

Welcome!

In this issue, we shine a spotlight on diabetes, and more specifically, the management of diabetic foot ulcers and the treatment services available at SKH. Also, we share a handy guide on appropriate footwear to recommend to patients with diabetes. Thank you!

❖ Foreword by Dr Priscilla Chiam, Head and Senior Consultant, Department of Endocrinology, Sengkang General Hospital



In 2016, Singapore declared a war on Diabetes. Seven years later, this war is still raging, and our battle is far from over. Diabetes Mellitus affects approximately 17% of Singaporean adults between the ages of 21 and 69 years. By 2050, we are looking at a lifetime risk of 50% in our adult population.

One of the most dreaded complications of poorly controlled diabetes is Diabetes Foot Ulcer (DFU) and lower limb amputations. It may surprise some of you to learn that we have one of the highest amputation rates in the developed world. Losing a limb and, as a result, the potential loss of independence can be extremely traumatic to a patient. Many struggle to come to terms with this debilitating condition.

This edition of the GP eBulletin will focus on the management of DFUs and introduce the multidisciplinary Diabetes Foot management services available at Sengkang General Hospital. With rapid access to our healthcare team consisting of the various disciplines including Endocrinology, Podiatry, Orthopaedic Surgery, Plastics Surgery and Vascular Surgery, we aim to work hand in hand with you to improve the management of DFUs and reduce the rate of lower limb amputations.

You, the Primary Care Physicians, are likely to be the first and most frequent point of contact for a patient with diabetes. As you lead the frontline in our fight against Diabetes, let's work together with our patients to tackle diabetes and its complications together.

❖ Services

Management of Diabetic Foot Ulcers at SKH

Diabetes & Foot Ulcers

The Facts

1 in 10 live with diabetes mellitus

Diabetes increases risk of amputation by 10-20x

15-25% risk of developing diabetes foot ulcers (DFUs)

Lower limb amputation performed every 30 seconds globally

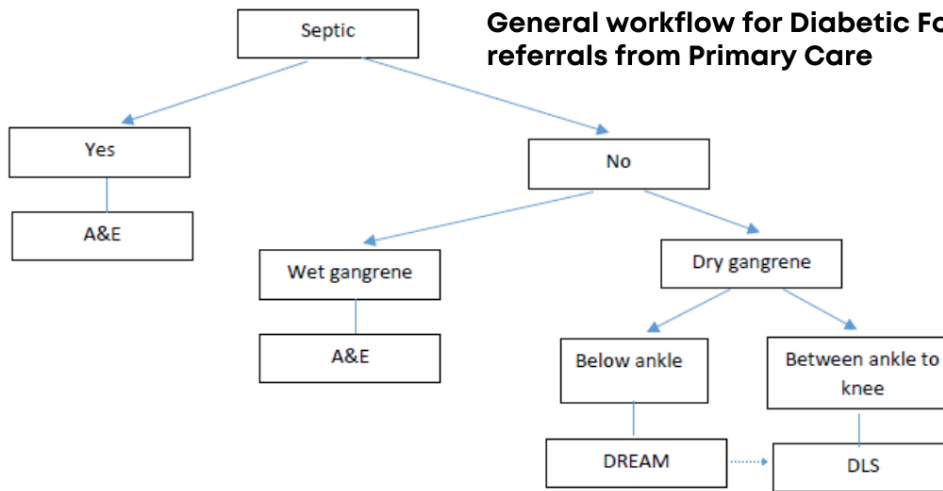


Sengkang General Hospital offers two services that can enhance patient outcomes and prevent lower limb amputations caused by diabetes.

Comprehensive and timely management in treating DFU is pertinent to prevent lower extremity amputation for improved long-term outcomes including morbidity and mortality, quality of life and cost effectiveness.

Treating early stage DFUs with local debridement, anti-microbial dressings, and shoe wear modifications, as well prescribing a short course of oral antibiotics if infected.

General workflow for Diabetic Foot Ulcer referrals from Primary Care



DREAM service

Diabetes Rapid Evaluation and lower limb Amputation Management (DREAM)

Triaged by podiatrist with same-day consultation by Endocrinology, Vascular Surgery and Orthopaedic Surgery, this clinic has been established since the opening of SKH in 2018 and has since shown promising results. All healthcare professionals involved in the care of our patients play an active role in improving DFU management by identifying the patient in need of the service. The clinic aims to see patients within 48 hours of their presentation with DFU to provide timely appropriate care right at the touch point to fit the puzzle in optimal diabetes care, making diabetes care a dream come true.

