

A SIMPLE GUIDE

To Healthy Living

OCT-DEC 2017 ISSUE 54

MICA (P) 023/08/2016



**LOWER BACK PAIN?
YOUR GP CAN HELP!**

Consult your GP before
rushing to the A&E

**DEFEATING
HYPERTENSION**

Find out how to overcome it

**THINK RIGHT WITH
HYPERTENSION**

How you can manage it well

Defeating Hypertension. Here's how!



AUTHOR DR ZHANG MEIFEN, Associate Consultant, Endocrinology Department, Changi General Hospital

HYPERTENSION, ALSO KNOWN AS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, IS ONE OF THE MOST COMMON HEALTH CONDITIONS AND IT AFFECTS 23.5% OF THE POPULATION IN SINGAPORE. ARE YOU FREE FROM HYPERTENSION? READ ON TO FIND OUT.

Hypertension is diagnosed when a person's Blood Pressure (BP) is high and persistently so when measured on 2 separate occasions ($\geq 140/90$ mmHg). As one ages, the risk of developing hypertension increases. The risk further increases with obesity, smoking, as well as having a sedentary lifestyle. Since most people with hypertension do not feel any symptoms, some of us may have hypertension and may not realise it. Being undiagnosed and therefore untreated will cause further harm to the body and put us at increased risk of heart attacks, strokes, heart failure and kidney failure. All is not lost. You can prevent hypertension.

Prevention starts with simple lifestyle changes. These include the avoidance of smoking, losing weight and eating healthily by reducing the intake of salt, fat and sugar. Decreasing sedentary and screen time and increasing

physical activities are also helpful in preventing hypertension. Moderate-to-vigorous activity, for about 150mins per week (3-4 days a week averaging 40-50 minutes per session), should be considered.

Given the hectic work schedules of Singaporeans, setting aside dedicated time for physical activities is likely low on one's list of priorities. However, being physically active can be achieved anytime, anywhere – at home, at work, during commuting and during leisure time. According to Health Promotion Board (HPB), even lifestyle activities such as washing the car, mopping the floor, or taking the stairs, will also count for the 150 minutes.

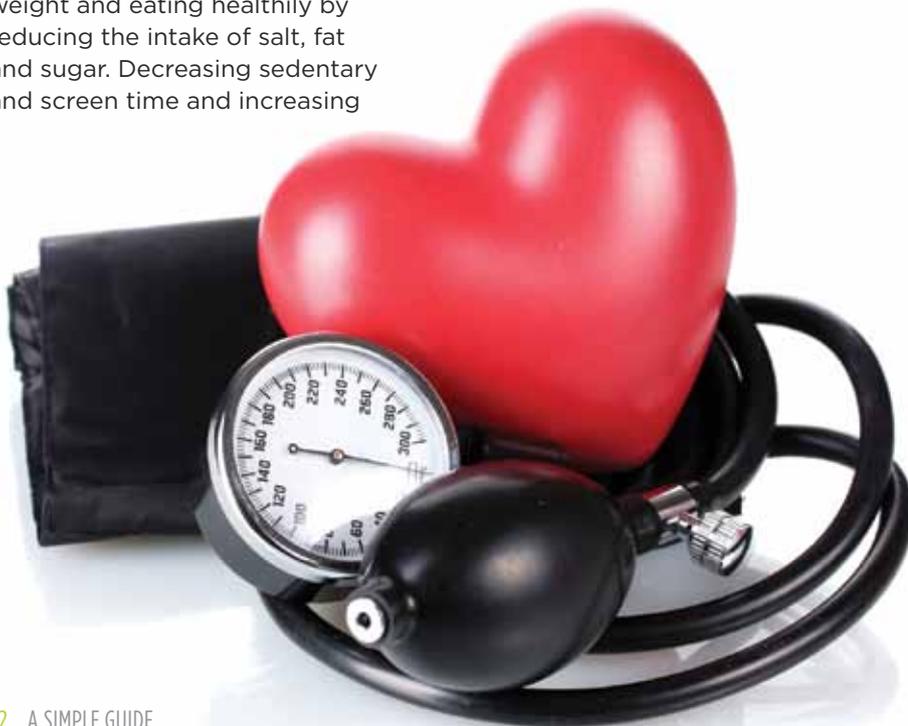
As a general guide, a moderate intensity activity causes a noticeable increase in breathing and heart rate.

For instance, one should still be able to talk but do not have enough breath to sing; such as in brisk walking, low-impact aerobics or dancing. A vigorous activity, on the other hand, will cause a large increase in breathing and heart rate such that one should still be able to say a few words but is not out of breath, like when jogging and swimming.

