

# The Hearty Digest

**SUNWAY**  
MEDICAL CENTRE<sup>®</sup>  
Sunway City Kuala Lumpur

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FROM THE EDITOR

# Starting the Year with a Bang!



Hey everyone! Just dropping in to share some exciting news—I've taken on the role of Editor at The Hearty Digest magazine. Huge thanks to all our amazing readers for their unwavering support—it's what keeps our team going!

We've got a ton of fresh health insights and updates on medical advancements lined up for you in this edition. From tackling tuberculosis to dealing with lactose intolerance in kids, we've got experts weighing in on a variety of important topics.

Our Sunway Cancer Centre also made significant progress over the years as we aim to become a leading one-stop cancer centre with the integration of state-of-the-art machines and cutting-edge equipment, ensuring accurate diagnostics and advanced treatment options for our patients.

Plus, we're shining a spotlight on the importance of early cancer screening for women and celebrating our incredible cancer survivors.

“ Guess what? The Sunway Medical Centre made it into the top 250 hospitals worldwide in the Newsweek World's Best Hospitals 2024 listing - talk about kicking off the Year of the Dragon with a bang! ”

There's so much packed into this edition, and I hope you enjoy diving into my first issue as Editor. Until next time, thanks a bunch!



*Mohamed Basyir*  
Editor, The Hearty Digest

**The Editorial Team**  
Corporate Communication  
Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

# Of Trailblazing Milestones and Pioneering Spirit

Dear Hearty Digest readers,

Welcome to this year's inaugural edition of Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City's (SMC's) Hearty Digest. As we go through the early months of 2024, we are pleased to share that this year holds immense significance for our hospital as we commemorate two important milestones - our 25th anniversary alongside Sunway Group's 50th anniversary.

Since our inception in 1999, our hospital has evolved from having one single tower with 200 licensed beds in Sunway City to 6 towers with 724 licensed beds. With a built capacity of 885 beds across Towers A to E, we will continue to grow, and we aim to have 1,100 beds when we launch Tower F.

We take pride in being the largest private quaternary hospital in Malaysia, boasting 28 Centres of Excellence and a diverse team supported by over 3,500 dedicated healthcare and hospitality professionals.

Recognising the unique needs of each patient, our dedicated multidisciplinary team collaborates closely to provide personalised treatment with a holistic care approach. With our achievements and trailblazing milestones, we are grateful to have been recently included in the Newsweek Top 250 World's Best Hospitals, the first time for any Malaysian hospital, reflecting our pioneering spirit, exemplified by our exceptional patient care.

This year, too, has brought more reasons to celebrate, including our celebration to welcome the Year of the Dragon, and our conferment with the titles of Hospital of the Year and Health Promotion Initiative of the Year in the Malaysian categories at the Healthcare Asia Awards 2024.

With these recognitions, as an institution, we remain steadfast in our commitment to advancing healthcare education and engaging in Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives. Our involvement in community outreach programs in the Klang Valley and at SMC Branch offices in East Malaysia; and health-day events at our hospital, underscores our commitment in health promotion.

One of our core focuses remains on the sharing of knowledge, fostering meaningful exchanges and partnerships with other healthcare practitioners and allied health professionals through the various medical seminars and symposiums organised by SMC this year. These Continuing Medical Educations (CMEs) are shining examples of our commitment to elevating the standard of healthcare in the region.

SMC aims to become a leading private medical centre in the ASEAN region. With your support, we will continue to provide personalised, holistic, patient-centred care through innovation and collaboration across all sectors.

We hope you find this issue both pleasant and insightful, and we look forward to seeing you in the next issue.

Thank you.



*Dr Seow Vei Ken*

Chief Executive Officer  
Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City

**DO YOU KNOW?**

# Tuberculosis: How to Stay Safe and Protected

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease that most often affects the lungs and is caused by a type of bacteria. It spreads through the air when infected people cough, sneeze or spit but is curable. In Malaysia, it remains a significant public health challenge, with a concerning increase of 17% in TB cases in 2022 compared to 2021, and a 12% rise in TB-related deaths in 2022 compared to 2021.



**Dr Rosmadi Ismail**  
 Internal Medicine, Interventional Pulmonology and Respiratory Medicine Consultant



Diagnosis Method	Treatment Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smear microscopy, culture and sensitivity testing, as well as nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs) to identify TB cases.</li> <li>• Chest radiography and clinical tests like the Tuberculin Skin Test (TST), to confirm the infections.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combination of 4 drugs administered for 6 to 8 months:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Ethambutol</li> <li>◦ Rifampicin</li> <li>◦ Isoniazid</li> <li>◦ Pyrazinamide</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Directly Observed Treatment (DOT) strategy – patients are supervised by healthcare workers, ensuring the complete intake of medication</li> </ul>

The fight against TB in Malaysia demands a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach. There is also ongoing research on new vaccines, especially for adolescents and adults.

“By focusing on advanced diagnostics, adherence to treatment, and preventive measures, we can significantly curb the spread of TB. Community awareness and collaboration with international research initiatives further enhance our arsenal against this disease.”



## Preventive Measures

- Stay clear of crowded places
- Listen to your body - seek medical help promptly!
- Get checked if you are at risk
- Complete your treatment regime and take precautionary steps
- Stay protected at work if you are in contact with many people
- Consider vaccination

## DO YOU KNOW?

# Lactose Intolerance: How It Affects Children

From the day a child is born, it is pertinent that the baby is fed with the most essential nutrient – milk. It is the one thing that will help the child grow up healthy with all the necessary vitamins, minerals and nutrition.

However, if a baby starts experiencing diarrhoea, constant crying and restlessness, as well as a loss of appetite after milk feeding, parents will need to be wary as the child may be suffering from lactose intolerance.



