



# WellnessBuzz

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## Getting to the Root of Gum Disease

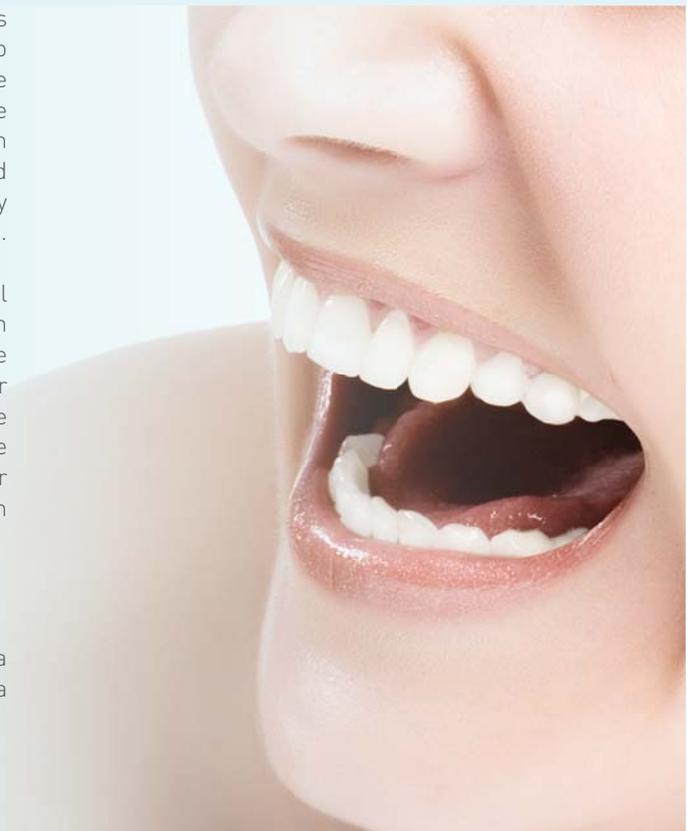
In Singapore, it is widely believed that gum disease cannot be controlled and cured. Gum disease is an infection of the tissues that surround your teeth and is a major cause of tooth loss in adults. With basic knowledge of the early signs of this condition, there might be hope for cure at the root of it all.

Generally, there are two types of patients that dentists commonly meet in their line of work. The first group of patients strongly believe that nothing can be done for their shaky teeth; they were simply waiting for the day when they will have to wear dentures. And then there are those who suffered from bleeding gums and recurrent gum swelling for years, thinking that they had to live with this condition due to their 'weak gums'.

As most gum diseases are caused by bacterial infections, the primary focus of treatment will be on the eradication of the bacteria that is causing the infection. However, in severe infections that occur beneath the gums, a visit to the dentist for routine scaling and polishing will have limited effect on the disease. That is why it is important to look out for the signs of gum disease and seek early treatment in order to find a cure for this condition.

### **Warning signs of gum disease**

An unfortunate fact about gum disease is that it is a silent disease. It is often not painful, and comes with a few subtle signs, which include the following:





Article contributed by

**Dr Benjamin T.K. Tan**

B.D.S. (Singapore),

M.Sc. Periodontics (London),

M. Clin. Dent. Periodontics

(Distinction, London),

F.A.M.S (Periodontics)

Specialist Periodontist

Poon & Phay Dental Surgeons Pte Ltd

**Novena Specialist Center**

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### 1. Gum redness and swelling

Gums that appear to be red, swollen or tender usually signals the start of early stage gum disease, which is called gingivitis. At this stage, the disease is still reversible and can usually be cured with professional cleaning at the dentist, followed by daily brushing and flossing.

### 2. Bad breath and bleeding while brushing teeth

For cases of bad breath or gums that bleed while brushing teeth, a visit to the dentist is in order to seek advice and treatment. Should the bleeding gums or bad breath persist or recur despite scaling treatment, or worse, when teeth loss occurs, it is advisable to ask for a referral to see a Specialist Periodontist for further treatment.

