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## Editor's Note

THE FIRST STEP  
TO TAKE IS TO  
LIKE US ON 



In this issue, we would like to raise awareness for gastric cancer. **Cancer of the stomach is the seventh most common cancer in men and the ninth most common cancer in women in Singapore.** Stomach cancer is readily treatable when diagnosed early. Reduce your risk of stomach cancer by making a few changes in your lifestyle.

Have a diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables, and low salt intake. Avoid smoking and second-hand smoke.

We'd love to hear from you! Do you have any interesting stories or any ideas to share with us? Please email us at [enquiry@pcc.sg](mailto:enquiry@pcc.sg)

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# WHAT IS GASTRIC CANCER?

Gastric cancer, or stomach cancer, is cancer that starts in the stomach.



## What Causes It?

While the exact causes of stomach cancer remain unknown, factors that may increase the risk of stomach cancer include:

- A diet high in salty and smoked foods
- A diet low in fruits and vegetables
- Family history of stomach cancer
- Infection with *Helicobacter pylori*, a bacterium that lives in the mucous lining of the stomach
- Chronic gastritis, which refers to a long-term inflammation of the stomach
- Pernicious anaemia, which is a decrease in red blood cells that occurs when the intestines cannot properly absorb vitamin B12
- Smoking

## Signs and Symptoms

This cancer has few or no symptoms in the early stages, which makes early detection difficult.

A patient may experience a loss of appetite, unexplained weight loss and chronic abdominal pain. However, gastric pain or dyspepsia (any pain or discomfort in the upper abdomen) is a very common symptom and mostly due to common ailments such as acid reflux or gastritis. As such, many people, even doctors, may not immediately suspect stomach cancer.

This is the main reason why the cancer is often discovered late. Less common symptoms of stomach cancer, and which tend to present in the more advanced stages, include vomiting and the passing of black stools, which is a sign of bleeding.

## How Can We Prevent Gastric Cancer?

Although the exact causes of stomach cancer are unknown, there are steps we can take to reduce the risk of developing stomach cancer. In fact, in many developed countries, where refrigeration has allowed a greater intake of fresh rather than salt-preserved foods, rates of stomach cancer have fallen over the years.

Here's what you can do:

- Take more fruits and vegetables
- Reduce intake of salt and smoked foods
- Stop smoking
- Know your medical history and undergo regular gastroscopy if you have a history of *Helicobacter pylori* infection



# 10 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CANCER PREVENTION

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## 1. SOME VIRUSES CAN CAUSE CANCER

You know that smoking (and passive smoking) as well as prolonged sun exposure put you at a higher risk of developing cancer. What's less commonly known is that some viral infections can raise your risk, too. The human papillomavirus (HPV) can lead to cervical cancer, while the hepatitis B virus (HBV) increases the risk of liver cancer – and both viruses can be passed from person to person through blood or sex.

The good news is, you can safeguard yourself with vaccinations against HPV and HBV.

## 2. SUGAR HAS A ROLE

There is no evidence linking sugar to cancer. However, eating too much of it can cause you to gain weight or become obese, which can increase your cancer risk. So, it is important to exercise and maintain a healthy weight.

## 3. GO EASY ON ALCOHOL

The less alcohol – beer, wine or spirits – you imbibe, the better you are for it. Alcohol has been linked to increased risk for mouth and throat, oesophageal, liver, colorectal, breast and stomach cancers. Men should not have more than two drinks a day, and women should just have one.

## 4. MOST CANCERS ARE NOT INHERITED

Only five to 10 per cent of cancer cases are caused by abnormal genes that run in the family. Other cancer-causing factors include an unhealthy diet and lifestyle, viruses, and excessive exposure to sunlight and tobacco smoke.

## 5. 40 PER CENT OF CANCERS ARE PREVENTABLE

The World Cancer Research Fund and American Institute for Cancer Research have these recommendations to lower the risk of developing cancer: Stay active, eat more fruits and vegetables, cut down on red meat and sugary drinks, use more fresh ingredients in cooking, and eat less processed, salted as well as smoked food like ham, bacon and sausages. Added preservatives, like nitrates, and the process of smoking, salting or drying may produce carcinogenic compounds in food.



