

# In Support of International Women's Day

## 8 March 2024



**United Nations**

International Women's Day  
8 March



International Women's Day

#IWD2024 #InspireInclusion  
#InvestInWomen



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International Women's Day (IWD) is a global celebration of the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. Each year, this day serves as a powerful reminder of the progress made towards gender equality and highlights the work that still needs to be done.

Education and awareness play vital roles in fostering inclusion and empowering women.

Protecting women's health with a highlight on women's related cancer health is outlined in this article.

## **‘Protecting Women’s Health’- From a cancer perspective**

- Health screening is important for the early detection of conditions that may not be showing symptoms
  - Early detection of health conditions can lead to timely intervention to prevent the condition from progressing leading to better health outcomes
  - Regular health screening helps to keep your mind at ease that you are having your health under control
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- There were an estimated 18.1 million cancer cases around the world in 2020
  - 9.3 million cases were in men, 8.8 million in women
  - Cancer prevention through early detection and health promotion is one of the most significant public health challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century
  - **Global cancer incidence for women: Breast, colorectal and lung accounted for 44.5% of all cancers**
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- **Importance of early detection of cancer:**
  - Cancer affects everyone of any age
  - With early detection, the treatment is more likely to be successful
  - Cancer screening involves testing for early signs of cancer in a healthy individual with no symptoms

- **Current women cancer screening Singapore guidelines (adapted from Ministry of Health (MOH)):**

1. **Breast cancer**

- Mammogram for women 50 to 69 years of age every 2 years. (All normal risk, asymptomatic women)
- For normal risk women 40-49 years of age, screening mammography decisions are based on the benefits and harms of screening, as well as on the woman's preferences and breast cancer risk profile. If screening is to be performed, it should be done annually.

2. **Colorectal cancer**

- (i) From age 50 years old, faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) (stool analysis for faecal occult blood) is to be performed annually

(Applicable to average-risk individuals defined as asymptomatic individuals and individuals who do not have a family history of colorectal cancer, as well as those with family history confined to non-first-degree relatives or relatives older than 60 years old)

OR

- (ii) Colonoscopy, from age 50 years old every 5-10 years

(Applicable to average- risk individuals defined as asymptomatic individuals and individuals who do not have a family history of colorectal cancer, as well as those with family history confined to non-first-degree relatives or relatives older than 60 years old)

3. **Cervical cancer**

- All women who have ever had sexual intercourse
- Screening starts from the age of 25 years old
- Women aged 25 to 29 years old should be screened with Pap smear at least once every 3 years
- Women aged 30 years and older should be screened with HPV testing at least once every 5 years

## Summary of population cancer screening

- For the average risk person without symptoms (i.e. those without symptoms or family history of the cancer being screened for), the following cancer screening is recommended:

Colorectal Cancer	Cervical Cancer	Breast Cancer
For those age 50 and above, <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Faecal occult blood testing once a year OR</li><li>• Colonoscopy once every 10 years OR</li><li>• CT colonography once every 5 years</li></ul>	In those who have ever been sexually active, the following is appropriate:  From age 25-29: Pap smear every 3 years  From age 30 and above: HPV DNA test every 5 years	From age 40-49: Mammography screening once a year  From age 50-69: Mammography screening once every 2 years

## Multi-cancer early detection (MCED): An advancement in cancer screening

- Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) technology applied to the patient's blood drawn is used to identify cancer signals and location on where the ctDNA might have originated from.
- With a single non fasting blood draw, signaling of 50 types of cancer can be evaluated at the step earlier than the current traditional screening of protein markers and imaging to provide insights on where the cancer-associated alterations might have originated from.

\*MCED is available at Asia HealthPartners

## **Cancer Prevention Recommendations:**

1. Maintaining a healthy BMI (Asian BMI- 23, Caucasian BMI- 25)
2. Be Physically Active
3. Healthy diet
4. Limit fast food
5. Limit red and processed meat
6. Cut down on sugary drinks
7. Limit alcohol consumption
8. Breastfeed your baby if can
9. Vaccination

Through preventative lifestyle measures, having regular health screening and knowledge of the up-to-date cancer guidelines with the up-to-date resources of multi cancer early detection screening tool, we are able to ***invest in our health to live the best version of ourselves.***

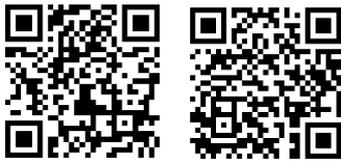


Let's share our knowledge, advocate together and improve better health together.

**#towardsbetterhealthoutcomes**

## About the author:

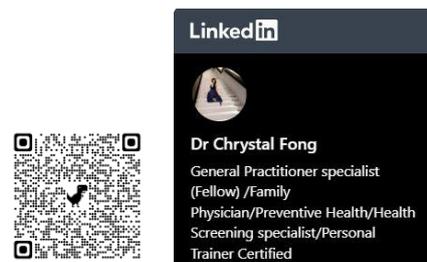
Dr Chrystal Fong (MBBS Melbourne, FRACGP) is currently practicing as a family physician at Asia HealthPartners under the subsidiary of Singapore Institute of Advanced Medicine (SAM) Holdings, located at Lucky Plaza, Orchard, Singapore. She has a special interest in health prevention and incorporates sports psychology and lifestyle medicine principles in her health screening and advocacy in health promotion.



<http://www.asiahealthpartners.com/>

<https://advancedmedicine.sg/imaging/index.html>

## Connect with Dr Chrystal Fong on LinkedIn



## Website resources

1. <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/>
2. Report of the screening test review committee, Academy of Medicine, Singapore 2019
3. <https://www.wcrf.org/cancer-trends/worldwide-cancer-data/>
4. <https://canceratlas.cancer.org/the-burden/the-burden-of-cancer/>
5. <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/cancer-symptoms/why-is-early-diagnosis-important/1000>
6. <https://insight.lucence.com/>