Periodontists are dentists who specialise in the treatment of gum disease, and there are currently 36 Ministry of Health accredited Specialist Periodontists in Singapore.

### 3. Shaky teeth and tooth migration

Teeth that feel loose or gradually shift position in the mouth may be signs of chronic periodontitis. This advanced gum disease can lead to the loss of tissue and bone that support the teeth, and it may become more severe over time.

#### ***Dentist's Tip:***

#### **Do not ignore tooth loss!**

Once tooth loss occurs as a result of gum disease (i.e. tooth extracted because it become very mobile or shaky), it is usually a telltale sign of a severe gum infection. This leads to the spread of bacteria, and other teeth in the mouth will also become infected over time.



Gum disease usually makes its appearance with subtle warning signs that we might miss. But with regular dental check-ups and good oral care at home, gum disease can be effectively cured and prevented from becoming more serious.

*Dr Benjamin T.K. Tan is a Ministry of Health (Singapore) accredited Specialist in Periodontology. He specialises in the provision of dental implants, treatment of gum disease, bad breath and periodontal cosmetic surgery. Dr Tan received his training in Periodontology and Dental Implantology at the Eastman Dental Institute, University College London; and obtained his Master of Science and Master of Clinical Dentistry in 2000. He is currently Chairperson of the Chapter of Periodontists, Academy of Medicine Singapore and Dental Specialist Accreditation Committee (Periodontology), Singapore. Dr Tan believes in salvaging natural teeth rather than extracting them, and uses non-surgical and conservative treatment options whenever possible.*



Article contributed by

**Dr Chiam Tut Fu**

MBBS (Singapore),  
MSS (Sports Medicine),  
MMed (Occupational Medicine),  
Graduate Diploma  
(Occupational Medicine),  
Consultant Sports Medicine  
Physician  
SportsMed Central

**Novena Medical Center**

## Knees Please

Stiffness, swelling and pain in the knees could be signs of knee arthritis. Fortunately, there is a host of non-surgical treatments that can help straighten out this problem.

Bending or straightening of the knee has become a challenge, no thanks to the stiffness or swelling in the joint. Or perhaps the knee hurts first thing in the morning, after a period of inactivity or strenuous activity. The pain often shows up as a feeling of weakness in the knee. Other times, it occurs gradually or may even strike suddenly. This could be the onset of arthritis, of which there are three types.

Osteoarthritis, the most common, is usually a progressive degenerative disease in which the knee joint cartilage slowly wears away. Rheumatoid arthritis, which tends to affect both knees, is an inflammatory arthritis that can destroy joint cartilage. Post-traumatic arthritis can develop years after a fracture or other knee injury.

### Seeking Non-Surgical Relief

With early detection and intervention to seek relief for arthritis, this weak and stiff knee condition can be treated effectively – without the need for surgery. Here are some non-surgical ways that can help reduce the symptoms of arthritis:

#### Change your lifestyle

Depending on the type of arthritis, patients may be asked to modify certain lifestyle habits. Some examples include losing weight to lessen the loading on the knees, switching to low-impact exercise routines or to get started on physical therapy to strengthen leg muscles and reduce knee pain.

#### Get support

To cushion the impact on the knees while moving about, support devices such as a knee brace or energy-absorbing shoes can provide support and relief.

#### Supplements for your pain

Some over-the-counter pain relief medications can help to reduce inflammation of the knees. Supplements such as glucosamine and chondroitin sulphate, while have not been proven to help in osteoarthritic pain, seem to provide



relief for some people. It is always advisable to consult the doctor before taking any of these pain-relief medications.

#### Shots of relief

For moderate-to-severe pain, anti-inflammatory joint injections such as corticosteroids have been known to provide relief. Other treatments that can be considered include gold-salt injections and viscosupplementation with hyaluronic acid which help to improve the quality of the joint fluid and enable bones to move smoothly over each other. Over time, this can help to relieve pain in the knees.