**Dr Ong Sik Yong**  
Paediatric Gastroenterology and  
Hepatology Consultant

### Understanding Lactose And Its Benefits

- Lactose is the main carbohydrate in human breast milk as well as cow's milk. It is also present in many other dairy products such as cheese and yogurt.
- Lactose that is ingested by humans needs to be broken down through hydrolysis by the lactase that is bound to the small intestine membrane before it is absorbed.
- Young infants do not absorb all of the ingested lactose from breast milk. This malabsorbed lactose is then fermented in the colon into short-chain fatty acids, hydrogen, carbon dioxide, methane, and converted into lactic acid by enteric bacteria and becomes prebiotic in our gut.
- Increased counts of Bifidobacteria (good gut bacteria) and increased concentration of short-chain fatty acids provides considerable protective effect on colonic mucosal integrity and are beneficial for early immune development.

Lactose intolerance in young children is said to be typically caused by underlying gut conditions such as:

- Gut infection
- Cow's milk allergy
- Celiac disease
- Inflammatory bowel disease



### Symptoms

Children with lactose intolerance have one or more intestinal or extraintestinal symptoms:

- ❑ Develop abdominal discomfort, bloating, farting, and/or diarrhoea. Usually, symptoms begin about 30 minutes to 2 hours after consumption.
- ❑ Their stools would have low faecal pH (less than 5.5) and may cause perianal skin irritation and excoriation (raw irritated lesions on skin surrounding the anus).
- ❑ The above usually happen after an episode of acute gastroenteritis, when a child transiently loses the ability to digest lactose. In most circumstances, a baby can continue with breastfeeding.
- ❑ When symptoms are progressive or troublesome such as perianal excoriation, the child may need to temporarily stop breastfeeding. Babies with transient lactose intolerance can be given lactose free formula or soy formula for one to two weeks until the child recovers.





Primary lactose intolerance usually happens after the child turns 5 years old, but it can also be present as early as 2 years old. When this happens, the symptoms can only be managed by limiting lactose in their diet.

#### Managing A Lactose Intolerant Diet

Children showing signs of lactose intolerance should only be fed:

- Dairy products with naturally lower lactose content
- Small amounts of food and drinks containing lactose only after a period of limiting food with lactose
- Symptoms should be observed throughout this trial period
- Overtime, the parents or even children themselves would be able to tell how much of lactose they can take
- Consider using lactase enzyme, which can be taken prior to consumption of dairy products to reduce unwanted consequences from consuming lactose.

Dr Ong said “Children with lactose intolerance may have a little dairy product in their diet as milk and other various dairy products are a major source of calcium and vitamin D. Hence, it is important to make sure children who has limited dairy product intake to have other non-dairy food which are rich in these nutrients, like fish with soft edible bones as well as green leafy vegetables. They may also require calcium or vitamin D supplement for their growing bones. ”

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

# SMC Elevates Cancer Care with Innovative Cancer Centre



Driven by a visionary mission and commitment to excellence, Sunway Cancer Centre aims to be the leading one-stop cancer centre, seamlessly integrating supportive and palliative care services into patient-centred cancer care that addresses the complex needs of cancer patients and their family caregivers throughout their cancer journey.

Spanning over 4,000 sqm, it is equipped with one of the largest radiotherapy departments, a chemotherapy daycare centre, a bone marrow transplant centre, and a nuclear medicine department. This facility comprises a highly skilled, subspecialized, multidisciplinary team of clinical oncologists, adult and paediatric haematologists, bone marrow transplant physicians, and nuclear medicine physicians with vast experience in treating both solid and liquid cancers.

“ We take pride in the existence of our Sunway Cancer Centre, a testament to our commitment to redefining healthcare excellence. SMC stands out as a hub of innovation, and this Cancer Centre is one of our 28 centres of excellence. Our vision is to provide holistic, patient-centred care, ensuring optimal outcomes through the latest treatments, technologies, and support services,” said Dr. Seow Vei Ken, Chief Executive Officer of Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City.

## Sunway Cancer Centre's Visionary Approach and Technological Innovation

Embracing the belief that a one-size-fits-all approach does not suffice, Sunway Cancer Centre has made significant advancements in its treatment plans and diagnostics by integrating state-of-the-art machines and cutting-edge equipment, ensuring accurate diagnostics and advanced treatment options.



### Amongst technologies available at Sunway Cancer Centre:

- Varian TrueBeam™
- Leksell Gamma Knife® Icon™
- Digital PET/CT scanner
- Tomotherapy



“The Cancer Centre is not merely a facility; it is a paradigm shift in how we approach cancer. With a dedicated multidisciplinary team, cutting-edge technology, and a holistic care approach, Sunway Cancer Centre sets a new standard for comprehensive cancer treatment. This marks a crucial step forward in our mission to provide accessible and compassionate healthcare,” shared Dr Seow.

### Breakthroughs and Success Rates in Cancer Care

“Breakthroughs in treating challenging cancers such as Nasopharyngeal Carcinoma highlight our commitment to pushing the boundaries of all cancer care. Our clinical trials, continuous research, and dedication to innovation and personalised care contribute to these advancements in the field,” shared Dr Heng Siew Ping, Senior General Manager of Sunway Cancer Centre, Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City.

### Holistic Cancer Care for The Patient and Community

Sunway Cancer Centre goes beyond conventional cancer care by fostering emotional and psychological support through various holistic care and community initiatives, including:

- **The Cancer Buddy Program** pairs cancer survivors with patients on a voluntary basis to provide emotional and psychological support to those undergoing cancer treatments.
- **Collaborations with Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City’s allied healthcare teams** in Palliative Medicine, Dietetics, Home Nursing, Speech and Hearing, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and Psychiatry and Behavioural Health for well-rounded support.
- **Weekly tumour board meetings** with surgeons, physicians, oncologists, radiologists, and pathologists to discuss cancer cases and treatment plans for the patient.
- **Active clinical trials** that improve cancer treatment and patient quality of life.
- **Patient to Nurse Ratio of 1:5** with experienced oncology specialists providing the best possible care for the patient.
- **Supportive & Palliative Care Service** that consists of a specialist-led team of doctors and nurses who have been professionally trained to care for palliative care patients.
- **Prestigious Accreditation as the Designated Centre of Integrated Oncology and Palliative Care** by the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) from 2018 to 2024.
- **Advocates and prioritizes holistic approach** in supporting cancer education, early screening and detection via public health talks.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

