

INAUGURAL CITIZENS' JURY

After seven weeks of online discussion, brainstorming sessions, getting advice from various experts of their respective field of expertise, formulating recommendations, voting and three full-day meetings, the inaugural Citizens' Jury set up by the Ministry of Health submitted their report to Senior Minister of State for Health Amy Khor and other senior civil servants on 13 January 2018.

Seventy-six people from different walks of life, full of love and passion, were tasked to come up with ideas on how to prevent and manage diabetes here in Singapore. The group was divided into 12 sub-groups and worked on their selected topics. Twelve major ideas were finally selected and three other minor ideas were also included so that none of the ideas were left out.

Minister promised that all these ideas will be reviewed with various Government departments and agencies and come up with action item in three months' time. On the other hand, some ideas were accepted on the spot such as the jury's "Drink Plain Water" campaign and the suggestion to install more water coolers at community clubs and cultural institutions to stave off cravings for sugary drinks.

We are very thankful to Diabetes Singapore for giving us this opportunity to take part in this pioneer programme by the government. We are also grateful for the active participation and valuable contributions of Albert Lim, Hwee Leng, Christina Tan, Dr Kalpana (vice-president of Diabetes Singapore), Rama, Juliana Lim (Diabetes Support Group leader) and Arumugam Ardhanari who were involved in various sub-groups. All of us enjoyed the experience and exposure, and look forward to seeing the recommendations implemented.



Here are the 12 suggestions presented by the jury:

1. **#DrinkPlainWater** campaign led by citizens to make plain water more accessible and reduce liquid calories.
2. Popularise the Health Promotion Board's existing "My Healthy Plate" guideline to raise awareness about healthy eating among consumers and hawkers.
3. Incentivise stair-climbing at places like MRT stations to encourage Singaporeans to be more active.
4. Form a peer support group to link patients who have controlled their diabetes and their caregivers with newly diagnosed patients.
5. Promote healthy cooking at home through cooking classes, food preparation competition and other cooking communities.
6. Raise awareness of online patient support groups as a means to provide quick and timely guidance to manage the disease.
7. Strategic advertising to promote healthier food choices and other purchases.
8. Raise the Medisave claim limit from \$450 to \$700 for those under the Chronic Disease Management Programme.
9. Set up a rewards system to motivate diabetes patients to take better care of themselves - for example, they could get grocery vouchers if their diabetes is better-managed over a period of time.
10. Improve the communication skills and empathy of healthcare practitioners.
11. Increase awareness of and motivation to consume healthy foods in schools.
12. Improve canteen food in schools.

Source: <http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/health/first-citizens-jury-presents-its-recommendations-on-how-to-combat-diabetes>