

# SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR. CHAN CHEE SENG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY,  
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, AND MP FOR JALAN BESAR, AT THE OPENING  
OF THE DENTAL HEALTH EXHIBITION AT COMMUNITY CENTRES, ON FRIDAY,  
11 AUGUST 1978 AT 8.00 P.M. AT THE MAUDE ROAD COMMUNITY CENTRE

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We all would like to have a nice set of teeth. We like to have good teeth for the beautiful smile it gives us, to have sweet breath and to be able to enjoy our food.

Nature has been generous by giving us each two sets of teeth. Even though the first set is eventually replaced, each one of the temporary teeth has to be kept healthy as they form the foundation for a good and healthy second set of our permanent teeth.

Rinsing the mouth and brushing the teeth are two simple activities. These should especially be done after meals. These should be able to prevent most dental caries. You should spend the time for regular check-ups with the dentist, even if you do not think that there is anything wrong with your teeth. Certainly it would be rather late if you attend a dentist only when you suffer a toothache. When this happens it may already be too late. You will pay for costly treatment, and may run the risk of having to lose your teeth.

The intention of the Government has always been that services should be provided to people on a fair deal at a price they can afford. We have made heavy investments in educating medical and dental specialists hoping that they would serve the people and upgrade medical and dental health among the population. It is therefore sad to know that there are many specialists in the private sector who charge such high fees that only the rich can benefit from their services. Such specialists should remember that the training they received was made available to them at cost to society. Therefore, when they set their price for specialist treatment, they must take into account the social circumstances of the patients who

come to see them, keeping in mind that it is not only the rich who need specialist treatment, but even those who cannot afford to pay a large sum sometimes do require to be seen by a specialist. They should see it as their social responsibility to set realistic charges and price their services within the reach of the common people.

The Government will continue to strive to make specialist dental care available to the public in its dental clinics at low cost. However, it is also the responsibility of the people to take whatever preventive measures they can to keep in good condition what nature has given them. This is especially so when they are likely to be faced with exorbitant medical or dental charges when they seek specialist treatment from the private sector.

The Dental Health Exhibition is to remind you that the care of teeth is essential if you want to preserve what nature has given. Our teeth need care. They are not indestructable. This exhibition is therefore to encourage preventive action.

I am pleased that the exhibition is being held in this community centre. The Training and Health Unit, particularly the Dental Section of the Ministry of Health, is to be thanked for arranging it. The effort and time spent in presenting this exhibition to you will be worth all the trouble if this simple message of self-care of the teeth is taken to heart.

I have great pleasure in declaring this exhibition open.

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