Star Special

SUNDAY STAR, SUNDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2025

YOUR HEALTH

(Above) Audiologists help guide patients throughout the rehabilitation process. (Right) Audiologists play a critical role in a patient's hearing care journey.

Ensuring the future is heard

AS awareness of hearing health grows across South-East Asia, the need for professional hearing care has never been more urgent.

According to the World Health Organization, the region may see more than 660 million people experiencing some degree of hearing loss by 2050, with up to 80% of cases remaining untreated.

With hearing loss now affecting people at younger ages, whether due to noise exposure, lifestyle factors, or ageing populations, audiologists play an increasingly critical role in ensuring early detection, effective treatment, and long-term hearing wellness.

The heart of modern hearing care

An audiologist is a healthcare professional trained in diagnosing, managing, and treating hearing and balance disorders.

Their work goes far beyond administering hearing tests or recommending devices.

Today, audiologists serve as the central pillars of a patient's hearing care journey, providing expert guidance from diagnosis to rehabilitation.

Comprehensive diagnosis and personalised device fitting

Audiologists conduct detailed hearing assessments to pinpoint the type and degree of hearing loss before prescribing and programming hearing aids. Device selection is always personalised and factors in age, lifestyle, comfort, as well as communication needs.

For cochlear implant users, audiologists perform mapping, a precise process that calibrates the implant for optimal sound quality and speech clarity.

Rehabilitation, counselling and emotional support

Successful hearing care doesn't end with fitting a device. Audiologists walk with patients through the adaptation process, providing auditory training, communication strategies, and emotional support. Their counselling helps patients and families process the impact of hearing loss and build confidence in everyday communication. 20dB Hearing offers these services through 20dB Therapy Tree.

Long-term maintenance and follow-up care

Hearing aids and cochlear implants require regular adjustments and maintenance. Audiologists provide ongoing support, including troubleshooting, repairs, fine-tuning, and periodic reassessment, to ensure patients continue to hear at their best as needs evolve.

Patient education and holistic collaboration

Audiologists empower patients by teaching device care, communication techniques, and ways to navigate challenging listening environments. They also collaborate closely with ENT specialists, surgeons, paediatricians, speech-language therapists, and counsellors to provide holistic, multidisciplinary care.

Local expertise powered by global innovation

With one of the largest networks of hearing care professionals in Malaysia and Singapore, 20dB Hearing combines trusted local expertise with world-leading technology.

Hearing aids require regular maintenance and adjustments.

From diagnostic assessments and personalised hearing aid fittings to cochlear implant support, rehabilitation services, and paediatric audiology, 20dB Hearing's offerings go beyond devices. The team of certified audiologists guide individuals and families through every stage of their hearing journey, ensuring comfort, clarity, and confidence at every step.

20dB Hearing also offers a full range of world-class, technologically advanced hearing solutions from Sonova International – including Phonak, Unitron, and Advanced Bionics, the global leaders in hearing aid and cochlear implant innovation. This gives patients access to cutting-edge solutions backed by ongoing professional support.

A commitment to better hearing for every individual

For over 20 years, 20dB Hearing has been committed to helping individuals rediscover the joy of sound through trusted diagnostic services, personalised hearing solutions, cochlear implant care, and long-term rehabilitation.

With the largest network of hearing care professionals across Malaysia and Singapore, as well as partnerships with global technology leaders, 20dB Hearing remains dedicated to delivering better hearing and better living for every patient.

Building strong bones starts early

THE best time to start caring for your bones would be during your childhood as your bones begin to develop and grow, gaining strength and mass. Your lifelong skeletal health is determined by the amount of bone mass you obtain while you are young.

Nutrition plays a pivotal role, particularly your intake of calcium and vitamin D. The daily calcium needs for infants under six months starts at 200 mg and gradually increases, whereas teenagers between the ages of 14 and 18 require 1300 mg per day to support their optimal growth.

Factors that affect bone health

For babies under a year old, a minimum daily intake of 400 IU of vitamin D is recommended while those older than a year old should aim for 600 IU per day.

Certain groups of children and adolescents face an elevated risk of experiencing compromised bone health:

- Premature babies and infants with a low birth weight may exhibit lower-than-average bone mass during their initial months of life
- Children who are on prolonged medication regimens such as steroids and anti-seizure drugs
- Children with conditions such as cystic fibrosis, celiac disease and inflammatory bowel disease may struggle with proper nutrient absorption
- Children with medical conditions such as juvenile idiopathic arthritis, osteogenesis imperfecta, diabetes, kidney disease, hyperthyroidism, Cushing's syndrome and anorexia nervosa

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A sufficient intake of calcium and vitamin D plays an important role in building bone mass.

