

EMBARGOED TILL 30 SEPTEMBER 2022, 10.00AM



BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH 2022 'A MAMMOGRAM IN TIME SAVES LIVES'

MEDIA RELEASE

- Only 37.9% of eligible women in Singapore had gone for mammogram screening in 2019 and 2020¹, despite breast cancer consistently being the most common cancer among this group over the past 50 years.² Women are encouraged to go for regular mammograms as early detection can greatly increase the chances of breast cancer survival.
- The theme of this year's breast cancer awareness month campaign is 'A Mammogram in Time Saves Lives' which aims to encourage eligible³ women to take charge of their breast health and book their mammogram screening. In line with the month-long campaign, educational talks and outreach activities will be organised throughout October (please refer to the Annex A for the full calendar of activities).

Singapore, 30 September 2022 – October is synonymous with breast cancer awareness and this year, Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF) will host the national Breast Cancer Awareness Month (BCAM) campaign, working with BCAM agencies and institutions namely the Health Promotion Board (HPB), National University Cancer Institute Singapore (NCIS), Singapore Health Services (SingHealth), Singapore Cancer Society (SCS), and Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH).

Breast Cancer Prevalence and Breast Cancer Screening in Singapore

The incidence rate of breast cancer has steadily increased across the three major ethnic groups in Singapore from 1968 – 1972 to 2015 - 2019, accounting for between 29-36% of

¹ National Population Health Survey 2020, Ministry of Health, Republic of Singapore.

² Singapore Cancer Registry Annual Report 2019, National Registry of Diseases Office (2022), Health Promotion Board.

³ Women aged 50 and above are recommended to go for their mammogram screening once every two years. Women aged 40 – 49 are recommended to consult their doctor on potential benefits and limitations of screening mammography for their age group. If recommended to screen, it should be done annually.

all cancer diagnoses within each group⁴. In 2015 – 2019, the 5-year survival rate for the disease was one of the highest compared to other cancers for each year post-diagnosis, and this rate increased when the breast cancer was detected at an earlier stage.⁵

Early detection through regular mammogram screening can make all the difference in catching the disease early and improving prognoses and survival rates. Mammography is currently the most accessible and reliable tool for breast cancer screening. Based on the National Population Health Survey 2020, only 37.9% of women in Singapore who were eligible for mammogram screening had gone for one in 2019 and 2020.⁶ Some common reasons for not going for regular screening included thinking that it was unnecessary as they “felt healthy”, or that they were afraid to know their screening results.⁷

As we journey further towards a new normal of living with COVID-19, the BCAM agencies and institutions will continue to encourage eligible women to go for their mammogram screening.

A Mammogram In Time Saves Lives

The 2022 Breast Cancer Awareness Month campaign is a powerful reminder for eligible women to proactively go for regular breast cancer screening. ‘A Mammogram in Time Saves Lives’. The messaging in the campaign: ‘It’s Not Scary, It’s A Mammogram’, aims to encourage more women to go for this life-saving screening.

DDB Group Singapore has been the lead creative agency for BCF, supporting the annual breast cancer awareness campaigns. This year, the messaging centres around Mammograms. Mr Thomas Yang, Executive Creative Director DDB Group Singapore, shared “Mention ‘mammogram’ and most people will think of something that’s cold, clinical and even scary. What if we could add some hues of hope to this visual in their heads? After all, a mammogram in time can save lives. So, we created artistic interpretations of actual scans that detected cancer. By showcasing these, we hope women will put aside their doubts and step forward to do their mammograms.”

A breast cancer diagnosis can impact not just an individual woman, but her family and those around her. The yearly Breast Cancer Awareness Month efforts aim to bring women’s health to the forefront. Regular mammogram screening can save lives and protect the well-being of women and their families.

Women, along with their families, are encouraged to take part in this year’s Breast Cancer Awareness Month activities to learn how to take charge of their breast health. Early detection saves lives and saves breasts.

