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Detect liver cancer early with free health screenings

Amelia Tan | The Straits Times | Monday, Sep 22, 2014



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FREE hepatitis B screenings that can help to detect liver cancer will be held for 1,200 people aged 50 and above until Sunday.

Public hospitals such as National University Hospital (NUH) and Singapore General Hospital will offer the screenings as part of the annual Liver Disease Awareness Week, which was launched yesterday at NUH.

Minister of State for Health Lam Pin Min said at the event that hepatitis B screenings and leading a healthy lifestyle are crucial to keeping liver cancer at bay.

"By being physically active, having a healthy diet with sufficient intake of vegetables and fruit and being careful with alcohol intake, you can reduce your risk of contracting liver cancer."

The Liver Disease Awareness Week is organised by the Hepatopancreatobiliary Association of Singapore, a group of medical specialists with an interest in liver disease.

In Singapore, it is the third most common cause of cancer death among men and the fourth most common among women.

The association's president, Associate Professor Stephen Chang, said: "The good news is patients who have liver cancer which is detected early through hepatitis B screenings have a good chance of recovery."

Prof Chang is a senior consultant at the division of surgical oncology in the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore.

About 200 people attended yesterday's launch event and half of them were screened for hepatitis B.

Retiree Chua Sua Thian, 72, a grassroots leader in Dover Road, said: "More free screenings should be held for the lowincome elderly.

"They worry about the costs of the tests and having to pay for transport to travel to the hospital."

ameltan@sph.com.sg

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