

# A SIMPLE GUIDE

*To Healthy Living*

APR-JUN 2017 ISSUE 52

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## **TIME FOR A CHECK!**

Find out about the latest  
Health Screening Dates

## **A HEALTHY MIND AND BODY**

How can you create  
a good balance?

## **WHEN CANCER AND DEPRESSION STRIKES**

Deal with this lethal  
combination in time



# Cancer and Depression

AUTHOR **DR EUGENE WUAN**, Psychiatrist, Health Wellness Programme, Changi General Hospital



**FIND OUT HOW CANCER LEADS TO DEBILITATING MENTAL HEALTH AND HOW THE COMPLEX COMBINATION OF THE TWO EVILS CAN SPIRAL ONE DOWN THE ABYSS FURTHER. RECOGNITION IS THE FIRST STEP IN ARRESTING THIS PROCESS. LEARN WHAT THE SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION ARE.**



**I**t is not surprising that approximately half of all patients with terminal or advanced cancer suffer with poor mental health, particularly in depression, anxiety and adjustment disorders. Less than half of these patients receive treatment for their mental health, which means that many of them suffer in silence.

The potent combination of cancer and depression takes its toll; death rates are as much as 39% higher in diagnosed depressed cancer patients and 25% amongst those who felt depressed. It is often the case that the diagnosis of cancer, or cancer-related issues, triggers depression. It can also be a result of other difficult events, or simply by chance.

Acknowledging and recognising the need for treatment of depression in patients with cancer can help to enhance quality of life and help patients and families make the best use of their remaining time together. Since patients are often reluctant to describe their depressive symptoms, it is important that caregivers know how depression can be recognised.



**Here are some possible depressive symptoms. They need to last over a period of time:**

- o **Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.** A bleak outlook – nothing will ever get better and there's nothing you can do to improve your situation.
- o **Loss of interest in daily activities.** You don't care anymore about former hobbies, pastimes, social activities or sex. You've lost your ability to feel joy and pleasure.
- o **Appetite or weight changes.** Significant weight loss or weight gain – a change of more than 5% of body weight in a month.
- o **Sleep changes.** Either insomnia, especially waking in the early hours of the morning or oversleeping.
- o **Anger or irritability.** Feeling agitated, restless or even violent. Your tolerance level is low, your temper short and everything and everyone gets on your nerves.
- o **Loss of energy.** Feeling fatigued, sluggish and physically drained. Your whole body may feel heavy and even small tasks are exhausting or take longer to complete.
- o **Self-loathing.** Strong feelings of worthlessness or guilt. You harshly criticise yourself for perceived faults and mistakes.
- o **Reckless behaviours.** You engage in escapist behavior such as substance abuse.
- o **Concentration problems.** Trouble focusing, making decisions or remembering things.
- o **Unexplained aches and pain.** An increase in physical complaints such as headaches, back pain, aching muscles and stomach pain.

If you notice these symptoms in the cancer patient, it is time to seek help. Depression is a bleak and lonely road, but it does not have to be journeyed through alone. Speak to your doctor for more advice and help.



# FAMILIAR, YET IMPORTANT

AUTHOR **DR LINSEY UTAMI GANI**, ECHO Programme Director

Dear Readers,

We are charging along into 2017 and I hope you have been keeping well! This issue, we will touch on an unfortunately familiar, but very important topic – cancer, the number one cause of death in Singapore. Sadly, for some of us, we would have been personally affected or know someone close who have been impacted by this disease. The diagnosis of cancer is often overwhelming and may bring about emotional distress. Depression is a disabling mental illness that affects 15-25% of cancer patients and increases a patient's risk of death. For this issue we have invited Dr Eugene Wuan, a psychiatrist from CGH to shed light on the topic of cancer and depression. There are also strategies provided by our clinical psychologist and physiotherapist on how to manage our moods when we are down, and how to start an exercise regime that may help to improve our emotional health. We hope you find these articles useful and informative.



Last but not least, we would like to remind our readers on the importance of regular health screening to maintain our health and detect chronic diseases early. Our health screening sessions for 2017 are starting in April, do keep a lookout for the dates that ECHO is coming to your local community centres. You may also visit our website to register online for these screening! We look forward to meeting all of you during our events.

