on regular visual checking for symptoms such as discoloration or swelling.
If our diabetes is not well controlled, nerve damage can occur over time. We may experience numbness, burning or tingling sensations of pain in parts of our body. This is referred to as neuropathy pain.

The prevention and management of neuropathy pain is through the medical management and control of blood glucose levels. And, in some instances, medication for neuropathy pain.

Although, neuropathy pain can be managed, a lot of patients typically delay seeking help. They think that it is just an ordinary muscular pain that will eventually go away. In fact, research has shown that many patients seek help only seven years after they experience the pain.

You do not need to suffer in silence for such a long period.

Regular Follow Ups With Your Medical Team

Neuropathy pain may develop slowly and gradually. And it is usually detected through a series of medical examinations and tests. Keep to your regular follow up appointments with your doctors and nurses. They will not only be able to help you better monitor and control your blood glucose levels, but they will also be able to help you monitor any development of neuropathy pain.

In addition, conditions like high blood, high cholesterol and obesity may also contribute and increase the risk of developing nerve damage and pain. Hence, management of our chronic illnesses in general is essential.

Lifestyle Behavioural Changes

Besides working with medical professionals, we can play a part in our daily life. This includes having a healthy diet, regular exercise, regular monitoring our glucose levels and taking our medication.

Reducing or abstaining from behaviours that increase the risk of developing neuropathy pain like smoking and alcohol intake will also be helpful.

Managing Our Catastrophic Thinking

For most people, a simple prick already elicits not only pain but also some level of distress. Patients experiencing chronic neuropathy pain may experience emotional distress. And it may be inevitable that they develop catastrophic thoughts.

Catastrophic thoughts are thoughts that make things look very hopeless, make the person very helpless and keep repeating in the person’s mind even though he or she does not want to think about them intentionally. Some examples include: “I cannot do anything”; “I am worthless”; “There is no hope”.

Research has show that catastrophic thoughts not only make the person more emotionally distressed, but they also intensify the pain experience. Hence, managing these thoughts can help to alleviate the emotional distress due to pain and therefore, help us to manage the pain experience better.

Coping thoughts are fairly different from “positive thinking”. Its working principle is to recognise first the difficult situation one is in, before thinking positively. That seems to be very helpful to many people. Some examples include:

One of the ways to manage these thoughts includes developing alternative coping thoughts.

Notice the difference between coping thoughts and positive thoughts. This does not mean coping thoughts replace the positive thoughts we often use; it just means that we have another way of dealing with our catastrophic thoughts.

Managing our emotion and thoughts may not cure us of the pain, but it will help us to experience a better quality of life, moment to moment.

There are many other ways to increase your quality of life. Some of these include problem solving and pacing your activities. But one thing is clear. You are not alone in managing your neuropathy pain.

You are not alone in managing your neuropathy pain.

Talk to your healthcare professional for support.
Money bags
serves 10
by Sim Chin Ting, Dietitian,
Mt Alvernia Hospital

INGREDIENTS
Spring roll pastry 1 packet (around 50 pcs)
Potato 4, medium-sized
Onion 1, minced
Peas 1/2 cup
Dried black fungus 1 handful, soaked in hot water for 10 mins, then minced
Tuna 425g can, in water, drained

SEASONING
Soy sauce 1 tsp
Fish sauce 2 tbsp
Pepper 1/2 tsp
Light mayonnaise 2 tbsp
Wasabi 1 tsp
Tomato sauce 2 tbsp

METHOD OF PREPARATION
1. Saute onions until soft and brown.
2. Discard star anise.
3. Add tuna to potatoes. Add peas, black fungus, onions and seasoning. Adjust to taste.
4. Pan fry shallots until light brown.
5. Pour oil and shallots over tofu.
6. Sprinkle coriander and chilli on top.
7. Serve hot.

NUTRITION INFORMATION per serving
Energy 133 kcal
Protein 6 g
Carbohydrate 4 g
Total fat 10 g
Saturated fat 1.0 g
Cholesterol 0 mg
Dietary fibre 0.5 g
Sodium 1241 mg
Carbohydrate exchanges: ~0.5 exchange

Do I have to give up high GI foods completely?

Thankfully, not all the carbohydrates have the same effect on your body. Some carbohydrates will give a quick rise in blood sugar levels and some will have a slower effect. For example, white rice, white bread, more cooked or processed food and more ripen fruit are generally high in GI. They break down in the body faster and quickly raise the blood sugar levels!

We eat foods in combination with other foods. When you combine high GI with low GI food, the final a medium GI-balanced meal.

A diabetes meal plan involves choosing foods that have a low or medium GI and low in saturated/trans fats.

A teaspoon of peanut butter is high in GI and a slice of wholemeal bread is low in GI. Combining these will give you a medium GI!

A bowl of white rice is naturally high in GI. Reducing it to a medium GI will not only prevent the insulin spike, but it also keeps you feel full for a longer time. To keep a good balance, simply replace half the bowl of rice with red kidney beans and vegetables. You will get a low GI dish and a pretty decent amount of protein, too!