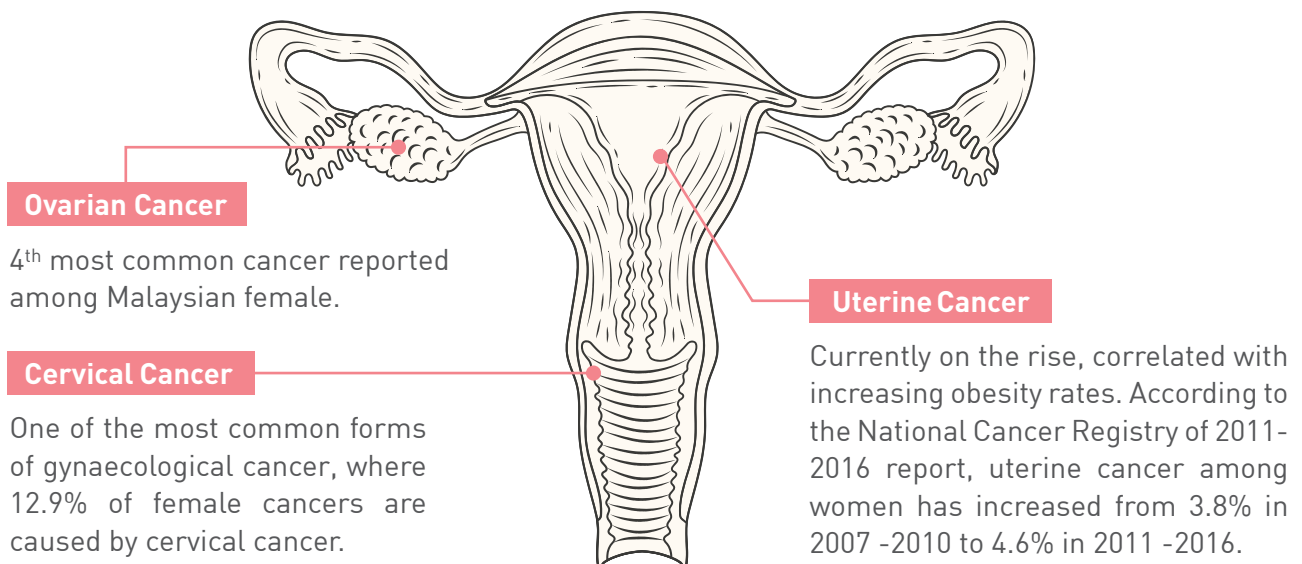
# Importance of Early Detection and Cancer Screening for Women

Cervical cancer is a silent threat that affects women worldwide, but early detection holds the key to successful treatment and improved outcomes. In Malaysia, it is the 4th most frequent cancer among women and 2nd most frequent cancer affecting women 44 and below. This worrying finding shows that it is crucial to shed light on the significance of proactive health measures, breaking taboos, and embracing regular screenings.

“We have been seeing a rise in uterine cancer. This could be mainly due to the hormonal imbalance as a result of obesity. This imbalance is one of the contributing factors of cancers affecting organs like the uterus, breast, and ovaries,” said Dr Thangesweran.



**Dr Thangesweran Ayakannu**  
Gynaecology, Oncology and Robotic  
Surgeon Consultant



## HPV Vaccine

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a leading cause of cervical cancer. One of the most prevalent preventative measures is the HPV vaccination, which can substantially lower the risk by targeting the most dangerous strains of the virus. However, HPV vaccines is not a substitute for pap smears as a proven method of gynecological cancer screening.”

### Fertility Treatments & Cancer Risk

As one of the main risks of cancer is hormonal imbalance or fluctuations, and the main function of fertility drugs is to overstimulate the ovary, there may be concerns surrounding the increased risks of cancer to women undergoing or who have undergone fertility treatments.

Infertility has been found to be an important risk factor for ovarian cancer. However, the association between infertility drugs and ovarian cancer needs to be addressed with consideration of other factors such as age, body mass index, parity, genetic factors, and aetiology of the infertility, along with longer follow-up times.

### Importance of Cancer Screening

Early detection is paramount in the fight against cervical cancer. Regular screenings empower women to take control of their health, allowing potential issues to be identified in their infancy.

Dr Thangesweran adds, “By fostering awareness and encouraging proactive health-seeking behaviours, we can collectively move towards a future where cervical cancer is not just treatable but preventable. Prevention involves detecting cell changes early through HPV vaccines, regular pelvic exams, HPV DNA tests every 4 years and pap smears every three years. Late-stage diagnoses, preventable with these measures, are something we aim to avoid.

## Knowing Your Risks And The Importance Of Managing Your Gynaecological Health And Wellbeing

- **Know Your Body, Break the Taboos:** Understanding your body, monitoring your menstrual pattern, and seek early help. Do not ignore symptoms!
- **Clear Communication and Regular Pelvic Examinations:** Communicate your medical history during doctor visits, regular pelvic exams, and provide vital information.
- **Risk Assessment and Screening:** Risk assessment determines the right screening tests. Catch it early; the earlier you catch it, the better the outcome!
- **Recognising and Addressing Symptoms and Risk factors:** Do not ignore your symptoms even though you may think it's normal. For example, bleeding after menopause or postmenopausal bleeding is not normal but it may be an early warning sign for endometrial cancer.

Early detection is not just an option but a shared responsibility. Early detection, open communication, and regular screenings are imminent. By breaking taboos and fostering a culture of awareness, we pave the way for a future where cervical cancer is not just treatable but preventable.





## YOUR EVERYDAY WELLNESS

The weather has been rather unpredictable lately, alternating between heavy rain and scorching heat. It's crucial to seek expert advice on navigating through such conditions. But don't worry, we've got you covered as you browse through this section.



**YOUR EVERYDAY WELLNESS**

# Do Not Ignore Deformed Hands, Crooked Fingers!

Whilst deformed hands and crooked fingers are commonly found especially among older individuals, they should not be ignored as it may be a sign of a medical condition known as hand osteoarthritis.

Hand and Microsurgery Consultant at Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City, Dr Liew Siew Khei said the condition, which affects approximately 600 million individuals worldwide, is caused by progressive degeneration and inflammation of joints in the hands.