#### Considering Cold Laser Therapy?

This outpatient treatment has been clinically proven to be very effective for treating arthritic knee pain, as well as acute and chronic injuries. With cold laser therapy, light of certain wavelengths and intensity is applied to the knee to reduce pain and inflammation.

Among the advantages of this treatment are that it is non-surgical, painless and low-cost – with zero downtime. There is no prolonged recovery time, nor does it involve taking any medication after treatment. Cold laser therapy has also been known to induce cellular and tissue regeneration in some patients, which helps to repair knee muscles.

**Living with arthritis may not be easy; but with early treatment via a wide range of non-surgical relief options, there is hope for cure that could improve this troubled knee condition.**

*Dr Chiam Tut Fu obtained his Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) from the National University of Singapore in 1990. He then went on to attain his Master of Sports Science (Sports Medicine) degree from the United States Sports Academy, where he graduated as the top student. He is an accredited Sports Science specialist.*

## Good Bones

Osteoporosis is a major health problem worldwide, especially in developed countries. Singapore is no exception, especially with a growing aging population. Thus, it is important to know the factors that could lead to bone degeneration and the treatment options available to manage this condition.

Osteoporosis is the thinning of bone tissue and loss of bone density that occurs over time in both men and women. Unlike women who develop this medical condition due to the lack of estrogen during their postmenopausal years, for men, factors such as delayed puberty, hypogonadism (i.e. when the sex glands produce little or no hormones) and androgen deprivation treatment for prostate cancer may trigger the onset of osteoporosis.

That is why it is important to take note of the symptoms that could lead to osteoporosis. Some common indicators include previous fractures and injuries, loss of height, bone pain, low calcium intake, smoking, alcohol intake and use of drugs such as anticoagulants (i.e. medication that prevents blood clot) and anticonvulsants (i.e. a type of antiepileptic drug).

### Assessing Bone Density

The Dual-Energy X-Ray Absorptiometry (DEXA) is the preferred method of assessment of bone density. It has been widely used for more than 20 years in many osteoporosis trials and treatment. DEXA measures the densities of the lumbar spine (located on the lower back) and the hip bone.

The World Health Organization has defined the following categories based on bone density:

- Normal bone: T-score better than -1
- Osteopenia: T-score between -1 and -2.5
- Osteoporosis: T-score less than -2.5

### Treatment for Osteoporosis

Apart from encouraging physical activities and prescribing supplements such as calcium in doses of 1g and vitamin D3 of about 800iu daily, one of the following well-established drug treatments for osteoporosis should be initiated.

#### Biphosphonate

With weekly oral prescriptions of drugs which include alendronate 70mg and risedronate 35mg, this treatment has been known to reduce the risk of spine and hip fracture.

However, prolonged usage has been associated with osteonecrosis of the jaw (ONJ), where a facial bone begins to starve from a permanent

or temporary lack of blood and atypical fracture, breaking of a leg bone in an unusual spot.

#### I.V. Zoledronate (Aclasta)

With just a single yearly transfusion, this treatment helps to maintain the bone mineral density of osteoporosis patients. However, the downside of this method is that it may cause acute renal failure and hypocalcemia, a condition of low serum calcium levels in the blood.

#### Strontium

This treatment involves daily administration, usually at night two hours after dinner with plain water. The major concern is skin reaction, particularly Steven Johnson Syndrome, a deadly skin disease that results from the drug reaction.

#### Teriparatide

With a single daily injection, teriparatide has a strong anabolic effect on the bone. It is usually reserved for patients with high fracture risk. The high cost of treatment for the daily injection and risk of hypercalcemia, in which too much calcium is found in the blood, are some down sides to this treatment.

