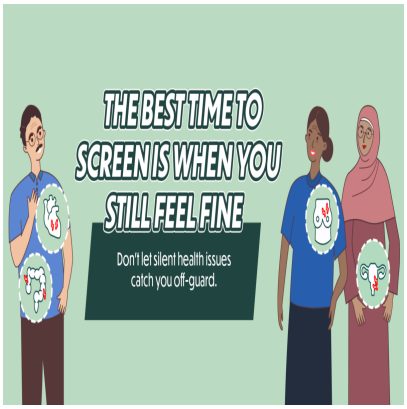

Cancer screening in Singapore: what a mammogram, Pap or HPV test and FIT cost under Healthier SG

Description

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Cancer screening in Singapore is cheaper than most people assume, and for citizens it is often S$5 or less at a neighbourhood clinic. The catch is that nothing sends you a reminder at the right age, so even the kiasu among us keep postponing it. Here is what Healthier SG Screening covers for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer, who qualifies, and what you pay.

Healthier SG Screening is the new name for the Screen for Life programme, run by the Health Promotion Board (HPB). HPB says the benefits are unchanged by the renaming. Screening is for people with no symptoms, so if you already have a lump, bleeding or pain, see a doctor instead of booking a screen.

Cancer screening in Singapore: the three tests and who they are for

- Mammogram (breast): women aged 40 to 74 with no breast symptoms. Women aged 75 and above may be offered screening based on their clinical risk profile, after talking to a doctor.
- Pap test or HPV test (cervical): women aged 25 and above who have had any sexual activity.
- FIT (colorectal): Singapore citizens aged 50 and above who have not done a FIT in the past year.

For cervical screening, the test depends on age. Women aged 25 to 29 do a Pap test, because HPV testing is not recommended at that age, while women aged 30 and above do an HPV test. You are not eligible if you had a Pap test in the last three years or an HPV test in the last five.



Source: Health Promotion Board

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What you pay under Healthier SG Screening

The cervical and colorectal tests are done at CHAS GP clinics. Eligible citizens pay S$0 with a Pioneer Generation card, S$2 with a Merdeka Generation card or a CHAS Blue or Orange card, and S$5 for other eligible citizens or CHAS Green card holders. Citizens enrolled in Healthier SG pay S$0 at their enrolled clinic.

Mammograms work differently. They are offered only at selected polyclinics, and the subsidised prices are:

- Pioneer Generation cardholders: S$25
- Merdeka Generation cardholders: S$37.50
- Eligible Singapore citizens: S$50
- Permanent residents: S$75
- Healthier SG-enrolled citizens: S$0

If you are 40 or older, you can use your own Medisave or an immediate family memberâ??s Medisave for the mammogram at Medisave-approved centres. HealthHub adds that any doctorâ??s consultation is charged separately by the CHAS GP clinic.

How often, and how to prepare

How often you go depends on the test, and your results decide the next date.

- Mammogram: you are eligible again after one year if you are aged 40 to 49, and after two years if you are 50 or above.
- Pap test: every three years after a normal result.
- HPV test: every five years after a normal result.
- FIT: every year.

For the Pap or HPV test, HealthHub suggests booking about two weeks after your period starts. For 48 hours before, avoid intercourse, spermicides, vaginal creams, lubricants, medications and tampons. Results take about four weeks.

The FIT is done at home, with no fasting or diet changes. You collect two kits from a participating CHAS GP clinic, take a stool sample on each of two days, and return each within 24 hours. Finish the whole process within two weeks of collecting the kits.