# NEW CLINIC IN THE EAST

Parkway Cancer Centre now serves you at Parkway East Hospital. The new clinic is helmed by Dr Tan Wu Meng, Consultant for Medical Oncology.

The 700 sqft centre on the third floor has one consultation room and a treatment area fitted with four treatment chairs and one bed. Patients will have access to individual television sets and headsets, as well as storage areas for personal belongings.

### PCC's 8th Clinic @ Parkway East Hospital

321 Joo Chiat Place #03-10 Singapore 427990

Tel: (65) 6247 9608



## 6. NOT ALL TUMOURS ARE CANCEROUS

Tumours are formed when cells in the body do not die when they should or when there is abnormal cell growth. However, tumours can be malignant or benign. Malignant tumours are cancerous as they can invade surrounding tissue and spread to other parts of the body through the bloodstream or lymphatic system. Benign tumours, on the other hand, do not spread or invade surrounding tissue and, once removed, they do not usually recur.

## 7. DON'T SKIP SCREENINGS

Cancers that are detected in early stages when they are still small are easier to treat. And there's a very good chance of a cure if the cancer hasn't spread. So opt for age-appropriate screenings, even if you are well. Common screenings include a mammography for breast cancer, a colonoscopy or a stool test for colorectal cancer, and a Pap smear for cervical cancer.

## 8. NEVER IGNORE THESE SYMPTOMS

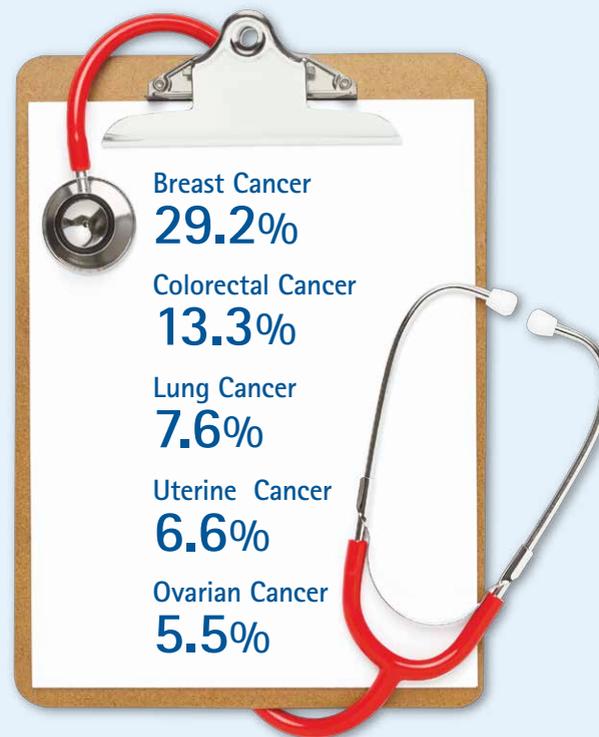
For most cancers, pain is not an initial symptom. In fact, symptoms usually only appear when the cancer is in the advanced stages. However, you can watch out for these warning signs and, if they persist, see a doctor as soon as possible.

- Lumps in the breast or on other parts.
- Hoarseness or a persistent cough that is not due to a viral illness.
- Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing.
- Unexpected or rapid, significant weight loss.
- Sores that do not heal.
- Unusual bleeding or vaginal discharge, or blood in phlegm, urine or stool.
- Chronic constipation or diarrhoea, or a change in the pattern or size of stool.
- Changes in the colour, shape and size of a wart or mole.

## 9. BREAST CANCER IS THE BIGGEST KILLER

From 2010 to 2014, there were 61,522 cancer cases diagnosed in Singapore. Of these, 31,743 affected women. Breast cancer was the most common and most fatal, causing 2,049 deaths.

Here are the top five cancers among women during that period:



Source: The Singapore Cancer Registry, Annual Registry Report, Trends in Cancer Incidence in Singapore, 2010-2014.

