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Singapore launches national Familial Hypercholesterolaemia genetic testing programme

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To enhance preventive care measures to support better health outcomes for Singaporeans



The Ministry of Health (MoH), Singapore government, will launch the national Familial Hypercholesterolaemia (FH) genetic testing programme on 30 June 2025, as part of its broader strategy to enhance preventive care in Singapore.

This initiative aims to identify individuals with FH early and reduce the risk of premature heart disease for these individuals with timely interventions. Genetic tests for FH at the Genomic Assessment Centres (GAC) will be subsidised for eligible Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents, and they can also tap on their MediSave to offset the cost.

FH is a condition that affects the body's ability to process cholesterol. It affects an estimated 20,000 people in Singapore. Individuals with FH face a significantly higher risk of up to 20 times more, of experiencing heart attacks at a younger age compared to the general population. It is also a hereditary condition, meaning it can be passed down in families.

As part of the push to enhance preventive care, MoH is targeting to open three GACs to ensure effective, efficient and sustainable delivery of genetic testing services within each healthcare cluster. Individuals referred to the GACs will undergo Pre-test genetic counselling, to understand potential outcomes and benefits before consenting to the test; Blood drawing and genetic test, arranged by the GAC; Post-test genetic counselling, to understand the implications of the results.

The first GAC, which will be operated by SingHealth and located at the National Heart Centre, Singapore, will start to accept referrals from 30 June 2025. This GAC will serve all Singapore residents until additional centres open. GACs operated by National Healthcare Group (NHG) and National University Health System (NUHS) will open subsequently to cater to residents' needs.

After subsidies, patients who are referred to do FH testing due to abnormally high cholesterol levels (index patients) can expect to pay between $117 to $575. Individuals who are eligible to undergo cascade screening (immediate family members of index patients who have tested positive for FH) can expect to pay between $53 to $253 after subsidies. MediSave500/700 can be used to further offset the cost of the genetic test after subsidies. Patients who are 60 years old and above may also use Flexi-MediSave to further defray out of pocket costs.