⁴ *Singapore Cancer Registry Annual Report 2019, National Registry of Diseases Office (2022), Health Promotion Board.*

⁵ *Singapore Cancer Registry Annual Report 2019, National Registry of Diseases Office (2022), Health Promotion Board.*

⁶ *National Population Health Survey 2020, Ministry of Health, Republic of Singapore.*

⁷ *National Population Health Survey 2019, Ministry of Health, Republic of Singapore.*

Quotes from BCAM 2022 Agencies & Institutions

Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF)

"To garner more eligible women to take up mammogram screening regularly, BCF uses a multi-pronged approach to make it more affordable and accessible. Supported by BCF's First Screen Fund (please refer to the Annex B for more information), eligible women from the lower income bracket can have their 1st mammogram done at no cost. With mammography messaging intensified during Breast Cancer Awareness Month (BCAM), we want more to make 'taking charge of breast health' their top priority and debunk the fear of mammography. Regular screening with breast self-examinations done in-between support early detection of breast cancer to save lives, save breasts. This simple yet critical step impacts not only individuals and their loved ones, but poor breast health in women if left unchecked can have negative impact on work life, corporate efficiency and our economy as women make up more than half of our workforce."

Ms Susan Leen, General Manager, Breast Cancer Foundation

Health Promotion Board (HPB)

"Early detection and treatment of breast cancer can improve health outcomes. Although many are aware of mammogram screening, only 2 in 5 eligible women aged 50 to 69 years old had gone for screening in the past two years. Early-stage breast may not present with any signs or symptoms, and hence regular mammogram screening is important. We have increased accessibility and affordability of breast cancer screening through the Screen for Life programme and community partnerships with organisations such as BCF and SCS that provide additional funding support. We will continue our efforts to encourage women to take preventive steps and go for regular mammogram screening."

Dr Shyamala Thilagaratnam, Group Director of Outreach, Health Promotion Board

National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS)

"NCIS is committed to caring for the breast health for all women from screening to treatment and survivorship. We endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for women, which is through regular screening. Mammograms can detect breast cancer before the cells invade the surrounding tissue or form a lump, allowing for early and effective treatment. Breast cancer screening is available not just during BCAM in October, but at all times, and should be continued at regular intervals by all women."

*Dr Samuel Ow, Consultant, Department of Haematology-Oncology,
National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS)*

Singapore Cancer Society (SCS)

"During BCAM, SCS is extending \$25 mammogram funding assistance coupled with a series of public education and outreach initiatives. Beyond October, SCS adopts a holistic approach by providing support and services along the entire cancer journey in line with our mission to minimise cancer and maximise lives. All year round, we make mammogram more accessible by providing the service at no cost for Blue and Orange CHAS cardholders at SCS Clinic @Bishan and through the Community Mammobus Programme where a mobile mammogram bus provide the service at subsidised rates. Under SCS FIT50, women who just turn 50 will get special invitation to go for cancer screening services at no charge including Mammogram, Pap test and Faecal Immunochemical Test(FIT). Talks on the importance of mammogram is also part of our outreach efforts. We hope more women will be empowered to take action, go for mammogram and do it regularly."

Mr Albert Ching, CEO, Singapore Cancer Society

Singapore Health Services (SingHealth)

"This October, SingHealth Duke-NUS Breast Centre echoes the unified national message on breast health with a tongue in cheek reminder, "Donut forget to keep them in check". While this is a light-hearted way to remind the women we love to keep up-to-date with their breast health, we are serious about highlighting an important issue that impacts our community – the significance of regular mammogram screenings for early detection of breast cancer, which can save lives. The multidisciplinary breast care team at SingHealth is a strong advocate for breast cancer awareness, our patients and survivors, and strives to stay ahead of the curve in medical, surgical and technological advancement, research and education for breast cancer care."

Clinical Assistant Professor Sabrina Ngaserin, Head and Consultant Breast Surgeon, Department of Surgery, Sengkang General Hospital, and Service Chief, SingHealth Duke-NUS Breast Centre

Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH)

"When it comes to breast cancer, education is key. Through public forums, support groups and outreach efforts, the hospital hopes that more women are well-informed and are encouraged to get their screening done early and regularly"

Associate Professor Tan Ern Yu, Head of Breast and Endocrine Surgery Service, TTSH

About Us

Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF)

Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF) is a social service agency which advocates for the early detection of breast cancer and supports the breast cancer community in Singapore. Established since 1997 in Singapore, BCF actively raises breast cancer awareness through talks, events, research and publications that advocate for early detection through regular screening. BCF supports those affected by breast cancer through psycho-social programmes, support groups and befriending activities. BCF offers subsidy assistance to support low-income women for their first-time mammogram screenings and runs a complimentary wig loan programme. As a registered charity in Singapore, BCF is self-funded and is dependent on public donations to provide quality services and programmes for more women and their families. BCF runs Singapore's very first Breast Cancer Centre at Sin Ming Court. The Centre also welcomes members of the public who wish to find out more about breast cancer.