**Dealing with the pain of osteoporosis may not be the easiest thing to do. But the discomforts of this condition can be eased by looking out for signs of bone density loss and seeking the right treatment according to the severity of the condition.**

*Dr Soon Puay Cheow has been a specialist in Endocrinology for more than 10 years. Before he left for private practice, he was a Senior Consultant Endocrinologist at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) and served as a committee member of the Specialist Trainee Committee of Endocrinology, Singapore. Currently, he is a Visiting Consultant in General Medicine at TTSH and Senior Consultant Endocrinologist at Soon Diabetes Thyroid and Endocrinology Clinic.*

*Over the years, he has won many service awards such as the National Healthcare Group Service Champion Award 2002, the Star Excellent Service Award (ExSA) 2003, the Quality Pillar Award 2004 and the Silver Excellent Service Award (ExSA) 2006.*



Article contributed by

**Dr Soon Puay Cheow**

Consultant Endocrinologist  
MBBS, MRCP (UK), FRCP (Edin),  
FAMS (Endocrinology)  
Soon Diabetes Thyroid And  
Endocrinology Clinic

Novena Medical Center

The following clinics are just three that are available at Novena Medical Center and Novena Specialist Center. To look for a specific healthcare and medical specialist, please refer to the directory listed at the back of this booklet.



### Poon & Phay Dental Surgeons Pte Ltd

Poon & Phay Dental Surgeons is a specialist dental clinic located at the Novena Specialist Center. The team of clinical specialists is accredited by the Ministry of Health (Singapore) in the areas of Prosthodontics and Periodontics. The clinic provides a wide range of general and specialist dental services including teeth whitening, root canal therapy, crown and bridgework, implants, as well as gum disease and bad breath management.

#### Poon & Phay Dental Surgeons Pte Ltd

8 Sinaran Drive #05-01  
Novena Specialist Center  
Singapore 307470  
Telephone: +65 6337 5365, +65 6338 3623  
Fax: +65 6737 3348  
Email: info@poonandphay.com  
Website: www.poonandphay.com



### SportsMed Central

SportsMed Central is a sports medicine clinic that provides a range of sport and musculoskeletal injury and weight management services. Services available at the clinic include non-surgical treatment for musculoskeletal injuries and wound healing, medical screening for exercise participation, stress testing, exercise prescription and nutrition consultation, and more. Patients are assured of personalised care and treatment, as the sports medicine physician works closely with the physiotherapists and personal trainers every step of the way.

#### SportsMed Central

10 Sinaran Drive #10-13  
Novena Medical Center  
Singapore 307506  
Telephone: +65 6479 6822  
Fax: +65 6479 0579  
Email: iocsportmed@healthwaymedical.com  
Website: www.healthwayspecialists.com



### Soon Diabetes Thyroid and Endocrinology Clinic

Located at Novena Medical Center, Soon Diabetes Thyroid and Endocrinology Clinic is run by Dr Soon Puay Cheow, an Endocrinology specialist with more than 10 years experience. Among the services provided by the clinic include treatment for medical conditions such as diabetes, hyperlipidemia, endocrine, hypertension, thyroid disorders, osteoporosis, obesity, hypogonadism and hypercalcemia. With a team of adept medical specialists, patients can be assured of receiving the best care and treatment.

#### Soon Diabetes Thyroid and Endocrinology Clinic

10 Sinaran Drive #10-08  
Novena Medical Center, Singapore 307506  
Tel: +65 6397 7101 Fax: +65 6397 7102  
Email: spc\_dmc@yahoo.com.sg Website: www.soonclinic.com.sg