She said the occurrence of hand osteoarthritis is severely underreported in Malaysia (7.05 cases for every 100,000 population, according to the journal *Frontiers in Medicine* 2022) as there is a lack of awareness among the public.



**Dr Liew Siew Khei**  
 Hand and Microsurgery Consultant

Condition	Symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peaks after 50 years of age</li> <li>• Risk increases as age advances</li> <li>• Condition is found in 80% of those aged 75 years and above</li> <li>• Manual workers using repetitive pinching or gripping motions at work</li> <li>• Individuals with previous hand fractures, family history, and obesity face higher risks</li> <li>• Women are 3 times more susceptible compared to men</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stiffness and joint pain</li> <li>• Exacerbate into deformation</li> <li>• Weakness in gripping</li> </ul>

This condition is not purely a biomechanical problem like in knee or hip joint, and it is closely related with inflammation and metabolic regulation.

**“ Women suffer a significant fluctuation of oestrogen levels when they reach their perimenopausal phase, around the age of 50, and hormonal changes causes them to be more prone to inflammation and have increased pain sensitivity,” she said.**





She also noted that it is concerning how a lot of patients especially elderly tend to ignore the symptoms and delay their treatment, while adding that deformities and costly surgeries to correct the condition could be prevented if patients seek early medical attention.

“ Once osteoarthritis sets in, usually it can't be reversed but what we can do is manage the symptoms such as using splints to correct the alignment of joints and alleviate pain, steroid injection to reduce inflammation or hyaluronic acid injection that will act as lubricants to reduce friction in the affected joints,” she said.

**Patients could also manage the early onset of hand osteoarthritis by:**

- Using hot or cold compress to alleviate pain
- Reducing their body weight to reduce pro-inflammatory cells in the body
  - Lifestyle modification such as replacing door knobs with handles, not wearing buttoned pants and shirts, and simple hand strengthening exercises

She added that if all fails, doctors will resort to surgery, such as keyhole (arthroscopic) surgery, alignment correction surgery, or by replacing with artificial or prosthetic joints.

By seeking early medical treatment, deformities can be prevented and perhaps prevent costly surgeries,” she said.



**YOUR EVERYDAY WELLNESS**

# Endoscopy for Children

Endoscopy is a nonsurgical procedure that allows a doctor to visually examine the inside of the body with an endoscope — a long, thin and flexible tube with a camera and light.

Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City consultant paediatrician Dr Nazrul Neezam Nordin said in children, endoscopy could be used to look for causes of unexplained, recurrent and persistent abdominal pain as well as to identify certain conditions.

“Whilst undergoing any type of medical procedure could be stressful for any child, endoscopy is a relatively quick and painless procedure as it is done under adequate sedation, he said.



**Dr Nazrul Neezam Nordin**  
 Consultant Paediatrician

**Types of Endoscopy:**

<p><b>Gastroscopy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also known as upper endoscopy</li> <li>• Gastroenterologists would insert the endoscope from the mouth into the digestive tract to examine the upper intestine of the patients</li> <li>• Procedure would be performed if the child experienced persistent symptoms of unexplained vomiting, recurrent vomiting episodes or vomiting that is associated with warning symptoms such as blood-stained vomit</li> <li>• A very simple procedure where the child needs to fast for at least six hours before the procedure. Normally, this procedure only takes five to 10 minutes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Colonoscopy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The examination of the colon or large intestine, where the endoscope or colonoscope, specifically, is inserted from the anus</li> <li>• Investigate symptoms related to abdominal pain that is significant and severe enough to affect daily activities</li> <li>• Indicated if the abdominal pain is associated with prolonged diarrhoea especially with presence of weight loss</li> <li>• Children usually will be admitted for bowel preparation. It involves administering medication to make them poop</li> <li>• Typical procedure takes between 15 minutes to 45 minutes</li> </ul>
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Besides that, he shared that there is no dietary restriction after the procedure, but generally, patients could start with taking fluid first and upgrade accordingly because in some cases, the effect of the anaesthetics will linger but it all depends from case to case.

Despite all that, he said parents need to be alert on specific signs after the procedure, especially severe abdominal pain with distension as a result of the extreme unlikely risk of bowel perforation.

“Slight abdominal distension or bloating is expected as the intestine is inflated with air during the procedure,” he added.

**YOUR EVERYDAY WELLNESS**

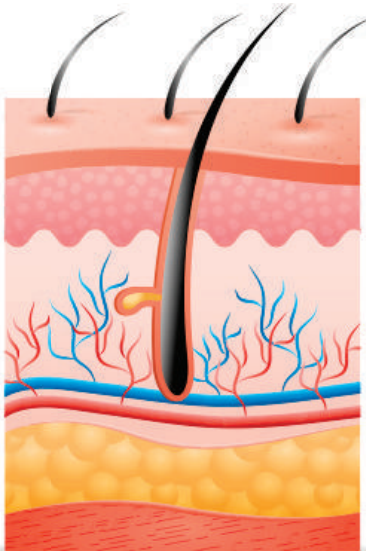
# Hydrated Skin, Healthy You!

The skin is the largest organ which protects our internal organs from injuries, germs or bacteria, as well as from exposure to extreme weather. It controls our body’s temperature and helps detect different senses such as cold, heat and pain.

“Lack of water or skin dehydration will cause dry skin where it will peel, crack, irritate, itch and become sensitive. If we scratch when it itches, it may lead to damage of the skin’s first layer or the epidermis (a protective layer), causing it to become thinner or eventually recede away.”



**Dr Felix Yap Boon Bin**  
 Dermatologist



**Skin on the human body consists of 3 layers:**

- **Epidermis:** Outermost layer of the skin, and is responsible for waterproofing and giving colour or tone to the skin
- **Dermis:** Below the epidermis, containing nerves, strong connective tissue and hair follicles
- **Hypodermis:** The deepest layer, which is the layer of subcutaneous tissue that is rich in fat and has protein to help the skin tissue return to its original shape after being stretched

“When the epidermis is compromised, germs and dust can penetrate into the second layer of the skin or dermis, causing inflammation, in addition to causing other skin problems, such as eczema and psoriasis,” he continued.

