

# Watsons launches diabetes programme

✓ SIM YAN LING

Beauty and health retailer Watsons officially launched its Diabetes Care programme in partnership with the National University of Singapore's Department of Pharmacy yesterday.

The programme will support the Ministry of Health's war on diabetes, which affects 11.3 per cent of those aged 18 to 69 here, according to the National Health Survey 2010.

Also, one in three Singaporeans has a lifetime risk of developing diabetes.

For \$60, the programme offers diabetic patients up to eight consultations with pharmacists over 12 months.

Patients can sign up at all Watsons pharmacy stores. They are also encouraged to get a referral from their doctors to allow for better communication between pharmacists and the doctors.

Consultations carried out by trained pharmacists at three selected Watsons pharmacies — Raffles City, Tiong Bahru Plaza and United Square — will focus on the patients' response to medication and lifestyle choices among others.

Dr Desmond Wai, gastroenterologist at Mount Elizabeth Novena Specialist Centre, praised the programme.

"I think it is a good programme. Having (the pharmacists) on board will definitely help with patient care.



A Watsons Diabetes Care Bay. PHOTO: **WATSONS**

"Patients can get overloaded by exercise and dietary information given by their doctors. The pharmacists will be able to reinforce the message and advise them," he said.

Madam Tan Ah Hwa, 75, a retiree with type 2 diabetes, feels that the Diabetes Care programme is good for those who may not go for check-ups regularly.

But she still prefers relying solely on her doctor.

"I feel that it is safer to go to a specialist, especially for older people like me."

Watsons also introduced its Diabetes Care Bays across 15 of its pharmacy stores, offering patients quick access to monitoring kits, diabetes essentials, relevant supplements and health and nutrition tips.

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