

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**DSS' Chinese Support Group did what Singaporeans love doing most – EAT OUT! Last December, they went on a food outing and came back filled with tidbits on eating right and diabetes management. DSS Diabetes Nurse Educator Chionh Lay Keng files this report.**

Chronic Diabetes Mellitus has been ranked the seventh highest principal cause of death in Singapore. The number of deaths has also increased from approximately 503 deaths in 2005 to approximately 617 deaths in 2007.

To cater to the Chinese-speaking majority, as well as to serve the ageing population, Diabetic Society of Singapore (DSS) recently launched its first ever Chinese Support Group. The group which was set up in October 2008 aims to encourage diabetes patients from all walks of life to come together to share and learn about the different aspects of managing diabetes during their regular meetings.

Madam Lai Yim Khim, a senior nurse consultant who specialises in chronic diabetes care management, has been an asset to the Chinese Support Group. Mr Ho, a regular patient and supporter, agrees. "Together with the other nurse educators, Mdm Lai's inputs and guidance have definitely been very useful to those of us who attend the group sessions," he said.

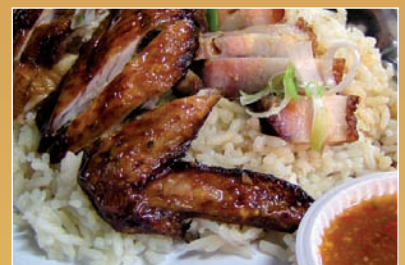
On 20 December 2008, Mdm Lai and I led a 10-member team from Boon Keng Diabetes Education and Care Centre for an eating-out activity. Ms Lo, who participated in the activity, was thrilled that it was about food. She enthused, "I dine out most of the time so an activity like this is practical and helpful to people who share a similar lifestyle. I was curious about how to eat healthy, especially in public places, and signed up without hesitation."

The entire experience did not disappoint. Before each one tucked into his or her own meal, we conducted a mini discussion and checked everyone's pre-meal blood glucose. Senior dietitian Mr For Wei Chek, an ardent DSS supporter, offered an insightful and valuable lesson on diet and diabetes, such as how diet can affect our blood glucose level.

Mr For's advice encouraged many to think twice before wolfing down an oily dish or snack. "His enthusiasm was infectious and his guidance so sensible. He helped me realise that I should make an effort to take better care of my body," said Mr Quek.

Mr How, who had a number of questions regarding the relationship between food intake and insulin interaction, was pleased that Mdm Lai spent some time clearing up various misconceptions about insulin injections. "It was an enlightening experience and certainly a good opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge to improve our self-care diabetes management," he said.

"We're looking forward to more of such activities" was an opinion echoed by many other participants. DSS Chinese Support Group is gratified with the response and hopes to organise more of such hands-on learning experiences to give our members the support they need to control diabetes.



If you have diabetes or have been newly diagnosed, we would like to invite you to join our DSS Chinese Support Group. Just give us a call at 6398 0282.  
Let's fight diabetes together!