Health Promotion Board (HPB)

The Health Promotion Board (HPB) was established as a statutory board under the Ministry of Health, Singapore, in 2001 with the vision of building "A Nation of Healthy People". HPB aims to empower Singaporeans to attain optimal health, increase the quality and years of healthy life and prevent illness, disability and premature death. As the key agency overseeing national health promotion and disease prevention programmes, HPB spearheads health education, promotion and prevention programmes as well as creates a health-supportive environment in Singapore. It develops and organises health promotion and disease prevention programmes, reaching out to the healthy, the at-risk and the unhealthy at all stages of life – children, youths, adults and older Singapore residents. Its health promotion initiatives cover nutrition, physical activity, mental well-being, health screening, tobacco control and communicable disease education.

More information can be found at www.hpb.gov.sg.

National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS)

The National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) offers a broad spectrum of cancer care and management covering both paediatric and adult cancers, with expertise in prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care. The Institute's strength lies in the multi-disciplinary approach taken to develop a comprehensive and personalised plan for each cancer patient and his or her family. Our award-winning clinician-scientists and clinician-investigators conduct translational research and clinical trials, providing patients with access to evidence-based cancer



diagnostics, technology and therapies. For more information about NCIS, please visit www.ncis.com.sg.

Singapore Cancer Society (SCS)

Established in 1964, the Singapore Cancer Society is a self-funded social service agency which provides care services to cancer patients in need in areas such as cancer control and prevention, patient support and services, and palliative care. Last year alone, more than 100,000 individuals benefited from SCS' cancer screening programmes, public education, financial and welfare services, psychosocial support, rehabilitation programmes and hospice care.

Singapore Health Services (SingHealth)

SingHealth, Singapore's largest public healthcare cluster, is committed to providing affordable, accessible and quality healthcare to patients. With a network of acute hospitals, national specialty centres, polyclinics and community hospitals offering over 40 clinical specialties, it delivers comprehensive, multi-disciplinary and integrated care. Beyond hospital walls, SingHealth partners community care providers to enable the population to keep well, get well and live well. As part of the SingHealth Duke-NUS Academic Medical Centre, SingHealth also focuses on advancing education and research to continuously improve care outcomes for patients. For more information, please visit: www.singhealth.com.sg

Members of the SingHealth Group

Hospitals (Tertiary Specialty Care): Singapore General Hospital, Changi General Hospital, Sengkang General Hospital and KK Women's and Children's Hospital

National Specialty Centres (Tertiary Specialty Care): National Cancer Centre Singapore, National Dental Centre Singapore, National Heart Centre Singapore, National Neuroscience Institute, and Singapore National Eye Centre

SingHealth Polyclinics (Primary Care): Bedok, Bukit Merah, Marine Parade, Outram, Pasir Ris, Punggol, Sengkang, Tampines, Eunos, Tampines North (expected completion: 2023) and Kaki Bukit (expected completion: 2025)

SingHealth Community Hospitals (Intermediate and Long-term Care): Bright Vision Hospital, Sengkang Community Hospital, and Outram Community Hospital

Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH)

Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) is the flagship hospital of the National Healthcare Group and part of Singapore's Public Healthcare System. As a pioneering hospital with strong roots in the community for over 178 years, TTSH is recognised as the People's Hospital, serving a resident population of 1.4 million living in Central Singapore. Together with 70

community partners and 80 community health posts, it brings care beyond the hospital into the community as an integrated care organisation – Central Health.

As one of the largest multi-disciplinary hospitals in Singapore, TTSH operates more than 1,700 beds with centres of excellence including the National Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCID), Institute for Geriatrics & Active Ageing (IGA), NHG Eye Institute (NHGEI), and TTSH Rehabilitation Centre.

