

INAUGURAL FALLS PREVENTION AWARENESS CAMPAIGN TO HELP SENIORS PREVENT A COMMON CAUSE OF INJURIES

Falls prevention guide developed to help seniors combat falls as incidence of falls rises with age

Singapore, 9 July 2016 –The Health Promotion Board (HPB) today launched an inaugural Falls Prevention Awareness Campaign to provide seniors and their caregivers with five simple tips to reduce the risk of falls. The campaign, an initiative under the Action Plan for Successful Ageing, is the third in a series of campaigns under the National Seniors' Health Programme.

2. Falls are a common cause of injuries among older adults and can have serious implications on our seniors' health. Falls among the elderly often result in injuries such as hip fractures, which can lead to significant decline in mobility and functional independence. In the last 3 years, about 8,000 seniors (i.e. aged 65 and above) a year were admitted to hospitals due to falls¹. In 2013, close to 60% of all trauma deaths were due to falls and about half of all trauma deaths were seniors aged 65 and above². The incidence of falls increases sharply with age and it is expected that the numbers will rise as our population ages.

Falls are preventable

3. As part of the Falls Prevention Awareness Campaign, HPB, in collaboration with Alexandra Health System, has developed a falls prevention guide for caregivers. The guide contains a simple falls risk checklist, information on the consequences of falling, tips on how to reduce a seniors' risk of falls by making simple changes to daily activities and a home safety checklist to identify potential hazards.

4. To better cater to seniors, a simplified version of the guide focusing on five simple tips to prevent falls has also been developed. Simple instructions accompanied with pictures help seniors learn what they should do in the event of a fall and equip caregivers with knowledge on how they can assist a senior if they fall.

Five simple tips to prevent falls

5. The five simple tips include (i) exercising regularly to build and maintain lower body strength and balance, (ii) keeping bones strong by having a calcium-rich diet, (iii) going for regular eye checks, (iv) wearing well-fitting non-slip shoes, and (v) keeping the home safe and clutter-free.

6. "In order for seniors to grow older with confidence and to age successfully, they need to be healthy – physically, mentally, emotionally and socially. Through the Falls Prevention Awareness Campaign, we want to reach out to seniors and their caregivers to let them

¹ Ministry of Health.

² National Trauma Registry Report (2012 to 2013)

understand that falls can be prevented through basic, practical ways. By making simple changes to lifestyle and the home environment, seniors can remain healthy, active and independent, and continue to have a good quality of life even as they age,” said Dr Amy Khor, Senior Minister of State for Health.

7. Following the launch of the campaign, a week-long roadshow will run from 9 to 17 July 2016 at different heartland locations to reach out to more seniors in the community. These roadshows are listed at Annex A. An educational video and a soft copy of the guide can also be viewed and downloaded from HPB’s Healthy Ageing website <http://www.HealthyAgeing.sg/FallsPrevention> from 9 July 2016. Copies of the falls prevention guides will also be distributed through HPB’s partners, including Community Clubs/Centres under the People’s Association, Guardian, Unity and Watsons retail pharmacies, polyclinics and restructured hospitals (Alexandra Health System, Eastern Health Alliance, National Healthcare Group, National University Health System and SingHealth) from August 2016. Please refer to <http://www.HealthyAgeing.sg/FallsPrevention> for details and updates on partners’ distribution.

8. The National Seniors’ Health Programme is one of the key initiatives under the Action Plan for Successful Ageing³. It aims to raise awareness among seniors to keep healthy, and encourage and empower seniors to take charge of their health so they can maintain their physical well-being, mental well-being and functional health. An inaugural initiative was launched in September last year with an exercise video for seniors titled “7 Easy Exercises to an Active Lifestyle”. In May this year, HPB dished out phase two of the National Seniors’ Health Programme, a nutrition campaign to help seniors understand the importance of a healthy diet and to eat healthily.

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About Health Promotion Board

The Health Promotion Board was established as a statutory board under the Ministry of Health, Singapore, in 2001 with the vision of building “A Nation of Healthy People”. The Health Promotion Board aims to empower the people of Singapore 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 relevant 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 programmes include nutrition, mental health, physical activity, smoking control and communicable disease education. HPB also promotes healthy ageing, integrated health screening, and chronic disease education and management.

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

³ www.successful-ageing.sg

Annex A List of Falls Prevention Awareness Campaign roadshows

Date	Time	Venue
12 – 14 July	11am – 7pm	The Clementi Mall, Level 3 Main Atrium
16 – 17 July	11am – 7pm	nex @ Serangoon Central B2 Event Plaza