## Cancer: How do I cope?



AUTHOR **DR SOON SIEW PENG**, Senior Clinical Psychologist,  
Health Wellness Programme, Eastern Health Alliance

**The 'c' word, *cancer*, often brings about immense fear and despair. Another relevant 'c' word is *coping*. Receiving news that one has cancer, the process of undergoing treatment, or having a loved one diagnosed with cancer are all challenging situations to cope with.**

**C**ancer may bring up a wide range of overwhelming feelings including anger, stress, anxiety, sadness, fear, guilt and loneliness. It is important to recognise that these feelings are normal and you do not have to push them away. These feelings may fluctuate, be more intense at times, change each day or even within minutes. Take note of periods that you may feel worse, and consider using some of the strategies below.

### USE SUPPORT FROM LOVED ONES OR SPIRITUAL BELIEFS:

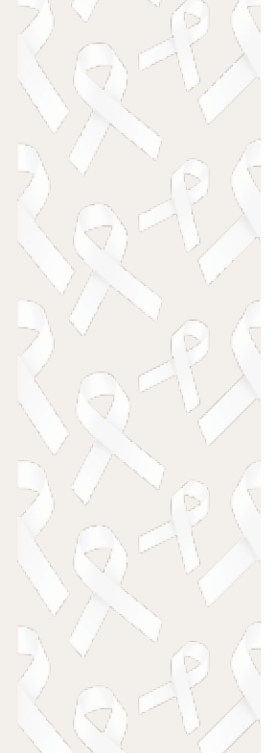
It may be helpful to share your feelings with trusted family, friends, or members of your faith community. Making connections and accepting support strengthens our ability to cope. Turning to religious or spiritual beliefs may also provide comfort in these times.





### MANAGE STRESS AND WORRIES:

To manage stress or anxiety, relaxation activities including deep breathing and meditation may help. Educating yourself about your illness and treatment options also helps you understand how to best care for yourself, prepare for what is to come, reduce fear of the unknown, and develop confidence in the decisions you make. Writing down your deepest thoughts and fears or sharing them with loved ones may also be helpful.



### IMPROVE MOOD:

Whilst you may feel like withdrawing and stopping the activities you once enjoyed, it is of utmost importance to keep yourself busy, active, and engaged in things you like to do. Have a daily routine and set small goals. Ask yourself, "What is one thing I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?" Spend time in nature, practise gentle yoga, or do hobbies like photography, dancing, crafts, or reading. These will lift your mood and allow you to focus on other things.

### FOCUS ON GRATITUDE, HOPE, AND SELF-DISCOVERY:

Negative thoughts may flood your mind. Even in this challenging time, it is still possible to pay attention to good things that occur each day. Practise gratitude, that is, noticing the things you appreciate. Even small things, like a good cup of coffee or a smile from a friend. Further, there may be reasons to feel hopeful or learn about yourself. People often find that they have grown through their hardships (e.g., having an increased appreciation for life, better relationships).



### SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP:

Importantly, if you are feeling very down, depressed, anxious, or are having thoughts about hurting yourself or taking your own life, please seek professional help. These conditions can be treated.

You do not have to control these feelings or experience them on your own.

**Coping with cancer is a considerable task. Each person differs in what coping methods they find helpful, so identify and try things that are likely to work for you. Remember that you do not have to go through this alone – turn to family, friends, and healthcare professionals to support you in coping.**





# A HEALTHY MIND & BODY

AUTHOR **TOH XI EN**, Physiotherapist, Changi General Hospital



**LIKE PHYSICAL HEALTH, GOOD MENTAL HEALTH IS CRUCIAL TO LIVING A MEANINGFUL AND HEALTHY LIFE. FIND OUT SOME WAYS TO SEEK A BALANCED AND HAPPY WAY OF LIVING.**

Everyone knows that staying fit is important to having good physical health, but many of us take our mental and emotional health for granted – focusing on it only when problems arise. It is important to build up our mental health to prepare us when crisis strikes.

Good mental health allows one to be in control of their emotions and behaviour, tackle challenges, build strong relationships and lead productive and fulfilling lives. When life takes a downturn, they're able to bounce back and move on. Mental health is a state of well-being that enables one to realise his/her own abilities, working productively and making a contribution to his/her community, while coping with the normal stresses of life. A poor mental health will make one susceptible to mental stresses and disorders that will affect functionality in life.