It is not only the low calories or GI that we need to take note of, but also the serving size when planning a meal because serving size has a great impact on blood glucose level.

Popcorn that is air popped has a high GI (72) but low in GI food, the final is a medium GI-balanced meal.

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6 WAYS TO LOWER YOUR CANCER RISK

by Kohila Govindaraju, freelance nutritionist

What’s on your plate?

Healthy selections at the supermarket and at meal times will help reduce your cancer risk.

Fruits, vegetables, wholegrains and pulses are generally low in calories and fat. They are considered the good food choices that help you control your weight and reduce your cancer risk. They are rich in:

- vitamins and minerals that strengthen the immune system.
- antioxidants that help to prevent the cell damage that leads to cancer.
- fibre, that is linked to reducing the cancer risk.

Eating lots of vegetables, especially cooked tomato-based foods, rich in lycopene, can lower the risk of prostate cancer in men. Watermelon, grapefruit, red and pink guava are also good sources of lycopene.

Berries are high in antioxidant properties. Antioxidants neutralise the free radicals, unstable compounds that damage the cells and lead to diseases including cancer.

Eating a diet high in fibre can reduce the risk of colorectal cancer. Dietary fibre protects against breast cancer through inhibition of the intestinal reabsorption of estrogen.

Soluble fibre has been shown to be more effective in controlling the blood glucose, insulin, which have been positively related to the risk of breast cancer. Insoluble fibre is more effective in binding and excreting estrogen with a consequent decrease in serum estrogen.

Nut eaters are less likely to die of cancer; it seems. The unsaturated fatty acids, minerals and other nutrients from heart-healthy peanuts, almonds and pistachios are not only cardio-protective, but also anti-carcinogenic, anti-inflammatory and with antioxidant properties that aid in lowering the cholesterol, inflammation and reducing the risk of cancer. Nuts are good sources of selenium which helps to destroy cancer cells and aid cells repair their DNA.

Choose wholegrain, as refined foods are high in the glycaemic index (GI). Research has shown that even women with BMI < 25 had an increased risk of breast cancer with an increasing amount of rapidly absorbed carbohydrates.

Don’t wait till you are overweight

A BMI of 25 or less is optimal. Waist size should also be considered, because a higher amount of body fat deposited in and around the waist signifies a higher risk of cancer. Having too much belly fat is linked to an increased risk of colorectal, pancreas, endometrium (lining of the uterus) and breast cancer (in women past menopause). A higher intake of dietary fat and alcohol and low levels of exercise have been implicated in causing prostate cancer in men and in estrogen metabolism which is related to an increased risk of breast cancer in women.

If you are overweight or obese, work to lose weight. Excess body fat can be reduced by lowering the number of calories you consume (reducing portion size), choosing a low-fat diet, and increasing the physical activity.

Regular physical activity

Regular physical activity will help reduce your risk of cancer and recurrence through several powerful and synergistic mechanisms. Strive for at least 30 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise. Combining aerobic and resistance exercise will have a synergistic effect on glycaemic control in individuals with type 2 diabetes. Enjoy performing some light stretching exercises often. About 25% of all breast cancer cases in women could have been avoided by maintaining a healthy body weight.

Wine down

Alcohol is a known cause of mouth, throat, liver, colon and rectum cancers. People who drink alcohol should limit their intake to no more than a glass per day.

Be Smoke-Free

Cigarette smoking accounts for at least 30% of all cancer deaths. It has been linked to various types of cancer, including the cancer of the lung, bladder, cervix and kidney. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in both men and women. Do note that exposure to second hand and sidestream smoke can also increase the risk of lung cancer. So, provide a safe, enjoyable and accessible environments for yourself and your family.

Limit your consumption of processed meats — smoked, cured, salted, added with preservatives — because a diet that is high in processed meat is linked to bowel cancer.

Culinary herbs such as garlic, basil, oregano, cilantro (coriander leaves), chives and parsley not only add flavour and colour to meals, but also help to prevent and manage heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

Choose cooking methods such as baking, boiling, steaming or stir frying, for they limit the use of fat and reduce your risk of being overweight! Broccoli is a good source of cancer-protective flavonoids. Steam or stir fry this vegetable to hold the cancer preventing flavonoids!
IS YOUR EXERCISE REALLY WORKING OUT?

by Ray Loh, exercise physiologist, Sports Medicine and Surgery Clinic, Tan Tock Seng Hospital

What you do during an exercise session has a huge effect on the blood glucose (BG) level during and after exercise. Many individuals with diabetes are sometimes puzzled and alarmed by the rise in blood glucose after exercise.

Post-exercise BG depends greatly on the intensity, duration, pre-exercise control and the individual’s training status.

Our skeletal muscles are the main consumers of glucose and they store some glucose (glycogen) for our daily physical activities. When glycogen in the muscle is used up, it gets replenished through two distinct pathways.