For those who are already diagnosed with hypertension, do not fret. Treatment of hypertension effectively prevents complications and death. Adequate treatment will regulate your blood pressure, targeting at within 140/90mmHg or less. This can be achieved through regular clinical visits to adjust anti-hypertensive medications and to check for side effects, and monitoring on your own. Monitoring BP at home is helpful for adjustment in medication.

In addition to consuming medication to control blood pressure, lifestyle improvements such as the cessation of smoking, loss of weight, maintaining a healthy diet and increasing physical activities should optimise the control of blood pressure levels.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) recommends screening at least once a year for undiagnosed hypertension once one reaches the age of 40 years old and above. Take the first steps to go for health screening, and then keep hypertension at bay with simple lifestyle changes. If hypertension is detected, do not hesitate to seek treatment, as complications such as heart failure and kidney disease can manifest. Hypertension can be defeated. Start by going for health screenings.





HYPING UP AGAINST HYPERTENSION

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

Dear Readers,

Would you believe that it's coming to the end of 2017? I hope this year had brought some new positive changes in your lifestyle and health. And as we start welcoming the end-of-year celebrations, let us continue to keep up with effort in staying active and fit.

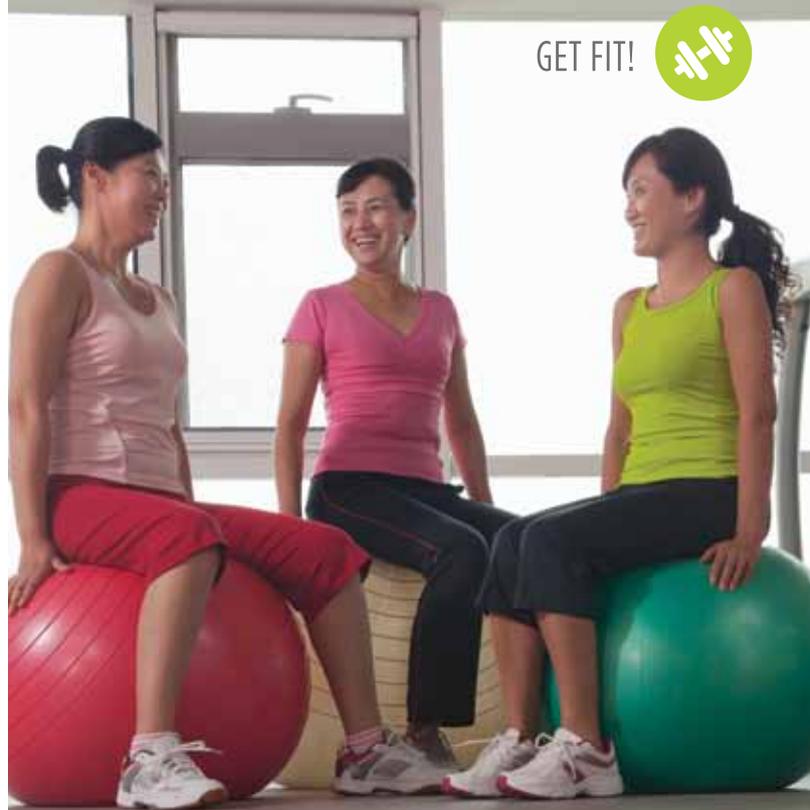


In this issue, we have Dr Zhang Meifen – one of our Endocrinologists sharing on how to stay free of hypertension and the importance of health screening to detect hypertension. Hypertension is one of the most common chronic diseases and untreated hypertension is a major contributor to strokes and heart diseases. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle and weight is an important step in the reducing the risk of hypertension. Not to forget the role of stress and its contribution to hypertension, we have our clinical psychologist addressing the issue of mental health and hypertension, and strategies to combat stress.

And for many of us who haven't thought about the importance of having a family physician and GP, we have Dr Kashyap, a family physician from our GPFIRST Programme, to talk about common ailments such as lower back pain and how your GP may be able to assist in diagnosing and treating them. Last but not least, we continue on our previous topic on osteoporosis and some exercises that are simple and easy to follow as prescribed by our physiotherapist.

Our health screening session continues, please keep a lookout on the dates of the screening for your constituencies and we look forward to meeting you there!

GET FIT!



PART 2

BREAK-ME-NOT: MANAGING BRITTLE BONES WITH EXERCISE

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



A CONTINUATION FROM THE PREVIOUS ISSUE ON OSTEOPOROSIS, WE WILL SHOW YOU SOME EXERCISES THAT ARE SIMPLE AND EASY TO FOLLOW.