Factors Causing Skin Dryness	Choice of Moisturiser According to Skin Type
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genetic factors</li> <li>• Improper selection of products</li> <li>• Air-conditioned room</li> <li>• Being under the hot sun for a long period of time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stiffness and joint pain</li> <li>• Exacerbate into deformation</li> <li>• Weakness in gripping</li> </ul>

If unsure on the type of products – use a sample first to ensure that the selected product is suitable for your skin type!

The skin requires a balanced diet which includes a variety of nutrients and not just vegetables!

**A healthy lifestyle is equally important to ensure water balance in the skin:**

- Adequate and quality rest or sleep
- Being active in sports as this improves the immune system. Low immunity can cause skin diseases such as eczema!
- Use moisturisers before going to bed
- Apply sunscreen before leaving the house

Dr Felix added, “The water content in the skin will also decrease as we age. The protective layer will become thinner and its efficiency to trap water will also become lower when we reach between 40 to 50 years old. Therefore, do not take skin care for granted and take care of your skin from young to avoid skin problems in the future.”





**YOUR EVERYDAY WELLNESS**

# Navigating Digestive Health Through Aging

While ageing, the impact on our digestive system is a chapter that often goes unexplored. Studies have found that nearly 40% of older adults have one or more age-related digestive symptoms each year. Furthermore, those with existing or long-standing digestive conditions can experience worsening symptoms as they age.



**Dr Lim Sim Yee**  
 Gastroenterology and Hepatology Consultant

## Navigating Aging and Changes in Digestive Health

As we age, our bodies undergo several natural changes affecting our digestive system. While these changes are inevitable, there are steps we can take to maintain good digestive health and minimise any discomfort or challenges that may arise.

Factors Contribute to Digestive System	Suggested Changes for Better Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreased production of digestive enzymes</li> <li>• Slower muscle contractions</li> <li>• Changes in gut bacteria</li> <li>• Side effects from medications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase protein intake to 1.5 grams per kilogram of body weight</li> <li>• Incorporating more fresh fruits and vegetables, fibre, and lean meat</li> </ul>

Dr Lim and Dr Soon underscored the importance of proactive measures, encouraging individuals to pay attention to digestive issues and not dismiss them as inevitable components of growing older as they may show underlying health issues, such as colon cancer.



**Dr Soon Yuen**  
 Consultant General and Upper Gastrointestinal Surgeon

This is because as we age, we lose muscle. Between 40 -80 years old, we lose 30% -50% of muscle mass due to ageing. Most men will lose about 30% of their muscle mass during their lifetime and lose even more if inactive. This muscle loss can also affect women the same way.

## Common Digestive Problems in Older Adults

Due to these age-related changes, older adults are more likely to experience digestive problems such as:

- Constipation
- Heartburn
- Diverticulosis
- Lactose intolerance



### Factors That Can Worsen Digestive Issues During The Ageing Process

- Chronic conditions such as diabetes can significantly affect the digestive system, altering gut movements. This is because high blood sugar, which is commonly caused by diabetes, can lead to gastroparesis, a condition that affects how you digest your food.
- Prescribed medications can have side effects that can cause constipation and other digestive issues. It is important to bring along your medications if you have digestive issues when you see your doctor, as it can help determine if your symptoms are related to the medication or could be something worse.
- Increased susceptibility of gastric ulcers and gastritis in older individuals due to the waning of protective mechanisms with age.

### Significant Role Geriatricians Play in Healthcare in Ageing Population

“Geriatricians are excellent coordinators of care and very good at complex care. They can speak to the patient, prescribe medications, and provide comprehensive treatment to treat them properly with minimal side effects.

Seeking early medical attention is imminent and symptoms should not be dismissed. Do not self-diagnose through online platforms as that can prolong your visit and worsen the problem. Many digestive issues can be treated easily if addressed promptly,” said Dr Soon.



YOUR EVERYDAY WELLNESS

# Hearing Loss among Younger Audiences in the Digital Age

In today's digital age, the widespread use of personal devices like smartphones, tablets, and headphones, particularly among children and young adults, has raised concerns about noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL). With approximately 1.1 billion teenagers and young adults worldwide affected by NIHL, mainly due to headphone and music player devices usage, prevention becomes paramount. Dr. Priatharisiny Velayutham, Consultant Paediatric ENT and ENT Specialist at Sunway Medical Centre, shared invaluable insights into the types, causes, prevention, and treatment of hearing loss especially among children and young adults.



**Dr Priatharisiny Velayutham**  
Consultant Paediatric ENT and  
ENT Specialist

## Misconceptions about Hearing Loss

When it comes to hearing loss, there are two main types of hearing loss: conductive and sensorineural. Conductive hearing loss, often caused by diseases affecting the ear such as fluid buildup or wax accumulation, is generally treatable. However, sensorineural hearing loss, which affects the nerve cells and is commonly induced by exposure to loud noises, is permanent, bilateral, and irreversible. This includes noise induced hearing loss where high-frequency exposure from personal devices, concerts, and other sources damages nerve cells in the inner ear, leading to hearing loss.







### Recognising Early Signs of Hearing Loss Among Children

Early signs and symptoms of hearing loss among children can often go unnoticed, but there are several early signs that parents should be aware of.

“ One common indicator is that if a child frequently listens to the TV or other electronic devices at a high volume, they also may have difficulties in school, such as struggling to follow instructions or falling behind academically and stagnating vocabulary growth. Speech and language delays can also be a significant red flag, as children may have trouble articulating words or understanding others. Many parents may not realise noise-induced hearing loss may be the problem so a hearing test and seeing a specialist or a paediatrician are crucial. ”

Dr Priatharisingy adds, “When it comes to noise-induced hearing loss, prevention is key. Parents play a crucial role in monitoring personal device usage among children and limiting exposure to loud noises. It’s essential to take breaks between sessions and consider using earplugs or noise protection gear for children in noisy environments like concerts.”

#### Tips for parents to manage and avoid NIHL:

- Set a timer between 30 minutes to one-hour period for headphones and gadget usages
- Limiting personal device usage at an early age such as headphone use as a “treat” upon completing tasks or homework.
- Encouraging activities such as reading and listening to books or stories instead of video or TV screens.
- Encourage time without personal devices especially during mealtimes or quality time to foster meaningful interactions and reduces dependency on screens and devices.
- Early intervention and regular screenings are essential for detecting and addressing hearing issues promptly, ensuring a better quality of life for the younger generation.



