



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES TO PROTECT OUR SENIORS

Additional precautionary measures will be put in place to reduce the risk of further transmission of COVID-19 among seniors.

2. The Ministry of Health (MOH) has studied the pattern of transmission among recent confirmed cases. It has found that many of the cases were transmitted during social activities and gatherings among seniors. For example, many of the confirmed cases over the weekend were linked to the SAFRA Jurong cluster and other social activities. These are mainly seniors who took part in singing classes and other activities such as qigong and line-dancing at several community clubs (CCs) and residents' committees (RCs). They are active agers who participate often in such group activities, joining multiple groups across different venues in Singapore.

3. While we encourage seniors to be active, there is now evidence of COVID-19 transmission among the seniors participating in such social activities, chiefly because some individuals who were unwell had continued to participate in them.

4. The Ministry of Health (MOH) had on 7 March announced precautionary measures for these groups of seniors. It had called for a 14-day suspension of all activities and classes in CCs and RCs which the confirmed cases had participated in, as well as all singing classes organised by the People's Association (PA) at the affected CCs and RCs.

Suspension of senior-centric activities for 14 days

5. Seniors are a particularly vulnerable group. We will therefore introduce additional targeted social distancing measures for our seniors. All senior-centric activities conducted by government agencies will be suspended for 14 days from 11 March to 24 March 2020. These include activities held at CCs, RCs, Senior Activity Centres, Active Ageing Hubs, CREST centres, Health Promotion Board and ActiveSG sport centres.¹

6. In the interim, organisers will implement additional precautionary measures before activities resume. These include reducing the group size of activities to prevent crowding, re-organising activities to minimise physical contact, increasing the frequency of sanitising equipment between activities, providing sufficient facilities for regular hand washing, and checking if participants are well.

¹ The list of activities which are suspended is in the [Annex](#), and can be found on PA's and MyActiveSG's websites, as well as the Health Promotion Board's HealthHub portal or Healthy 365 mobile app.

7. Care services for seniors – such as nursing homes, inpatient and day hospices, senior care centre services and home-based care services – will continue to run, but with additional precautionary measures.

8. Seniors who feel unwell should see a doctor and stay at home. Those who are well can continue to go to work, and go about their daily routine such as marketing and individual exercise in the meantime. But they should continue to take precautionary measures to keep themselves safe, such as maintaining good personal hygiene, washing their hands frequently and avoiding touching their face and eyes.

9. The Multi-Ministry Taskforce is assessing the situation locally as well as globally, and is studying a broader range of social distancing measures we might take to help further slow down the spread of the virus.

Social responsibility is key

10. Social responsibility is a critical factor in slowing the transmission of the virus. Many of the locally transmitted cases were the result of the socially irresponsible actions of a few individuals who attended events and activities despite being unwell.

11. About 35 of the 160 confirmed cases thus far had not minimised social contact although they had already developed fever or respiratory symptoms, or consulted a doctor early when unwell. More than a fifth (22%) of the confirmed cases continued to work or carried on with their daily routine despite being sick. For instance:

- a) The cluster at Wizlearn Technologies Pte Ltd had 14 confirmed cases. Of these, nine were staff, and three of them had continued with their daily activities despite feeling unwell. One staff also spread the virus to a family contact, who also had carried on with daily activities while symptomatic. This in turn resulted in an additional four cases who had not worked at the company.
- b) Of the cases linked to the private dinner function at SAFRA Jurong, one case who was already unwell had attended the function on 15 February, and subsequently tested positive. This could have resulted in 18 additional cases who were also at the dinner and subsequently tested positive. 10 of these 18 cases continued with daily activities despite feeling unwell, resulting in an additional 17 positive cases who had not been at the dinner.

12. We also urge the public to refrain from doctor-hopping so that the same doctor can follow up with each case, and make the appropriate assessment if a case needs to be tested for COVID-19. Of the confirmed cases, 38 (24%) had visited more than one general practitioner (GP) clinic. Among these 38 patients, eight had visited three or more GP clinics.

13. Our ability to carry out effective contact tracing requires the cooperation of individuals to provide comprehensive and truthful accounts about their activities when they are interviewed by MOH's public health officers. Otherwise our ability to quickly get in contact with others who may have been infected and to ring-fence clusters will be delayed.

14. Socially irresponsible behaviour poses a risk to all. The measures we have implemented will not work if individuals do not cooperate, and continue to engage in socially irresponsible behaviour. We urge all Singaporeans to play their part in the fight against the virus. Those who are unwell, even with mild flu-like symptoms, should see a doctor and stay at home to prevent spreading illness to others.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
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AFFECTED SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Suspended activities

Agency for Integrated Care

- Group and individual activities at Senior Activity Centres and Active Ageing Hubs
- Group activities at CREST centres
- Merdeka Generation roadshows

Health Promotion Board

- Community Physical Activity Programme (Seniors)
- Move It, Feel Young (MIFY)
- FIT+
- Seniors' Health Curriculum
- Balik Kampung
- Rolling Good Times
- National Steps Challenge Season 5 Silver Challenge Trails
- Cooking demonstrations

People's Association

- Senior-centric courses, activities and interest groups at Community Clubs/ Centres and Residents' Committee Centres

SportSG

- Dance programmes (e.g. Zumba)
- Aqua sports (e.g. aqua aerobics)
- Sports Interest Groups (e.g. badminton, pickleball)
- Social Interest Groups (e.g. urban gardening, hiking)
- Active Health (e.g. lab and gym sessions)

Care services for seniors that will continue

- Nursing home and inpatient hospice, psychiatric rehabilitation homes and psychiatric sheltered home
- Home medical, home nursing, home palliative, home therapy, home personal care, interim caregiver service, home-based respite care, Care Close to Home
- Meals-on-Wheels
- Medical escort and transport
- Senior Care Centres, integrated home and day care, day hospice centres, day rehabilitation centres, and psychiatric day centres
- Senior Activity Centres and Active Ageing Hubs will continue weekly check-ins on frail and/or homebound seniors who live alone or without a competent caregiver via telephone, with physical visits only if the senior is uncontactable
- Befriending/ counselling/ case management
- Community mental health support services by CREST (Community Resource Engagement and Support Team) and COMIT (Community Mental Health Intervention Team) will continue care and support for clients through phone consults or home visits as needed