We reiterate that **weight-bearing exercises** are highly recommended for osteoporosis. These are exercises that force you to work against gravity. The loading of the bones during exercise makes the bones stronger. Examples of weight bearing exercises are walking, jogging, staircase climbing and resistance training.

Other exercises are like swimming and cycling may build muscles and give you cardiovascular benefits, but they are not as effective in strengthening bones.

Extra caution needs to be taken in order not to overload the bones. There should not be any sharp pain in any joints during the exercises. Muscle aches that last 2-3 days after exercising is however, normal, especially if you have not done the exercises before. When in doubt, it is recommended to seek advice from a physiotherapist.

WEIGHT-BEARING EXERCISES



SIT TO STAND

Stand up from a chair or steady seat and return back to sitting. Repeat 10 times. Do 3 sets.



WALL SQUATS

With your head and back leaning against the wall, lower yourself by bending from your hips, until your thighs are parallel to the ground. Ensure that your knees do not go beyond your toes. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 10 times. Do 3 sets.



CLIMB THE STAIRS

Start with 1 flight of stairs. If you feel comfortable, you can increase the number of flights.



HEEL RAISES

Rise up on your toes. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 10 times. Do 3 sets.

**MORE EXERCISES ON MUSCLE STRENGTHENING
IN OUR NEXT ISSUE. STAY TUNED!**



GPFIRST

YOUR GPs CAN TREAT THIS CONDITION

AUTHOR DR KIRAN KASHYAP, Senior Family Physician



In January 2014, Eastern Health Alliance (EHA) launched the GPFIRST Programme to encourage patients in eastern Singapore to see their general practitioners (GPs) for mild-to-moderate conditions rather than to first head to the emergency department. In this regular series, our Eastern GPs offer advice on common ailments the community might face.

Visit www.gpfirst.sg or see your GP for more information on common conditions such as cuts, bruises, mild scalds, nausea, headaches, sprains and fevers. Read on to learn more about lower back pain and what you can do to about it.

LOWER BACK PAIN

Lower back pain is a common problem for many people, especially those with a sedentary lifestyle. This is usually related to stiffness of the back muscles, which is mainly treated with physiotherapy and exercise.

When back pain is prolonged and occurs for more than 4 weeks, or is accompanied by certain additional symptoms such as pain extending to the legs, numbness or tingling sensation in the legs, then further investigations are needed.

If you feel that your condition seems to be worsening, the aggravation of symptoms could be related to impingement of nerves in your spine, and may cause pain to radiate down your leg. It is recommended for you to visit your GP as soon as possible. Your GP will ask you some questions to determine the causes of the problem, and will examine you for signs of nerve compression, such as sharp, aching or burning pain, which may radiate outwards. The doctor will then advise you on