## TIPS FROM SUNMED DOCTORS

# Brighten your Festive Smile with the Right Dental Care

With all the delicious food during festive seasons, we tend to forget the importance of maintaining good dental health, especially with the need to maintain our beautiful smile during the festive season.

“It is okay to enjoy treats but moderation is key. Avoid consuming excessive sugary food and drinks as this can contribute to tooth decay and other dental issues. It is also better to consume sweets with meals rather than as snacks. This is because the increased saliva production during meals can help neutralise acids and rinse away food particles,” said Dr Emilia.



**Dr Emilia Chua Siew Li**  
Dental Surgeon

### Dr Emilia also Suggests the Following:

- Choose oral-friendly food like fresh fruits, vegetables with hummus, cheese, nuts, lean proteins, whole grains and beverages like green and black teas that provide additional oral health benefits
- Consume oranges in moderation as oranges are acidic and could erode the enamel and increase risk of tooth decay
- Use a straw for sugary or acidic drinks such as soft drinks and keep them at mealtimes
- Stay hydrated with water
- Chew sugar-free xylitol gum to stimulate saliva and prevent tooth decay

### Before the Festivities

- Schedule dental check-up and cleaning
- Consult with your dentist for personalised advice
- Discuss treatment options like fillings, teeth whitening, veneers, and replacements
- Encourage children to consume sugary food with moderation

### Tips to Maintain Good Oral Hygiene While Traveling:

- Pack enough oral care items and include a travel-sized toothbrush, toothpaste and floss especially in the plane or for short trips
- Consider using a toothbrush cover to keep it clean
- Stay hydrated to rinse away particles and prevent dry mouth
- Watch your diet, limiting sugary snacks and acidic drinks
- Stick to your regular oral care routine: brush twice a day and floss daily
- Schedule a dental check-up before traveling to avoid any additional dental emergencies



### In Case of Dental Emergencies

#### Here are some tips to help you while you make your dental appointment:

- Rinse your mouth and gently floss
- Use a cold compress for any swelling and take painkillers such as paracetamol
- If there are swelling, fever, or difficulty breathing or swallowing, seek emergency dental care or visit the nearest emergency room for immediate assistance
- For a knocked-out tooth, hold it by the crown, rinse without scrubbing, and try reinserting it in the socket immediately if possible or store it in milk or saliva to maintain the tooth while seeking immediate dental attention
- For lost fillings or dislodged crowns, maintain cleanliness and keep the detached crowns safe and seek dental attention promptly

By prioritising dental care and following these tips, let's enjoy a happy and healthy festive season while maintaining our dental health and hygiene.



TIPS FROM SUNMED DOCTORS

# Staying Safe During the Monsoon Season

In Malaysia, especially during the monsoon season, floods significantly threaten public health, especially in a tropical climate, causing various health issues that can have long-lasting consequences. With garbage and contaminated water overflowing into reservoirs and waterways, the risk of infectious diseases looms large.



**Dr Lim Eu Jack**  
 Consultant Emergency Medicine

Some of the common health impacts of floods:

Type of Diseases	Details	Symptoms
<b>Waterborne Diseases</b>	Typhoid fever, cholera, hepatitis A, dysentery, food poisoning	Diarrhoea, vomiting, fever, headache, abdominal pain
<b>Leptospirosis</b>	Bacterial infection, transmitted through contact with animal urine	Fever, headache, nausea, jaundice, abdominal pain
<b>Dengue Fever</b>	Transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes	High fever, muscle and joint pain, headache, nausea, vomiting



**Dr Mohd Khalis Abdul Rahim**  
 Consultant Emergency Medicine

Others include malaria, upper respiratory infections and dehydration.

“As a healthcare professional, dehydration is a major concern in flood-affected individuals, particularly those grappling with foodborne illnesses like food poisoning and diarrhea. Vulnerable populations, including children, infants, and senior citizens, are at higher risk due to their sensitivity to fluid loss. Individuals with chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, heart or kidney failure problem also face elevated risks,” said Dr Khalis.

Dr Jack adds, “Other complications includes kidney or urinary problems, impairing cognitive function leading to difficulty in concentration, confusion, and impaired memory. In extreme cases of dehydration, life-threatening situations such as hypovolemic shock may arise. This type of shock occurs when reduced blood volume leads to a decline in blood pressure”.

### Dengue during Monsoon Season

Dr. Jack shares said there is usually an upward trend in dengue cases especially during the monsoon season, as places susceptible to stagnant water tend to increase. This is why Malaysians have to be extra vigilant when it comes to taking precautionary steps such as using mosquito repellent or natural repellents that use plant-based extracts, such as citronella, eucalyptus and other essential oils when sleeping or outdoors, frequently checking and removing stagnant water from your home that can help prevent the spread of dengue fever.

It is highly imperative to seek medical help and get tested if there is high fever, muscle ache, joint pain, fatigue, nausea and vomiting, abdominal pain and bleeding tendencies as it could be life-threatening.

### Mental Health Impact

Several studies have found that direct and indirect exposure to floods can lead to a range of negative mental health impacts, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), psychological distress, depression, and anxiety which can be at an elevated rate compared with those unaffected by flooding.



#### Safety Tips for Monsoon Season

- Drink safe and clean water - boiled or bottled water only
- Consume cooked food
- Practice good hygiene
- Use mosquito repellent
- Check and remove stagnant water
- Seek medical attention immediately when you have symptoms - even after the disaster
- Avoid playing in floodwaters or rivers
- Turn off electrical switches, water supply, and gas valves before leaving home
- Prioritise the safety of vulnerable individuals

For emergency cases, call our emergency line: +603 5566 8888

To visit our A&EL, children below 12 years old: Tower D or 12 years old & above: Tower B



## TIPS FROM SUNMED DOCTORS

# Watch out for Dengue Warning Signs

The recent surge in dengue cases reported nationwide underscores the importance of remaining vigilant of the warning signs associated with the illness.