Annex

(A) BCAM 2022 Calendar of Events

Talks & Webinars

“Eating The Best For Your Breast” Forum (In English)

By Tan Tock Seng Hospital
1 October, 9am – 12.30pm
Tan Tock Seng Hospital

“Religious Misconceptions When Faced With An Illness Like Breast Cancer” Webinar (In Malay)

By Breast Cancer Foundation & Berita Harian
5 October, 7.30pm – 8.30pm
FB Live: @BreastCancerFoundationSG

“Mammograms Are Lifesavers!” Webinar (In English)

Jointly organised by all partners
15 October, 10.30am – 12pm
Via Zoom

“Mammograms Are Lifesavers!” Webinar (In Mandarin)

Jointly organised by all partners
15 October, 2.30pm – 4pm
Via Zoom

“Make Time For Breast Health” Forum (In Tamil)

By National University Cancer Institute, Singapore
16 October, 3pm – 4pm
Assyafaah Mosque

“Save Your Breast | Save Your Life” Fireside Chat (In Mandarin)

By Breast Cancer Foundation
17 October, 7.30pm – 8.30pm

FB Live: @BreastCancerFoundationSG

“Breast Health & Breast Cancer: What You Should Know” Webinar (In English)

By SingHealth & National Library Board

18 October, 7pm – 8pm

Via Zoom

“Mammograms Are Lifesavers!” Webinar (In Malay)

By National University Cancer Institute, Singapore

22 October, 10.30am – 12pm

Via Zoom

“Donut Forget To Keep Them In Check” Webinar (In English)

By SingHealth Duke-NUS Breast Centre

29 October, 9am – 11am

Zoom

Pink Ribbon Walk

By Breast Cancer Foundation

Fun Challenge: 30 October

Virtual Walk: 30 October – 15 November

Mammogram Funding Support

T&Cs apply

First Screen Fund

By Breast Cancer Foundation

All year round

Screen for Life breast cancer screening centres (at selected polyclinics)

Funding support for first-timers, aged 50 and above with a blue/orange CHAS card, by appointment only

Mammogram Screening At No Charge

By Singapore Cancer Society

All year round

Singapore Cancer Society's Clinic @ Bishan

No charge for eligible ladies with a blue/orange CHAS card, by appointment only

\$25 Mammogram Funding Assistance

By Singapore Cancer Society

1 October – 30 November

Participating screening centres

By appointment only

\$10 Additional Mammogram Funding Assistance

By National University Cancer Institute, Singapore

1 October – 30 November
Participating polyclinics
By appointment only

Mammobus Breast Screening

By National University Cancer Institute, Singapore
29 October & 5 November
9am – 4.20pm
Jurong Medical Centre
No charge for first-timer Singaporeans, by appointment only

Other Activities

BrArt Exhibition

By Breast Cancer Foundation
1 October – 31 October
10am – 9pm
ION Orchard, B4 (Free admission)

Fit & Fab Virtual Workouts

By National University Cancer Institute, Singapore
Selected days in October
6.30pm – 7.30pm
Via Zoom

#Squat2Support

By National Healthcare Group
1 October – 31 October
Social Media Challenge

For more details and to register for the events, log on to
<http://linkt.ree/breastcancerawarenessmonthsg>

(B) 'Screen for Life' Breast Cancer Screening Programme

Regular mammogram screening is the best defence against breast cancer, as detecting breast cancer early can lead to increased chances of survival due to better treatment outcomes. The Health Promotion Board (HPB) recommends that women aged 50 years and above go for mammogram screening once every two years.

Through HPB's national screening programme – Screen for Life – women aged 50 years and above can enjoy subsidised mammogram screening at participating breast screening centres. The screening test will cost \$50 for eligible Singapore Citizens and \$75 for Permanent Residents after prevailing government subsidies.

For more information on Screen for Life, please visit:
https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/61/Screen_for_Life

BCF supports the out-of-pocket payment for eligible lower-income women participating in Screen for Life mammogram screening. Since 2013, 100,000 screening mammograms have been supported by BCF.

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