

## Safety Corner

### What is an NCD?

A non-communicable disease (NCD) is a disease that is usually not transmissible directly from one person to another. NCDs may be chronic or acute, and tend to be the result of a combination of genetic, physiological, environmental and behaviours factors. The main types of NCDs are cardiovascular diseases (such as heart attacks and stroke), cancers, chronic respiratory diseases (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma), and diabetes.

Over 70% of global deaths are attributable to NCDs. Historically considered to be diseases of the rich and elderly, NCDs are now severely, and disproportionately impacting people from low- and middle-income countries. 80% of NCDs - some 32 million people - are in this section.

NCDs are driven largely by four main modifiable risk factors – tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, and harmful use of alcohol. With cardiovascular diseases now accounting for more than half of all NCD-related deaths, NCDs are expected to increase by 17% by 2025.

With a view to reducing the burden of NCDs, including disability and premature death, the Department of Health of the HKSAR Government has established the "Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Noncommunicable Diseases in Hong Kong (SAP)".

In the expectation that the leading causes and underlying risk factors for NCDs can be effectively tackled through population-based interventions that encourage healthier lifestyles, the SAP defines nine local targets to be achieved by 2025:

1. A 25% relative reduction in risk of premature mortality from cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes, or chronic respiratory diseases
2. At least 10% relative reduction in the prevalence of binge drinking and harmful use of alcohol (harmful drinking/alcohol dependence) among adults and in the prevalence of drinking among youth
3. A 10% relative reduction in the prevalence of insufficient physical activity among adolescents and adults
4. A 30% relative reduction in mean population daily intake of salt/sodium
5. A 30% relative reduction in the prevalence of current tobacco use in persons aged 15+ years by 2025 when compared to the baseline prevalence
6. Contain the prevalence of raised blood pressure
7. Halt the rise in diabetes and obesity
8. Prevent heart attacks and strokes through drug therapy and counselling
9. Improve availability of affordable basic technologies and essential medicines to treat major NCD

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