At rest, our muscle replenishes its glycogen storage via glucose uptake from the BG with the help of insulin. When muscle contractions are strong enough during exercising, glucose uptake from BG increases via GLUT proteins (another form of glucose transporter) without the need for insulin.

Both uptakes reduce our body’s BG level. Our body then maintains the BG level by glucose production through the liver and mobilisation of other fuels such as free fatty acids and amino acids.

For people with diabetes, during a moderate exercise session such as a slow or brisk walk, BG utilisation by muscle usually raises more than hepatic glucose production and, hence, BG reduces. This, however, also increases the risk of hypoglycaemia when exercise is prolonged.

During high intensity exercise, plasma catecholamine (exercise stress hormones) increases, thus leading to a rapid increase in hepatic glucose production. This increases BG which lasts for about one to two hours even after exercise has ended. This effect is commonly seen during intense and short bouts of exercises such as resistance training or more intense functional exercise training. It has been shown that BG will reduce quickly after these training sessions and the lowered BG is sustained for the next 24 hours.

To reap the full benefits of exercise, it is important to understand what to do and how much to do. Adjust your exercise program according to your health and fitness condition.

Add variety to your exercise regime. Include aerobic and anaerobic exercises. Have a good blend of easy, longer duration walks, medium duration brisk walks or low impact functional exercises and short bouts of higher intensity exercises such as heavy weight lifting (about 70% maximum strength).

A low impact 30-minute functional exercise session which emphasises correct movements and muscular contractions can be as effective in reducing BG levels as one to two hours of easy walking.

A vigorous resistance-training session might lead to hyperglycaemia lasting one to two hours in the beginning but could see lower BG levels for the next one to two days when food intake is maintained. Most important of all, exercise safely, be consistent and enjoy your workout.

Illustrations by Tilen Tj

1. Lying supine with hand by your side. This is the start position.
2. Lift the knee and chest off the floor at the same time till your legs and arms are parallel to the floor.
3. Hold position for 1 second and return to start position.

Work your way up to 20 repetitions.

1. Get into standard push-up position.
2. Maintaining a braced core with hips extended, flex and bring elbow away from the floor till your elbow is behind your back.
3. Hold position for a second before returning hand to the floor. Repeat with the other arm to complete 1 repetition.

Work your way up to 20 repetitions.

1. Stand upright with arms extended and parallel to the floor.
2. Brace your core, maintaining your knees fully extended, flex your hip, rotate your shoulder and touch your left feet with your right hand.
3. Return to start position and repeat with the other hand to complete 1 repetition.

Work your way up to 20 repetitions.

The following exercises are designed for general healthy individuals. Fundamental mobility, flexibility and stability are needed to perform these exercises properly. If you feel pain or discomfort in any position or when performing any of the exercises, do not continue doing it. Check with your health care provider to see if you have any limitations at the moment in performing these exercises.

For beginners, start with fewer repetitions and progress with an increment of 3 to 5 repetitions weekly till you are able to perform 20 repetitions at one go.
Crack! Then a sharp pain in my left wrist on which I landed while trying to land some ‘fancy’ mid-air clearance of a football during a friendly futsal game with my colleagues. I didn’t know it then but I had just broken my left radius at the wrist joint. The confirmation came the next day at the hospital A&E. The good news is that it was a clean break and the bone is still in place, which means no surgery will be required. The bad news is — my arm is now broken!

Anyone with a broken arm will tell you that it casts a shadow on many of your activities, especially when you are an active person. For someone with diabetes, it is a delicate balance of insulin injections, diet and exercise. I have lost my ability to exercise for weeks. For the first few days, I was eating the amount I usually do. Unfortunately, this was increasing my sugars drastically.

I thought I could go for walks to exercise. That is always a bad idea when you have a cast. The sweat had no way of escaping from the cast so my skin started turning red and itchy. The itchy madness is sheer torture. I am starching while typing this article. So, if I wanted to heal faster I need to make sure my sugars are in check. I cast off my disappointments and supported my team mates during the Commando Challenge. I asked if the climb school could postpone my course and they gave me a two-month extension. When my arm stopped hurting, I went back to work.

I was training for the Commando Challenge with a team and I was going to get my Level 1 rock climbing certification by attending a one-day course. Of course, I couldn’t do any of those. Staring at the X-ray the doctor showed me, I was getting depressed.

What could I do to not have a self-defeating attitude? I did what I could to carry on in spite of the pain and inconvenience. Instead of being downcast, I decided it was better to be positive and soldier on. Moping never makes anything better. Here’s wishing you all a positively Happy New Year.

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**DIABLOGUE**

By Pravin Rajwani

(Soldiering On) By Pravin, in his cast, carrying his colleague’s daughter.

(Above) Pravin with his Commando Challenge team mates.
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Course Fee: $21.00 per person (4 sessions)
For registration, please call the respective centres.

Please note that the above dates may be subject to change.

Supported by Lions Diabetes Program