DYMM Tengku Permaisuri Selangor Hajah Norashikin launching the new Oncology Day Care Unit at Damansara Specialist Hospital, joined by dignitaries from KPJ Healthcare and Petaling Jaya City Council.

Early detection and effective treatment can cure breast cancer

BREAST cancer is one of the most treatable cancers, yet many cases in Malaysia are still diagnosed late. Increasingly, younger women — including those who are pregnant – are affected. Some women are diagnosed before the age of 40, while others may present at advanced stages 3 or 4. Early detection greatly improves survival, but once cancer spreads, treatment becomes more complex, costly and life-changing.

Treatment options becoming more precise

Breast cancer can be divided into Hormone Receptor positive, HER2 positive and Triple Negative types. With modern hormone therapies, targeted therapies and immunotherapies, many stage 4 patients now live beyond five years with a good quality of life.

Advances in radiotherapy, such as Deep Inspiratory Breath Hold (DIBH) and Intraoperative Radiotherapy (IORT), have improved outcomes while reducing side effects. Meanwhile, modern imaging like 3D Mammogram and Breast MRI can detect even Stage 0 breast cancer (DCIS), which has a near 100% cure rate when treated with surgery and radiotherapy alone.

Awareness must be matched with action. Breast cancer screening should be convenient and accessible for women in both urban and rural areas.

All Malaysian women aged 40-74 are encouraged to undergo a mammogram every two to three years, regardless of risk factors.

DYMM Tengku Permaisuri Selangor officiates newly renovated Damansara Specialist Hospital Oncology Care Unit in conjunction with Pink October 2025

In conjunction with the Pink October Breast Cancer Awareness Month 2025, Damansara Specialist Hospital (DSH) was honoured to have DYMM Tengku Permaisuri Selangor Hajah Norashikin officiate the launch of the DSH Oncology Day Care Unit (ODCU) on Oct 1 2025.

DYMM Tengku Permaisuri Selangor visited the newly launched DSH ODCU and graciously presented fruit baskets to each cancer patient, engaging warmly in conversation with them, offering comfort and encouragement.

Assoc Prof Dr Aminudin Rahman Mohd Mydin is the head of oncology and senior consultant clinical and radiation oncologist at Damansara Specialist Hospital.

At Damansara Specialist Hospital, trusted by generations, it is committed to providing hope, healing and continuous care for every patient, their families and caregivers.

KKLIU 3704 / EXP 31.12.2027

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DR. ANN TEOH AI YEAN CONSULTANT OBSTETRICIAN & GYNAECOLOGIST
DR. LEE SAY BOB CONSULTANT UROLOGIST
DR. KELVIN VOON CONSULTANT GENERAL, UPPER GI SURGEON
DR. HEAH HSIN TAK CONSULTANT GENERAL & COLORECTAL SURGEON
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DR. AHMAD FAUZEY BIN KASSIM CONSULTANT ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON
DR. NGIM HUI-LING JOANNE CONSULTANT ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON
DR. MOHAMMED HARRIS BIN ANWARALI KHAN CONSULTANT ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON

KKLIU 3672 / EXP 31.12.2027

Boosting bone health

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Childhood obesity contributes to the decrease in bone density, yet further research is required to distinguish its impact from other factors, such as diet, race, ethnicity, lifestyle and exposure to the sun.

Diagnosing osteoporosis in children

Osteoporosis is typically identified when a child experiences a bone fracture. The diagnostic process may involve:

- Examining family medical histories to ascertain if there is a genetic component
- Employing a bone scan, specifically dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DEXA), to assess bone density
- Administering blood tests

Ongoing research is exploring strategies to optimise peak bone mass in children. However, parents and children can adopt a healthy diet and lifestyle by considering the following recommendations:

- Ensure a consistent intake of calcium and Vitamin D
- Engage in regular physical activity, with a preference for weight-bearing exercises like walking and running

Prevention towards osteoporosis starts when you are young. Taking early preventive actions reduces the risk of osteoporosis down the road. This involves a multi-faceted approach, encompassing a balanced diet rich in calcium and vitamin D, regular physical activity and a vigilant eye on underlying medical conditions and medications that may contribute to the risk.

Furthermore, promoting a healthy lifestyle is essential to safeguard children against the potential consequences of osteoporosis later in life. Early interventions and a comprehensive understanding of the risk factors can pave the way for stronger bones and a healthier future.