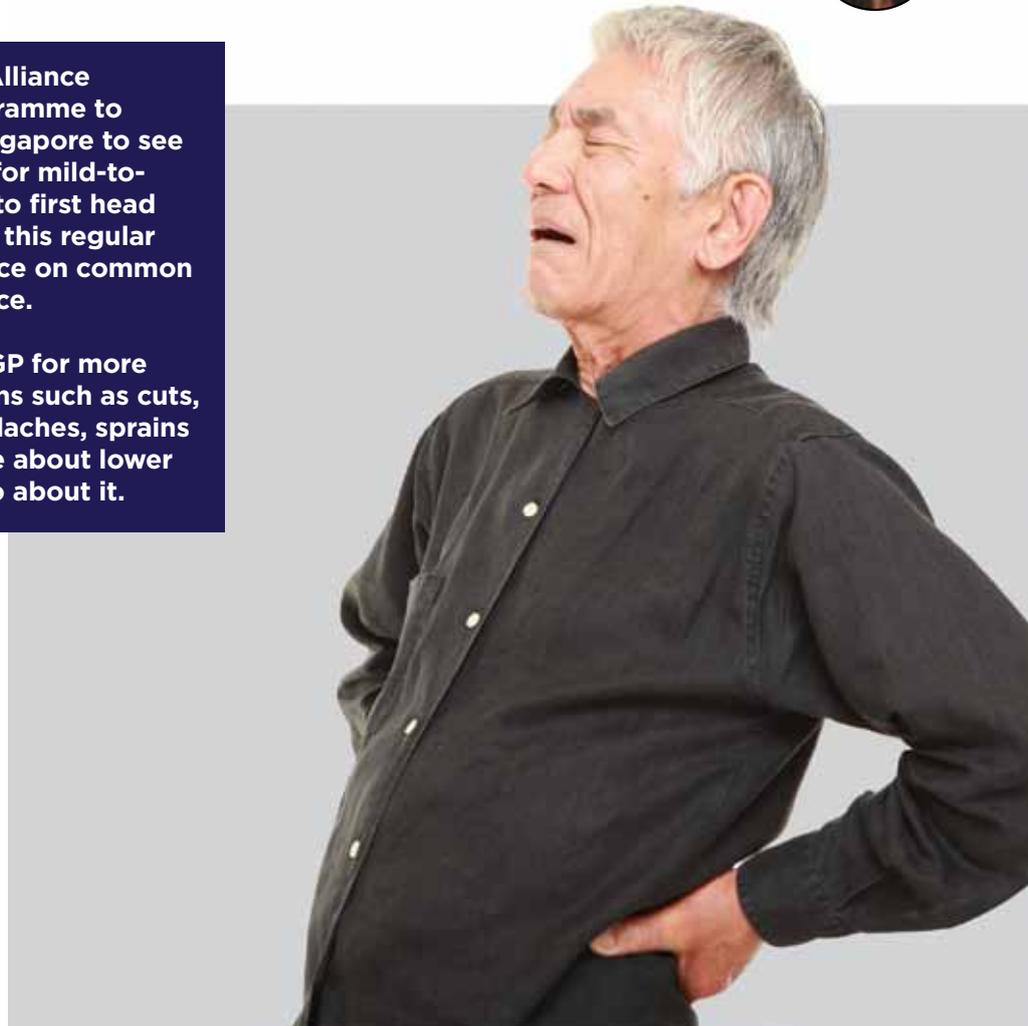
further investigations (X-rays or MRI) or specialist treatment if needed.

If you experience any changes in the bladder or bowel control (loss of control or urine retention), it is advisable to head to the A&E immediately. If you are unsure whether your condition is serious enough to head to the A&E, you can always visit your GP first as he or she will assess your condition and offer you the best advice.

Regular exercise, including stretching and core strengthening

exercises are helpful in preventing back problems. Maintaining a healthy body weight, having adequate intake of calcium and vitamin D are also important.

Having a poor posture can also make back pain worse, especially if you sit for long periods. Hence, do not slump over your keyboard and always sit upright with your shoulders relaxed and your body supported against the back of a chair. You may also wish to put a pillow between your lower back and your seat and keep your feet flat on the floor.





THINK RIGHT WITH HYPERTENSION

AUTHOR **MICHELLE TAN SU QING**, Clinical Psychologist, Health Wellness Programme



BLOOD PRESSURE LEVELS ARE LINKED TO STRESS LEVELS. READ ON TO FIND OUT HOW WE CAN REGULATE HYPERTENSION WITH HEALTHY MIND EXERCISES.

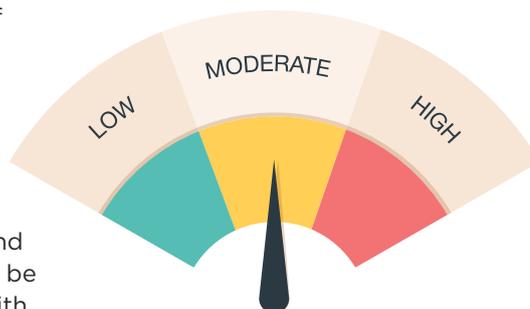
Hypertension, a condition in which pressure in the arteries is chronically elevated, has been linked to stress. Several studies show that people with stress-prone personalities are more likely to have high blood pressure. Other studies show that patients may face stress coping with lifestyle changes needed to manage high blood pressure, yet other studies suggest that chronic stress can lead people to overeat, drink alcohol and smoke — habits which increase their risk of developing hypertension.

Although people with high blood pressure rarely show symptoms, hypertension increases your risk of developing other conditions, such as coronary heart disease and stroke. Managing stress may thus be beneficial if you are diagnosed with

hypertension. Here are four things you can do:

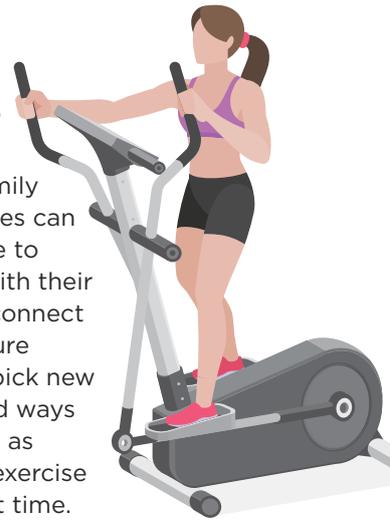
1. MONITOR YOUR STRESS LEVELS

We may be under stress but not realise it, leading us to push ourselves when we actually need rest. The first step is therefore becoming aware. Observe when your mind starts to go over your worries repeatedly. Notice when your body sends you signals like pain, tiredness or tension.