Dr Aaron Lai highlights the importance of early detection of the infection to facilitate prompt treatment and mitigate the risk of further complications.



### Warning Signs and Symptoms

- Abdominal pain
- Persistent vomiting over three times a day
- Persistent diarrhea over three times a day
- Bleeding from gums, nose or ears
- Black-colored stool



**Dr Aaron Lai Kuo Huo**  
Emergency Physician

Other primary symptoms of dengue fever are headache, generalized body aches, rashes and pain behind the eye.

Though these symptoms might resemble other common illness like flu, he said that dengue fever often presents with more severe muscle and joint pain and can progress to severe complications like dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF) or dengue shock syndrome (DSS).

DHF and DSS are characterized by severe internal bleeding, low platelet counts, plasma leakage, and organ impairment.

As clinical diagnosis of dengue lacks specificity, a definitive diagnosis of dengue requires laboratory confirmation.

Laboratory testing available for the diagnosis of dengue includes point-of-care testing with rapid dengue combo tests (Dengue NS1 Antigen, Dengue IgM/IgG antibodies), dengue serology testing (use to identify antibodies against dengue) and dengue viral RNA detection (use to detect the genetic material, RNA of dengue virus in the blood).

“Through clinical assessment and laboratory testing, the doctor can ascertain the likelihood of dengue infection, the phase of dengue infection and severity of the illness,” he explained.



### Stages of Dengue Infection

The Febrile Phase comprises of fever that lasts three to five days where during this phase, the patient experiences fever, joint pain, muscle pain, headaches and other symptoms.

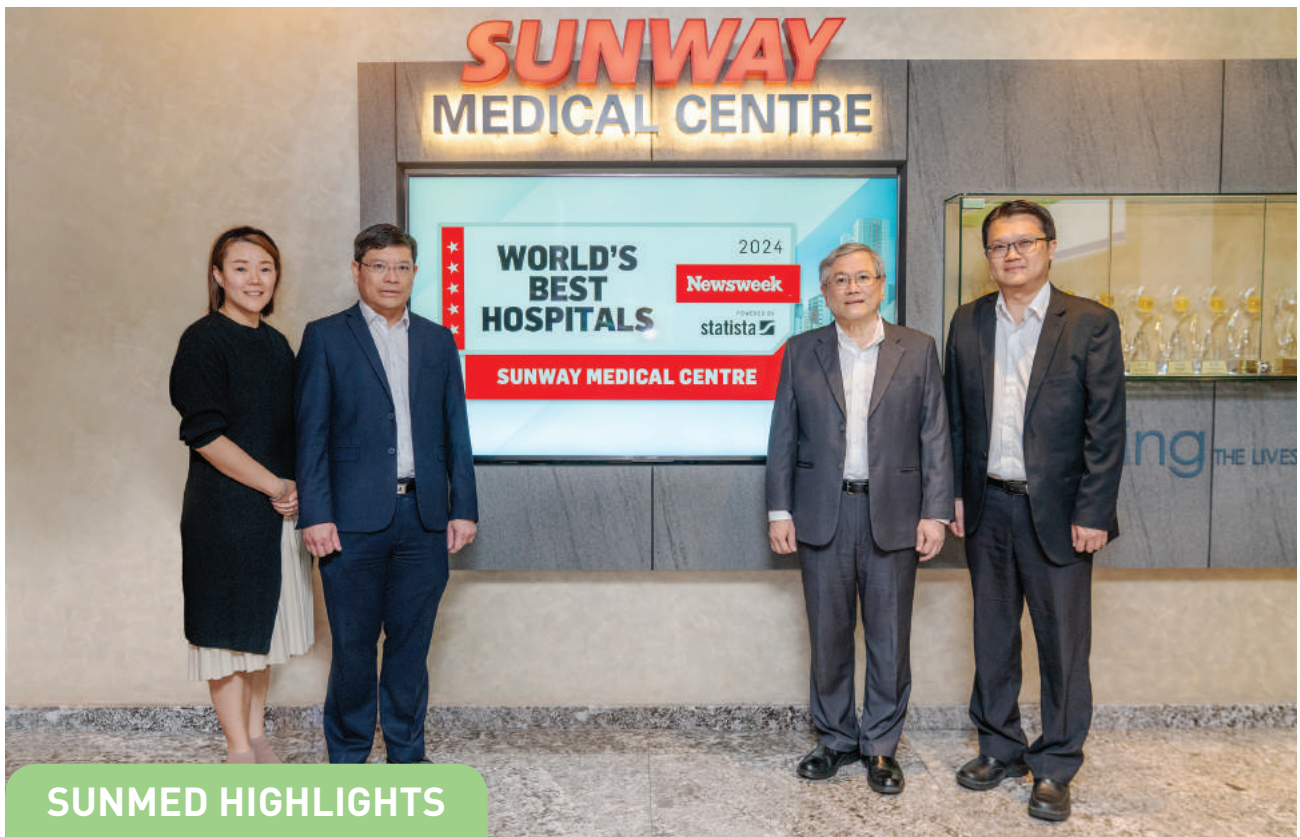
Subsequently, the patient may enter the Critical Phase which could last between 48 to 72 hours.

Though the patient recovers from fever at this stage, there is a potential of decreased platelet and white blood cell count.

The patient would then starts exhibiting different symptoms including serious indicators such as internal bleeding, water retention in the lungs or stomach, low blood pressure, kidney failure and liver failure as well as coma, which may lead to death.

Following the Critical Stage, the patient will go through the Recovery Phase where dengue symptoms dissipate while blood platelets and white blood cells return to normal count.





## Sunway Medical Centre Featured in Newsweek World's Best Hospitals 2024

The hospital made it to the prestigious list of the best in the world!

Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City (SMC) was ranked in the top 250 of Newsweek World's Best Hospitals 2024. This was the first time ever a Malaysian hospital featured in the list since the ranking began in 2019.

Out of 30 countries and 2,400 shortlisted hospitals, which include public hospitals, university teaching hospitals and the private medical centres, Sunway Medical Centre made it to the global listing.