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Unwind in ultimate comfort

GINTELL proudly introduces the all-new S5 Pro Massage Chair – an innovative solution designed to make healthy living more accessible for everyone. In today's fast-paced world, the S5 Pro supports a holistic lifestyle by promoting better circulation, relieving fatigue, and encouraging daily relaxation. More than just offering comfort, it complements a well-rounded approach to wellness that includes physical care, mental well-being, and proper nutrition – making healthier living achievable for all.

Crafted with a sophisticated black and brown leather finish, the S5 Pro Massage Chair blends style and functionality to complement any modern living space. The S5 Pro Massage Chair features 8D Twin Rollers that protrude 13 to 15 cm, allowing precise humanised spot massage on the upper back (neck and shoulders) and lower back (spine and waist) simultaneously. This innovative design mimics professional masseuse techniques using a combination of intelligent traditional massage techniques. This dual massage roller provides more coverage and deeper relief, ensuring a highly effective massage session.

It also features Thermal Knee Therapy with intelligent heating airbags that gently compress around the knees and calves, delivering soothing warmth to boost blood circulation, ease joint stiffness and relieve muscle tension. This makes it an ideal solution for those with chronic knee discomfort or tired, aching legs, especially for elderly users.

With the Gintell Super APPs OS, users can now control the massage chair directly through their smartphone. Users can customise their preferred massage settings, such as the intensity, massage angle, or switch programmes with just a few taps.

The Gintell S5 Pro Massage Chair offers the perfect way to unwind and relieve fatigue.

The S5 Pro Massage Chair incorporates the Magic Touch Reflex. Using synchronised rollers and airbags, these massage rollers target acupressure points on the feet, calves, knees and legs, providing overall relief of soreness, improving blood circulation, easing muscle tension, and enhancing leg mobility.

The AI Voice Control feature allows users to operate the chair with simple voice commands, while the AI VI-Memory system lets them easily customise and set their preferred massage programmes, ready to activate with just one tap whenever needed. This thoughtful, user-friendly design is especially helpful for the elderly, ensuring a truly hassle-free experience.

Featuring built-in surround Bluetooth speakers, it elevates users' relaxation with Brain Relief Therapy sessions. These massage programmes automatically play soothing ambient music to enhance relaxation. Users can also choose to stream their favourite hits and enjoy a deeply immersive, spa-like journey right at home.

Whether you're unwinding after a long day or simply prioritising self-care, the Gintell S5 Pro Massage Chair is your personal wellness companion, offering a luxurious, therapeutic experience at home like never before. Alongside this launch, Gintell is also introducing a limited special – edition model – the Gintell Mickey Fantasia Massage Chair, with only 1,000 units available across South-East Asia. Retailing at RM23,988, this exclusive model is a premium investment in long-term health, comfort and will only be available for a limited time during the official launch period.

■ For further enquiries or to place a pre-order, call 016-750 0998, visit *www.gintell.com*, or head to your nearest Gintell showroom to experience the Gintell S5 Pro Massage Chair firsthand.

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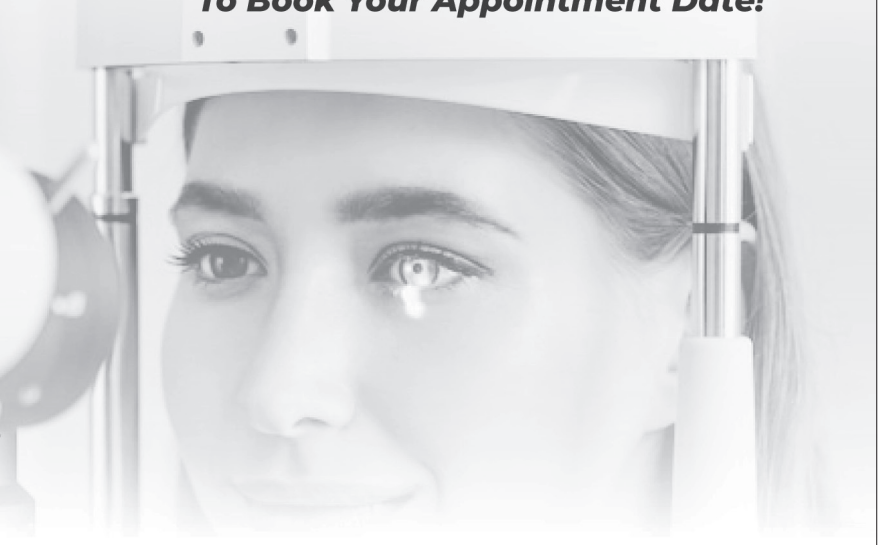

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KKLIU 2481 / 2025 Expiry Date: 31st December 2025

MSU MEDICAL CENTRE (452512-D)

Spot the signs early

NOVEMBER is Stomach Cancer Awareness Month, dedicated to raising awareness about one of the world's most common and deadliest cancers – particularly in Asia.

