



Northern Singapore Residents Face Higher Diabetes and Hypertension Rates – What the Government Is Doing About It

Description

If you live in the northern part of Singapore – particularly around Woodlands – you might want to pay closer attention to your health. Recent data from the Ministry of Health (MOH) has revealed that residents in this region are less physically active than the national average and face higher-than-average rates of chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension.

But here’s the good news: the government is not sitting idle. A raft of new healthcare initiatives is being rolled out across Northern Singapore from April 2026, bringing enhanced community health services, specialist care, and fitness programmes right to residents’ doorsteps.



The Health Promotion Board's MOVE IT programme encourages Singaporeans to get active through free community workout sessions. (Image: HPB)

What the Data Shows: Northern Singapore's Health Gap

According to national health data shared during the Ministry of Health Committee of Supply Debate on 5 March 2026, residents in Northern Singapore – including towns like Woodlands, Sembawang, and Yishun – engage in significantly less physical activity compared to the national average. The prevalence of diabetes and hypertension in this region is also notably higher.

Minister of State for Health, Ms Rahayu Mahzam, highlighted these disparities in Parliament, noting that a more targeted, community-based approach was needed to address the health challenges specific to Singapore's northern corridor.

Perhaps most concerning is the finding that Malay residents in the area have seen an 11% decline in screening rates for breast cancer and chronic diseases. This suggests that existing health outreach efforts have not been reaching all segments of the community effectively.

Enhanced Community Health Posts in Woodlands

One of the biggest changes happening right now is the enhancement of Community Health Posts (CHPs) across Woodlands Town. Since the start of 2026, NHG Health has been progressively upgrading 11 CHPs located within Active Ageing Centres in the area.

What makes these enhanced CHPs different from before? For starters, they are now open to all residents – not just seniors. Anyone living in the area can walk in on a weekly basis to access services including basic health assessments and screenings, general health advice, social prescriptions, and chronic disease management support.



Community workout sessions are being expanded across Northern Singapore to encourage residents to stay active. (Image: HPB)

This is a significant shift. Previously, many of these CHPs primarily served elderly residents. By opening the doors to everyone, the government is acknowledging that chronic disease prevention needs to start earlier and reach a wider population.

Specialist Care Coming to Your Neighbourhood

In what could be the most impactful development, Woodlands Health Campus is launching a new initiative to bring specialist-supported care directly to the enhanced CHPs. Starting from the end of March 2026, patients with diabetes and asthma can receive specialist care right in their community, without needing to travel to a hospital.

This includes teleconsultations, which allow patients to connect with specialists remotely – reducing the need for hospital visits and making healthcare far more accessible for residents who may have mobility issues or busy work schedules.

For a region where diabetes rates are higher than average, having specialist diabetes care available at neighbourhood CHPs is a game-changer. It removes one of the biggest barriers to managing chronic conditions: the inconvenience of travelling to a hospital for regular check-ups.

New Fitness Programmes from April 2026

Addressing the physical inactivity problem head-on, the Health Promotion Board (HPB) is expanding community workout and exercise sessions across Northern Singapore from April 2026.

New exercise sessions are being introduced at locations like 888 Plaza and Fu Chun Community Centre, making it easier for residents to incorporate physical activity into their daily routines. These sessions are free and open to everyone.

If you have been meaning to get more active but keep putting it off, this could be the nudge you need. Having free, organised workout sessions in your neighbourhood removes the excuse of gym memberships being too expensive or exercise facilities being too far away.

On top of that, the HPB is also upgrading its Healthy 365 app with new gamification and wayfinding features, expected to roll out by June 2026. The updated app will make it easier for residents to discover nearby fitness sessions, track their activity, and earn rewards for staying active.

Reaching Out to Underserved Communities

Recognising that some communities in the north have been harder to reach, the government is also partnering with local mosques to extend healthcare outreach. By September 2026, two Woodlands mosques – Masjid An-Nur and Masjid Yusof Ishak – will partner with NHG Health to provide health services and education to the Malay community.

Malay-fluent nurses and health coaches will be deployed to ensure that elderly residents who may face language barriers can still access and understand the healthcare services available to them. This culturally sensitive approach is crucial for improving screening rates and health outcomes in the community.

5 Health Trends Shaping Singapore in 2026

Beyond the government initiatives, several broader health and wellness trends are also shaping how Singaporeans approach their well-being this year. If you are looking to improve your health, here are

five trends worth knowing about:

Pickleball mania: This hybrid sport combining elements of tennis, badminton, and table tennis has taken Singapore by storm. It is beginner-friendly, low-impact, and perfect for people of all ages â?? making it an ideal way to stay active without putting too much strain on your joints.

Gut health awareness: More Singaporeans are paying attention to their gut microbiome, recognising its role in immunity, metabolism, skin health, and even mood. The focus has shifted from restrictive dieting to food diversity â?? incorporating fermented foods, fibre-rich ingredients, and a wider variety of plant-based foods.

Hormone health for everyone: Hormone wellness is no longer just about womenâ??s reproductive health. There is growing awareness that hormones regulate metabolism, sleep, mood, and energy levels for both men and women, with more men seeking advice on testosterone health and age-related changes.

Digital health tools: Wearables and health apps are becoming mainstream. From tracking sleep quality and stress levels to monitoring heart rate variability, Singaporeans are increasingly using technology to take a proactive approach to their health.

Cosy wellness: Not every health trend has to be high-intensity. The â??cosy wellnessâ?• movement embraces slower, gentler practices like meditation, journaling, and low-key cardio sessions done from the comfort of home. It is about building sustainable habits rather than chasing extreme fitness goals.

If you are interested in tracking your fitness journey with wearable technology, check out our [review of the Ultrahuman Ring Air](#) â?? one of the sleekest health trackers on the market.

What This Means for You

If you live in Northern Singapore, the message is clear: help is on the way. Whether it is free community workouts at your neighbourhood centre, specialist diabetes care at a CHP near you, or culturally tailored health outreach at your local mosque, there are more resources than ever to support your health journey.

And even if you do not live in the north, these initiatives serve as a reminder to take stock of your own health. When was your last health screening? Are you getting enough physical activity? Do you know your blood sugar and blood pressure levels?

For those looking to get started on their own fitness journey, we have some inspiration â?? read about [how one of our writers kicked off their fitness transformation](#), or if you prefer the outdoors, consider [hiking at Bukit Timah Nature Reserve](#).

Singaporeâ??s war on diabetes is far from over, but with these enhanced community-level interventions, Northern Singapore residents now have more tools and support than ever to fight back. The question is: will you take the first step?

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