Mental wellness does not come automatically, and everyone should make an effort to achieve it. This can be done by developing a healthy lifestyle by taking balanced meals and exercising regularly. Exercise has been shown to be effective in countering fatigue, insomnia and depression. More effectively,



limit alcohol consumption and avoid cigarettes and other harmful substances.

Do not neglect your own needs and feelings. Keep a journal or blog to understand yourself better. To work towards your objectives, it is helpful to set SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-limited). Avoid financial problems by creating a meaningful budget. Spending quality time with family and friends is also crucial. Be a volunteer. Being involved in the community gives a sense of purpose and satisfaction, and helps to make a difference.

Exercise has been proven to reward both the body and mind extensively. Start an exercise regime by picking one that you enjoy without difficulty. Find a buddy to do this together! A simple regime can consist of:

- Taking 10,000 steps a day.
- Low intensity exercise such as yoga or tai chi.
- Aerobic exercises (e.g. running, swimming, cycling and dancing) will also strengthen your cardiovascular system and increase stamina. You may gradually build up your exercise regime to target at least 30 minutes, 5 days/week.
- Your favourite game of tennis, squash or golf.

Let's all work towards a healthy lifestyle physically and mentally. If you find yourself or anyone around you need help to cope with mental health, do not hesitate to seek professional help early!

# Home Recipes

AUTHOR **BRYAN TAN**, Sous Chef, Dietetic & Food Services, Changi General Hospital



## Chicken and Vegetable Spring Rolls

**SERVES: 4 PAX**

### INGREDIENTS:

120g skinless chicken breast  
Salt & pepper  
4 dried mushrooms, soaked in hot water and drained  
50g beansprouts, blanched  
50g cucumber, julienned  
2 squares flavoured tau kwa, julienned  
1 egg white  
50g crushed peanuts  
Spring roll wrappers

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Season chicken breast with salt and pepper then make a cut, and stuff with mushrooms. Bake stuffed chicken at 170°C for 15 minutes. Cool then cut into slices.
2. To make the filling, combine cooked chicken and mushroom with remaining ingredients in a large bowl and mix well.
3. Lay a piece of spring roll wrapper on a plate or cutting board. Place filling on the wrapper, sprinkle with some crushed peanuts, and roll. Repeat with remaining filling and wrappers.
4. Brush with egg white and bake at 160°C for 5 minutes. Increase temperature to 220°C and bake for another 5 minutes.

### RECIPE ANALYSIS (PER SERVE):

	Per Portion
Calories (kcal)	173
CHO (g)	14.7
Protein (g)	16.3
Fat (g)	8.9
Cholesterol (mg)	15.0
Fibre (g)	1.4

### SHARE YOUR RECIPES!

Send in the recipes of your home-cooked food to the ECHO team! Our Dietitian from Changi General Hospital will review and provide suggestions to make it better and healthier and share the recipes in A Simple Guide!

#### Guidelines for recipe submission

1. The recipes should include ingredients and methods
2. All ingredients should have a unit of measurement (e.g. 1 teaspoon oil, 150g skinless chicken fillet)
3. Each recipe should indicate how many people the dish serves
4. The cooking equipment used to cook the dish should be mentioned (e.g. pot, non-stick pan, wok)



# Be Screened, Regularly!

AUTHOR **PETER TAY**, ECHO Programme, Eastern Health Alliance



**T**he condition of our health changes over time and it may be due to diet or lifestyle habits, or the environment. Unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, smoking, family hereditary and ageing are common risk factors of having chronic disease such as, stroke, heart diseases and diabetes. Hence, every year, we invite participants who have attended our ECHO health screening to get screened again.

The following are tests that you will be taking again and with simple explanations to help you understand.



## Body Mass Index (BMI)

BMI is to check whether one's weight is healthy, overweight or obese. Too much excess body fat will cause a variety of negative health conditions, such as heart disease and Type 2 diabetes.



## Blood Pressure

A healthy blood pressure is important because the higher the blood pressure is, the higher one's risk of health problems is. A healthy blood pressure should not exceed 140 for systolic and 90 for diastolic.