While Malaysia's rates are lower compared to neighbouring countries, most local patients are still diagnosed at advanced stages, when the chances of recovery are much lower.

Sunway Medical Centre Penang consultant general and upper gastrointestinal surgeon Dr Kelvin Voon explains, "The challenge with stomach cancer is that it develops silently. Early symptoms are often vague and easy to dismiss as ordinary gastric discomfort. But when detected early, stomach cancer is highly treatable and survival outcomes are much better."

A Malaysian snapshot

According to the National Cancer Registry, gastric cancer ranks among Malaysia's top 10 cancers. It is most common among Malaysian Chinese, followed by Malays and Indians.

"Late presentation remains a major concern," says Dr Voon.

"Many patients come to us only when symptoms become severe – by then, the cancer is often already at an advanced stage.

Understanding the risks

The main risk factors for stomach cancer include:

- Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori) infection
- Chronic gastritis or long-term stomach inflammation
- Smoking
- High-salt or preserved foods
- Family history of stomach cancer
- Previous stomach surgery

Dr Voon adds, "Infections like H. pylori can cause long-term changes in the stomach lining that increase cancer risk. But lifestyle habits – particularly diet and smoking – also play a major role."

Recognising the warning signs

Early symptoms of stomach cancer can be subtle and easily mistaken for minor gastric issues. These include:

- Indigestion or heartburn
- Bloating or discomfort after eating
- Early fullness after small meals

"Many people ignore these early warning signs, thinking it's just gastric wind," says Dr Voon. "But if symptoms persist for weeks, it's time to see a doctor."

More serious warning signs that require immediate medical attention include:

- Persistent vomiting or difficulty swallowing
- Black stools
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fatigue or anaemia

Early detection saves lives

Endoscopy remains the most accurate method for diagnosing stomach cancer in its early stages. This procedure allows doctors to view the stomach lining directly and take a biopsy if needed.

"In countries like Japan and Korea, routine endoscopic screening has significantly improved survival rates," Dr Voon explains.

"For Malaysians, those over 50, with a family history of stomach cancer, or a past H. pylori infection, should discuss screening with their doctor. Early detection can mean the difference between cure and advanced disease."

Modern, multidisciplinary treatment

Managing stomach cancer requires a multidisciplinary team (MDT) approach that includes surgeons, oncologists, radiologists, pathologists, dietitians, and physiotherapists. Treatment depends on the stage of the cancer and the patient's overall condition.

- Early-stage cancer can often be treated through endoscopic resection or minimally invasive surgery.
- Locally advanced cancer usually requires a combination of surgery and chemotherapy.
- Advanced or metastatic disease may benefit from chemotherapy, targeted therapy, or immunotherapy.

Dr Voon shares, "We tailor treatment for each patient. Even in advanced cases, a combination of surgery and modern therapies can improve quality of life and extend survival."

Precision and progress: robotic-assisted surgery

Advancements in technology have transformed the way surgeons treat stomach and gastrointestinal cancers.

"At Sunway Medical Centre Penang, the robotic surgery system allows us to perform complex stomach cancer surgeries with greater precision and control," Dr Voon explains. The robotic system enhances the surgeon's dexterity with 3D high-definition vision and wristed instruments that move more precisely.

"This enables smaller incisions, less pain, reduced blood loss, and faster recovery," says Dr Voon.

"It's particularly beneficial for delicate, deep-seated cancers where accuracy is crucial."

Recovery beyond surgery

Recovery from stomach cancer doesn't end in the operating theatre.

"Patients often need nutritional guidance to adapt to changes after surgery," Dr Voon notes.

"Physiotherapy helps restore strength, and emotional support is essential to cope with anxiety or lifestyle adjustments after treatment."

He emphasises that holistic care – combining medical treatment with nutritional and psychological support – plays a key role in helping patients regain independence and quality of life.

Prevention is powerful

Dr Voon reminds Malaysians that prevention starts with simple daily choices.

"Eat a balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables, reduce salty and preserved foods, quit smoking, and limit alcohol," he advises.