Seeking to benchmark hospitals around the world in areas of clinical excellence, research and innovation, the 2024 rankings relied on a comprehensive global survey conducted among doctors, healthcare professionals, and administrators spanning four continents, as well as data from patient surveys and hospital quality metrics.

"We are immensely honoured that SMC, though a relatively young hospital, is recognised among the world's best hospitals, in rankings that have seen the likes of Mayo Clinic (USA), Singapore General Hospital, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (Australia), and The University of Tokyo Hospital (Japan).

"This is a fitting way for us to celebrate our 25th anniversary this year, as we aim to further elevate our standards of care through patient-centred innovative treatments, digitalisation and providing comprehensive clinical services," said Dato' Lau Beng Long, President of Sunway Healthcare Group.



SUNMED HIGHLIGHTS

# Chinese New Year Celebration – Year of the Dragon

This Year of the Dragon, Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City, ushers in the new lunar year with a dazzling celebration, showcasing a captivating dragon dance alongside two lively lion dances at our Tower D lobby.

Following the performance, the lions made their way to various departments throughout the hospital, spreading joy, excitement and wishing a prosperous and fortune-filled New Year to everyone.

Indeed, we had a colourful Chinese New Year celebration at Sunway Medical Centre and we look forward to more festivities in the near future!





SUNMED HIGHLIGHTS

# Heartwarming Celebration for Brave Cancer Fighters

Ring in 2024, Sunway Cancer Centre hosted a heart-warming celebration for our brave cancer fighters and their families, bringing over 150 people together in a display of joy, community spirit, and resilience. The event featured the traditional lou sang for prosperity, an exciting lucky draw, and captivating performances by BCWA.

We are deeply thankful for every individual who joined us, each adding to the event's warmth and demonstrating the incredible power of unity and mutual support. This gathering not only celebrated the New Year but also reinforced our shared commitment to supporting one another through the challenges posed by cancer.

As we step into 2024, we are fuelled by the cherished memories of this celebration and driven by the hope of achieving significant milestones in cancer victory. Together, we are emboldened by a renewed spirit of togetherness, ready to continue our fight, support each other, and share hope. Here's to a year of strength, unity, and progress against cancer.



**SUNMED HIGHLIGHTS**

## SMC Partners with A-LOOK to Provide Quality Eye Care Services



Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City (SMC) and A-LOOK Eyewear Group, recently announced a strategic partnership aimed at providing comprehensive and quality eye care services to the community, in and around the Klang Valley.

Through this partnership, the organisations will together organise public awareness initiatives on eye health while emphasising on the importance of regular eye check-ups. There will be innovative outreach programmes that include providing accessible eye care services such as eye health screening and free spectacles to underserved communities, targeting children in orphanage homes and aboriginal populations residing in remote areas. Clear vision is crucially important for well-being and an improved quality of life.

This partnership also aims to enhance patient journey through a seamless referral process where A-LOOK Eyewear customers can easily access specialised eye care services at Sunway Eye Centre, through a dedicated careline provided to A-LOOK Eyewear's eye care practitioners for inquiries. This ensures patients have access to both medical eye care services as well as optical products, where and when needed. Blinding eye conditions such as diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma can be prevented if early intervention is put in place.



**SUNMED HIGHLIGHTS**

**Healthcare Asia Awards 2024**

SMC has clinched two awards for the Healthcare Asia Awards 2024!

We won the Hospital of the Year (Malaysia) award for the third consecutive year and the Health Promotion Initiative of the Year award.



**Malaysia Health & Wellness Brand Awards 2023**

Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City (SMC) has marked another feather to our cap by winning the Private Hospitals Category and the Private Hospitals - Cancer Centre Category Awards, at the Malaysia Health & Wellness Brand Awards 2023.

**Sunway Medical Centre's lab accredited with prestigious CAP**

SMC's Special Haematology Laboratory has been officially accredited with Gold Standard for Laboratory Quality Control Worldwide by renowned College of American Pathologists (CAP).

Led by Special Haematology Laboratory Director and Consultant Haematologist and Transplant Medicine Dato' Dr Chang Kian Meng, the acknowledgement further demonstrates that the lab operates with the highest standards of quality control to conduct testing for clinical diagnostics, providing the highest quality and precision care for our patients as well as further attesting that SMC is an internationally-accredited hospital.



SUNMED HIGHLIGHTS

# #SunMedCares: People Of SunMed

## Behind the Scene of Maintaining Excellent Hygiene

“As a hospital, cleanliness is crucial for patients’ overall well-being, and of course, this includes both the food and the environment where it is prepared.”

Meet Mohd Fadzil bin Che Yahaya, our Chief Steward who is based in the kitchens in Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City, right at the very heart of where all the tasty meals for everyone are prepared and cooked.

He is responsible for overseeing the stewards, and they play an important role in ensuring that our kitchens are kept to high standards of cleanliness.

They also clean the entire kitchen area using specialised chemicals and equipment before operations begin for the day and right after, and deep cleaning once a week.

Our appreciation goes out to Mohd Fadzil and the team who all work hard to ensure the cleanliness of our hospital kitchens. Thanks!



## Keeping the Hospital Clean and Comfortable

Meet our Supervisor of Linen Cleaning (Housekeeping), Amutha Perumal who is key to ensuring a hygienic environment for our patients and staff by providing a constant stream of fresh and clean hospital linens.

Amutha and her team of porters collect the dirty linen five times every day.

The next day, the freshly laundered hospital linens are delivered back to our hospital before the clean linens are distributed to the respective departments based on their specific requirements.

Our deepest appreciation goes to Amutha and her team of porters, who work hard to ensure a constant supply of clean hospital linen for our hospital!





# blood

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# Heat Exhaustion

Watch out for these **symptoms:**



Dizziness



Nausea



Headache



Rapid  
heartbeat



Fainting


## Stay safe in the heat!

Stay cool, stay safe, and stay alert to the signs of heat exhaustion!  
As hot weather is prevalent in many parts of the country,  
it is important for individuals to promptly identify  
the symptoms of heat stroke.

For emergency help, visit our  
**A&E Department** or call **+603 5566 8888**

**SUNWAY**  
**MEDICAL CENTRE**®  
Sunway City Kuala Lumpur

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