2. FIND ENJOYMENT

Managing work and family responsibilities can cause people to lose touch with their hobbies. Reconnect with old leisure pursuits, or pick new ones up. Find ways to relax such as meditation, exercise or have quiet time.



3. EXAMINE YOUR BELIEFS

Even when we know we need to relax, we may be unable to let ourselves do so due to beliefs we hold. For example, some of us may believe we must be productive to lead a worthwhile life. Others may believe they should not disappoint people, and drive themselves to be responsible at the expense of their well-being. If you have similar beliefs, reflect on the costs to your health that holding on to these beliefs have brought you. Can you try being a little less productive or dutiful for the sake of your health?

4. PRIORITISE YOUR VALUES AND SPIRITUALITY

Studies suggest that if you have greater spiritual well-being, you may have fewer mental health symptoms and better medication compliance. If you derive meaning from your religion, set aside regular time to deepen your understanding of its practices, and connect with your religious community. If religion is not a big part of your life, do a values review. Think about the top three convictions or pursuits that give your life meaning. Find ways to prioritise them, and commit yourself to taking things which are less important more lightly.

As our mind and body are intrinsically linked, these healthy thoughts will benefit your physical health. Take time to reflect and see improvements!



Home Recipes



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



Stuffed Zucchini Balls

YIELDS 4

RECIPE ANALYSIS (PER SERVE):

	Per Portion
Calories (kcal)	180
Carbohydrate (g)	12.6
Protein (g)	11
Fat (g)	10.3
Cholesterol (mg)	110.6
Fibre (g)	0.7
Sodium (mg)	140

INGREDIENTS:

- 200g (1 cup) grated zucchini
- 200g (1 cup) coarsely chopped zucchini
- ¼ cup onion, chopped
- 2 teaspoons olive oil, extra for greasing pan
- 2 eggs, beaten
- ½ cup plain flour
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2 teaspoons red chilli, finely chopped
- 1 sprig coriander leaf, finely chopped
- ¾ cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 tablespoon parmesan cheese

For garnishing:

- 60g plain, low-fat yoghurt
- ½ teaspoon red chilli, finely chopped

METHOD

1. Stir-fry grated and coarsely chopped zucchini and onion in olive oil. Set aside to cool.
2. Preheat oven to 170°C. Lightly grease a baking sheet with some olive oil. Set aside.
3. Combine cooled zucchini and onion mixture with remaining ingredients (except mozzarella & parmesan cheese) in a medium bowl. Shape mixture into 12 balls.
4. Take a ball, flatten and put in some mozzarella cheese, cover with mixture and roll into a ball again.
5. Place stuffed balls onto greased baking sheet, sprinkle over parmesan cheese and bake for 8 minutes.
6. Remove from oven and cool slightly before serving.
7. To serve, top each ball with a little yoghurt and sprinkle with chopped red chilli.

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)



FINAL QUARTER OF ECHO HEALTH SCREENINGS

Attention all ECHO Participants staying in Fengshan, Bedok, Changi Simei, Eunos and Kaki Bukit - remember to check your mailbox! You should be receiving a letter from ECHO Programme soon, informing you of the upcoming health screenings in your area. You can register for health screening at your respective community centre/club, anytime from the start of the registration date indicated in the table below!

If you have friends or relatives staying in these areas, please encourage them to join the health screening!

Note: If you wish to update your mailing address, please email to 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!

HOW TO REGISTER?

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

Screening Site	Health Screening		Registration Start Date
	Day 1	Day 2	
Fengshan CC	7 Oct (Sat)	-	15 Jul 2017
Bedok CC	21 Oct (Sat)	22 Oct (Sun)	
Eunos CC	28 Oct (Sat)	-	
Changi Simei CC	11 Nov (Sat)	12 Nov (Sun)	
Kaki Bukit CC	25 Nov (Sat)*	-	

* The screening date has been rescheduled. Please refer to this issue for the updated information.

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
 🌐 Website: www.echohealth.com.sg
 📞 Telephone: 6788 8833
 Monday – Friday, 9am – 5.30pm (excluding eve & public holidays)



This newsletter is printed on environmentally friendly paper.