Diabetic Limb Salvage (DLS) service

Diabetic Limb Salvage (DLS)

comprises multi-disciplinary Orthopaedic and Plastic surgeons who round patients twice weekly to simultaneously address the active infection, foot biomechanics, as well as skin coverage of diabetic foot wounds. If need be, they operate together to bring out the best outcomes, with the least amount of surgeries possible. Interventional Radiologists help to revascularise the vessels to optimise skin coverage, while podiatrists and nurses tend to foot wounds with advanced dressings and ambulatory tools. Dietitians and physiotherapists provide support to ensure patients continue to eat well, live well, and stay well to prevent the next episode from recurring.

If you are interested to know more, please contact:

DREAM Service

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Diabetic Limb Salvage (DLS) Service

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❖ **Pearls of Wisdom**

Diabetics Foot Care: Guide to Choosing Appropriate Footwear

Guide to Choosing Footwear

It is important for patients with diabetes to wear the appropriate footwear. Complications, such as neuropathy and foot deformities as a result of diabetes, may predispose patients to trauma and areas of high pressure on the feet. Here are some tips for choosing the right footwear.

- Choose shoes that have **laces** or **straps** to prevent the feet from slipping out or sliding within the shoe.
- Look for a **stiff heel counter**. It should not collapse when pressed from the sides or the back.
- Ideally, shoes should be flat and broad-based, fit well and have non-slip soles.
- Check the **flexibility** of the **toe-box**. It should only bend at the toes.
- Choose shoes with **stable midsoles**. The shoe should not twist in the middle.
- Ensure shoes **fit well**. An appropriate length is a thumb's width from the longest toe. Appropriate width should fit the widest part of your foot.

If you are interested to know more, please contact:

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❖ Highlights

Updates on the GPFirst Programme

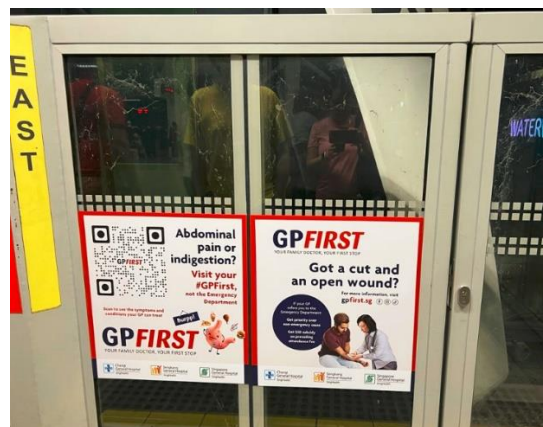
To our GPFirst partners, thank you for being our trusted partner in delivering care to our patients. We are pleased to share the following updates on GPFirst.

- 1) **With the launch of Healthier SG, you would be able to partner more than one hospital for the GPFirst Programme (if necessary).** This will be subjected to the audits from each hospital. Cross-regional GPFirst referrals will also be enabled where participating clinics have the option to refer patients to the “most appropriate” GPFirst acute hospitals.

For conditions that require timely emergency care, do continue to encourage your patients to go to the nearest hospital’s emergency department without delay. The use of ambulance to transport life-threatening, or potentially life-threatening cases, is highly encouraged, to ensure patients are safely conveyed enroute. Your SKH-CGH referral form will be accepted at all GPFirst-participating hospitals, as we gradually transit to the use of a unified GPFirst Referral Form across all hospitals.

- 2) To enhance awareness of GPFirst and provide public education, an integrated communications campaign for GPFirst has been launched. Here are examples of GPFirst campaign materials that have been rolled out:

RT platform screen door advertisements in Sengkang and Punggol:



- 3) **SGH and TTSH have also implemented GPFirst at their Emergency Departments since 1 April 2023.**

To date, acute hospitals participating in GPFirst are:

- Sengkang General Hospital (SKH)
- Changi General Hospital (CGH)
- Khoo Teck Puat Hospital (KTPH)
- National University Hospital (NUH) – Adult ED only
- Ng Teng Fong General Hospital (NTFGH)
- Singapore General Hospital (SGH)

- Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH)
- Alexandra Hospital Urgent Care Centre (UCC)
- Urgent Care Centre (UCC) @ Admiralty

If you are interested to know more, please contact:

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You may also visit <https://www.singhealth.com.sg/rhs/get-well/gpfirst/pages/for-gps.aspx> for more information.

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