## Cholesterol (Lipids) Profile

This is part of the blood test and it includes, Total Cholesterol, HDL ('good' cholesterol), LDL ('bad' cholesterol) and Triglycerides (another form of cholesterol found). The cholesterol profile test is to help determine one's risk of heart disease. We should keep our "bad" cholesterol as low as possible.



## Venous Blood Glucose (also known as fasting blood glucose)

This is also part of the blood test and its purpose is to measure the amount of sugar in your blood sample. This is to assess one's risk of having diabetes.



## Lifestyle Questionnaire

This is a set of questionnaire to understand your dietary and lifestyle habits and any family history of chronic conditions. These are incorporated into your health report to give a more complete picture of your health status.

The ECHO screening is done annually at various constituencies and venues throughout the year. If you wish to know when the next screening is available within your community, you may either look out for our invite letters or through our ECHO newsletter. Alternatively, you may also visit our website – [www.echohealth.com.sg](http://www.echohealth.com.sg) or look out for posters and/or banners put up around your neighbourhood.



## ANNOUNCEMENT: 2017 HEALTH SCREENING DATES (APR – JUL)

**A**ttention all ECHO Participants in **Tampines, Pasir Ris & Kembangan-Chai Chee constituencies**, remember to check your mailbox! You should be receiving your invite letter from ECHO Programme, at least 4-6 weeks prior to the first health screening date, to register for the upcoming health screening date at your respective constituencies and venue/s.

**Note:** If you wish to update your mailing address, please email to [ECHO@cgh.com.sg](mailto:ECHO@cgh.com.sg) or contact our ECHO coordinators during office hours.

**SPREAD THE NEWS! If you have family members, friends or relatives residing in the following constituencies, please encourage them to register for the ECHO health screening!**

Screening Site	Health Screening		Registration Start Date	
	Day 1	Day 2		
Tampines	Tampines Changkat CC	08 Apr (Sat)	09 Apr (Sun)	01 Feb 2017
	Tampines Central CC	22 Apr (Sat)	23 Apr (Sun)	
	Tampines East CC	29 Apr (Sat)	30 Apr (Sun)	
	Tampines North CC	13 May (Sat)	14 May (Sun)	
	Our Tampines Hub, Central Plaza Foyer	20 May (Sat)	21 May (Sun)	
Pasir Ris	Pasir Ris Elias CC	17 Jun (Sat)	-	04 Apr 2017
	Pasir Ris East CC	01 Jul (Sat)	-	
Kembangan-Chai Chee	Kampong Ubi CC	19 Aug (Sat)	-	01 Jun 2017

Please log on to [www.echohealth.com.sg](http://www.echohealth.com.sg) or visit the CC in your constituencies for more information.

### HOW TO REGISTER?

- 1) Log on to [www.echohealth.com.sg](http://www.echohealth.com.sg) for online registration when registration starts, payment by VISA / MASTERCARD only.
- 2) Register in-person @ respective CCs listed above when registration starts. Bring along your NRIC, together with your cash payment to register.

### CONTACT ECHO!

Please keep your subject: **ATTN to ECHO Programme**

✉ Mailing Address: 5 Tampines Central, Tampines Plaza #08-01/05, Singapore 529541  
 @ E-mail Address: [ECHO@cgh.com.sg](mailto:ECHO@cgh.com.sg)  
 🌐 Website: [www.echohealth.com.sg](http://www.echohealth.com.sg)  
 ☎ Telephone: 6788 8833  
 Monday – Friday, 9am – 5.30pm (excluding eve & public holidays)



A Project Brought By:



This newsletter is printed on environmentally friendly paper.

### NOTICE

## ECHO IS GOING ALL GREEN IN 2017!

**A** 'Simple Guide' will be circulated in e-format through your preferred e-mail address!

If you wish to continue receiving our newsletter quarterly, please e-mail to [ECHO@cgh.com.sg](mailto:ECHO@cgh.com.sg), indicate Subject: **<GO GREEN!>** and provide your **<NAME>** & **<NRIC>** in the content, so that we may include you in our \*e-copy. Alternatively, you may read or download the newsletter from ECHO website through this link – <http://echohealth.com.sg/news-media>.

*\*e-copy is only available in ENGLISH.*

**IF YOU DO NOT HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS -** From January 2017 onwards, hardcopies of "A Simple Guide" will be mailed to participants who have attended ECHO health screening in the last 3 years and have opted to receive by "Post" during registration..