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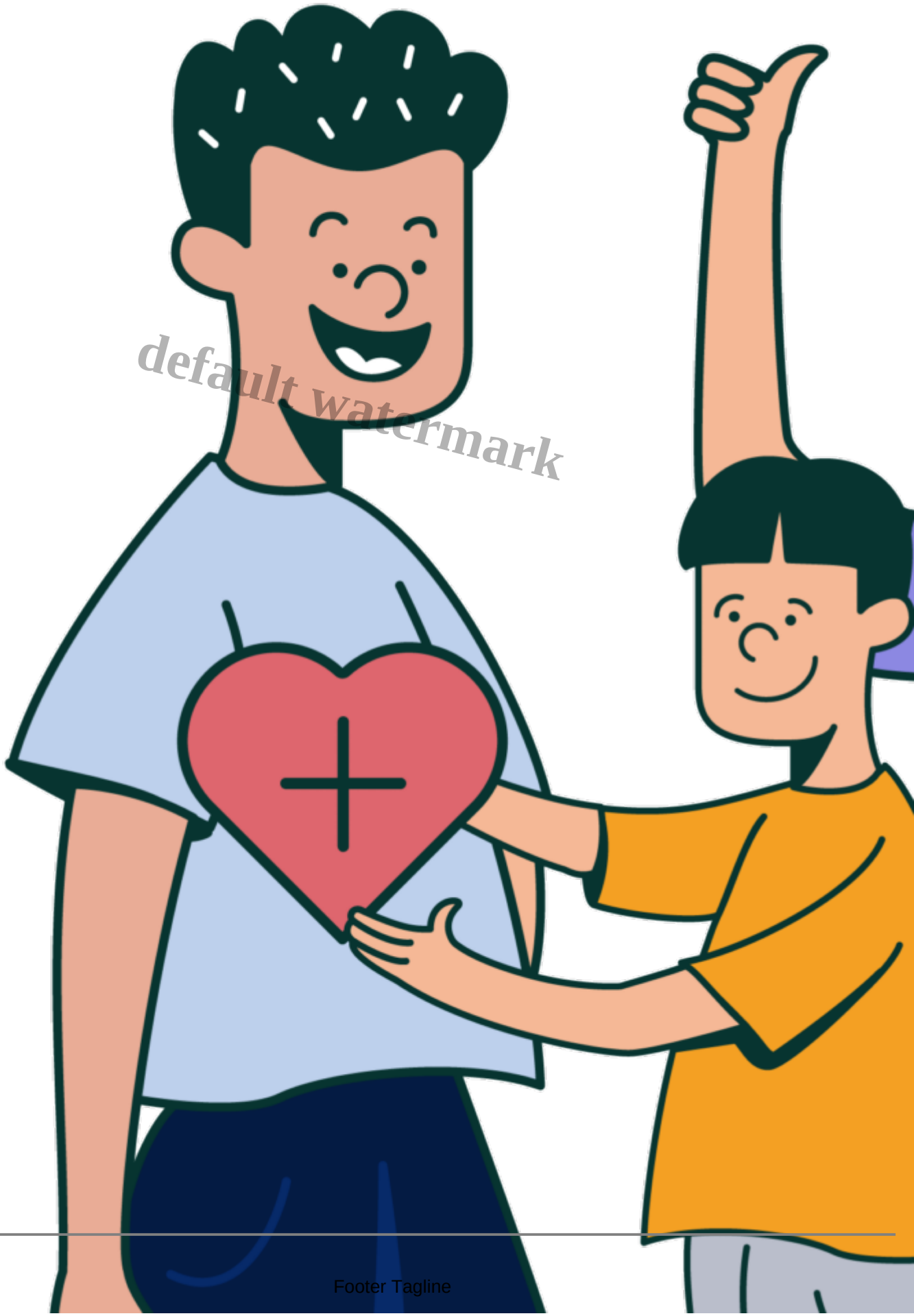
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Source: Health Promotion Board, HealthHub

Where to book

For the CHAS GP tests, book at book.health.gov.sg/healthiersg-screening and bring your NRIC and any CHAS, Merdeka Generation or Pioneer Generation card. You can also call HPB on 1800 223 1313. Ring your chosen clinic beforehand for preparation instructions.

For mammograms, there are 23 participating polyclinics across the three clusters. Call 6355 3000 for the National Healthcare Group clinics (Ang Mo Kio, Hougang, Kallang, Khatib, Sembawang, Serangoon, Toa Payoh, Woodlands and Yishun). Call 6694 7033 for the National University Health System clinics (Bukit Batok, Bukit Panjang, Choa Chu Kang, Clementi, Pioneer and Tengah). Call 6536 6000 for the SingHealth clinics (Bedok, Eunos, Outram, Pasir Ris, Punggol, Sengkang, Tampines and Tampines North).

Already ticking off other checks? Our guide to diabetes screening for citizens aged 40 and above uses the same S$5 or less pricing. If you would rather not travel, see the MammoXpress mammogram bus for fully funded screening stops. And if breast or ovarian cancer runs in your family, the HBOC genetic testing subsidy may be worth a look.

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HealthHub notes that online eligibility checks have had some hiccups, so a call to the clinic can save a wasted trip. HPBâ??s line is that the best time to screen is when you still feel fine, and a S$5 price makes that hard to argue with.

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