## 10. ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES MAY HELP

Cancer cannot be treated with alternative therapies, but they may complement the treatment you're undergoing. Patients are advised to inform their oncologist of any supplementary treatment or medication they are considering to ensure there are no side effects and that the effectiveness of the cancer treatment is not reduced.

## SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

3 AUG WED	10.00am – 12.00pm <b>Nutrition in Cancer Care</b> Gleneagles Hospital Board Room, Level 3
6 AUG SAT	10.00am – 12.00pm <b>Zumba</b> Mount Elizabeth Hospital Seminar Room, Level 2
17 AUG WED	2.00pm – 5.00pm <b>Look Good Feel Better</b> Gleneagles Hospital Board Room, Level 3
26 AUG FRI	10.00am – 12.00pm <b>Expat Cancer Support Group</b> The British Club, Singapore Windsor Terrace
27 AUG SAT	10.00am – 12.30pm <b>Adjusting to Changes: Preparing &amp; Starting Cancer Treatment</b> Mount Elizabeth Hospital Seminar Room, Level 2

7 SEP WED	10.00am – 12.00pm <b>Nutrition in Cancer Care</b> Mount Elizabeth Hospital ACR Room, Level 2
9 SEP FRI	10.00am – 12.00pm <b>Expat Cancer Support Group</b> The British Club, Singapore Windsor Terrace
10 SEP SAT	10.00am – 12.00pm <b>Zumba</b> Mount Elizabeth Hospital Seminar Room, Level 2
17 SEP SAT	10.00am – 12.00pm <b>Myth about Cancer Pain and its Management</b> Mount Elizabeth Hospital Seminar Room, Level 2
23 SEP FRI	10.00am – 12.00pm <b>Expat Cancer Support Group</b> The British Club, Singapore Windsor Terrace
24 SEP SAT	10.00am – 12.30pm <b>Adjusting to Changes: Preparing &amp; Starting Cancer Treatment</b> Mount Elizabeth Hospital Seminar Room, Level 2

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# TOMATO- AVOCADO SALSA AND POACHED EGG SANDWICH

A Hearty Breakfast Recipe from Chef Lee Chee Kheong  
and tips by Senior Dietitian Fahma Sunaja

Serves 4

## INGREDIENTS

15 cherry tomatoes, quartered  
2 avocados, diced  
1 Japanese cucumber, diced  
10 olives, sliced  
2 cups mixed salad  
2 tbsp + 4 tsp extra virgin olive oil  
A pinch of salt and pepper  
4 slices wholemeal bread  
4 eggs  
2 tbsp white vinegar, for poaching egg  
Alfalfa sprouts (optional)



## DIRECTIONS

1. To make the salsa, mix the cherry tomatoes, avocados, Japanese cucumber and olives together. Set aside.
2. Toss the salad with 2 tbsp olive oil, salt and pepper. Set aside.
3. Spread 1 tsp olive oil on each slice of bread and toast until golden brown.
4. To poach the eggs, bring a pot of water to the boil. Stir in the white vinegar, then reduce to a simmer.
5. Crack an egg into a bowl. With a ladle, stir the water to create a whirlpool, then slip the egg in.
6. Cook for 3min, then remove with a slotted spoon onto kitchen paper to drain. Repeat for the remaining eggs.
7. To assemble, spread the salsa on the toast. Top with a poached egg and alfalfa sprouts, and serve with the salad on the side.

## FAHMA'S TIP



Eating a protein packed breakfast helps the body release the gut hormone peptide YY, which makes you feel full so you're not reaching out for those chips by mid-morning.

## CONTACT US

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<b>Mount Elizabeth Medical Centre</b>	3 Mount Elizabeth #10-11/12 Singapore 228510 3 Mount Elizabeth #13-16/17 Singapore 228510
<b>Mount Elizabeth Novena Specialist Centre</b>	38 Irrawaddy Road #05-43, 50 to 55 Singapore 329563
<b>Parkway East Hospital</b>	321 Joo Chiat Place #03-10 Singapore 427990

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