"Regular health checks and endoscopic screening for at-risk individuals are the best defences against stomach cancer."

Dr Voon highlights the importance of early detection in improving treatment outcomes. (This image is for illustrative purposes only. It does not represent an actual medical event, procedure or interaction between healthcare professionals and patient.)

A call to awareness

"Stomach cancer may be a silent disease, but awareness can break that silence," says Dr Voon.

"By recognising the symptoms early, seeking timely medical care, and adopting a healthy lifestyle, we can change outcomes for many Malaysians."

Don't ignore persistent stomach symptoms – early detection saves lives.

KKLIU 3662 / EXP 31.12.2027

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Damansara Specialist Hospital is the **8th medical facility** under the flagship of the KPJ Healthcare Bhd. Group, one of the leading private healthcare providers in the region.

Started its **operations on 1997**, located in an upscale area of Kuala Lumpur that has become a center for expatriates and young urban executives. With 198-beds currently, hospital offers accredited, state-of-the-art treatments in first-rate facilities. Patients most commonly seek this hospital's services in Cardiology, Paediatric and Neonatology, Advanced Laparoscopy and Diabesity Surgery, Oncology, In Vitro Fertilization (IVF), and Orthopaedic.

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KKLIU 2410 / EXP 31.12.2027

Care for Life

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Stubbing out the habit

A SERIOUS conversation about nicotine addiction has always been difficult, especially when persuading a smoker to quit. The topic is rarely brought up despite nicotine being the most abused but legally addictive substance. Social normalisation would have certainly contributed to the relatively steady rate of nicotine product use despite abundant evidence of the negative consequences.

Understanding the history of nicotine product use helps us better understand why nicotine addiction remains a persistent global challenge. Tobacco use has been documented for over 8,000 years, which led to its cultivation in 5,000 BC in Central Mexico.

Originally used in religious ceremonies and for medical purposes, it was regarded as a valuable item and was used as gifts. In 1760, Pierre Lorillard established the first company in the US that processed tobacco to make cigars and snuff. Less than two centuries later, many tobacco companies were established, creating a powerful and profitable industry. Over the past 20 years, tobacco products have evolved in both content and presentation in an effort by the tobacco industry to increase the demand among new and diverse populations including children.

Claims have been made about the more medically disastrous nature of the newer generations of products due to the "fortification" of ingredients to modify the flavour or to change the nature of the tobacco from leaves to vape juices.

Quitting smoking can improve health to a level comparable to that of a non-smoker within 15 years.

Dr Faridah Mohd Zin.

Benefits of quitting tobacco products

● **Break the cycle of addiction**

Leaving one unsatisfied highlights the addictive nature of nicotine. The substance leads to tolerance and withdrawal – with irritability and other symptoms when users stop – creating a cycle that becomes harder to break over time.

● **Reduce the risk of getting cardiovascular diseases**

Smoking is a major modifiable risk factor for cardiovascular disease, which is one of the leading causes of death in Malaysia, including coronary heart disease and stroke.

When a person stops smoking, the benefits start almost immediately with the risk of heart attacks and stroke returning to the level of non-smokers after 15 years. Smoking cessation also reduces blood pressure which is another important risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

● **Improve the functions of the lungs**

Tobacco product use affects the lungs directly during inhalation and indirectly through toxins circulating in the blood.

It is well known to cause impairment of lung function and cancers. Quitting has been shown to improve the lungs' function and reduce the risk of lung cancer at a rate similar to that of non-smokers after 10 years.

● **Reduce the ageing process**

Ageing is a natural process. However, using tobacco products speeds up the ageing process due to the cells' inability to regenerate healthily in the presence of toxins.

Quitting smoking allows the body to recover more effectively and improves vitality.

● **Join the "new norm"**

Community studies have shown an increasing trend of smokers wanting to quit with health concerns being the most popular reason, followed by the health of loved ones and other sociodemographic factors.

Hence, quitting tobacco product use is a norm smokers should be comfortable with.

Family medicine and wellness consultant at MSU Medical Centre, Dr Faridah Mohd Zin explains the cold turkey method remains the most popular method chosen by smokers to quit using tobacco products.

However, this method has been shown to have the highest failure rate in the short and long term, primarily due to the resulting unpleasant withdrawal symptoms, as opposed to gradual reduction over time or by using replacement medication. Scientifically proven replacement medications are safe and effective when used under the supervision of certified professionals.

While the decision to continue smoking rests with the individual, the right to breathe clean air belongs to everyone.