**CLINIC / SPECIALTY**

- A Life Clinic**  
General Practice  
#11-20  
Tel: +65 67372283
- About Braces Dental Surgery**  
Orthodontics  
#10-21  
Tel: +65 63977177
- Advance Renal Therapy**  
Renal Medicine & Kidney Dialysis  
#11-14  
Tel: +65 63976468
- Ageless Revival Medical Centre**  
General Practice with Aesthetic Services  
#10-31  
Tel: +65 63976878
- Ambulatory SurgiCare**  
General Surgery  
#09-01  
Tel: +65 63976979
- American International Clinic**  
Internal Medicine  
#10-10  
Tel: +65 63977129
- Braces & Aesthetics Dental Clinic**  
Orthodontics  
#10-36  
Tel: +65 67322706
- Centre for Ear Nose Throat Allergy & Sleep**  
ENT (Ear, Nose, Throat)  
#11-23  
Tel: +65 65860988
- Centre for Hands & Reconstructive Microsurgery (Novena) Pte Ltd**  
Hand Surgery  
#11-17  
Tel: +65 63976850
- ClearSK™ Medi-Aesthetics Clinique (Novena)**  
Aesthetic Services & Wellness Care  
#10-01  
Tel: +65 63977250
- Clinic 10**  
Preventive Healthcare  
#09-31  
Tel: +65 63360504
- Compass Medical Group**  
Health Screening  
#10-28  
Tel: +65 66353525
- Cozy Dental Group**  
Dentistry  
#08-15/16  
Tel: +65 63976566
- CSK Novena Laser Aesthetic Clinic**  
Aesthetic Services & Wellness Care  
#10-26  
Tel: +65 63977050
- Dr Roby Marcou Developmental and Behavioural Paediatric Clinic**  
Developmental and Behavioural Paediatrics  
#10-12  
Tel: +65 63976637
- Fema Clinic & Surgery**  
Medical Clinic  
#09-01  
Tel: +65 68543720
- Healthway Medical Assessment Centre**  
Wellness Care  
#10-06  
Tel: +65 62382290

**CLINIC / SPECIALTY**

- H L Kong Medical Oncology Centre**  
Medical Oncology  
#11-08  
Tel: +65 63977123
- K O Chan Ear Nose Throat Sinus & Sleep Centre**  
ENT (Ear, Nose, Throat)  
#10-11  
Tel: +65 63976454
- LifeSource Medical Centre**  
Aesthetic & Regenerative Medicine  
#11-16  
Tel: +65 63976080
- Lim K.A Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery**  
Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery  
#09-25  
Tel: +65 62353688
- Loke Skin Clinic**  
Dermatology  
#09-13  
Tel: +65 63374926
- LQ Dental Centre**  
Dentistry  
#11-10  
Tel: +65 65380890
- Medifast Medical Centre**  
Health Screening  
#11-27  
Tel: +65 62223373
- MHC Medical Centre (Novena)**  
General Practitioner  
#09-10  
Tel: +65 63976568
- Naaman Skin and Laser Centre**  
Dermatology  
#09-27  
Tel: +65 63972833
- Neuglow The Aesthetics Doctors**  
Aesthetic Services  
#10-35  
Tel: +65 63972552
- Nihon Premium Clinic**  
Japanese Medical & Specialists Healthcare  
#11-12  
Tel: +65 63972002
- Nobel Psychological Wellness**  
Psychiatry  
#09-35  
Tel: +65 63972993
- Noel Leong Fertility and IVF**  
IVF/Obstetrics and Gynaecology  
#09-14  
Tel: +65 62556883
- Novena Children Clinic**  
Paediatric Medicine  
#10-32  
Tel: +65 63976960
- Novena Dental Aesthetic Practice Pte Ltd**  
Dentistry  
#09-34  
Tel: +65 63977097
- Novena Heart Centre**  
Cardiology & Cardiothoracic Surgery  
#09-05  
Tel: +65 63972004
- Novena Medical Center Family Clinic**  
General Practice  
#11-19  
Tel: +65 63977318

**CLINIC / SPECIALTY**

- Novena Medical Screening Centre**  
Health Screening  
#08-23  
Tel: +65 65132770
- Novena Psychiatry Clinic**  
Psychiatry  
#10-18  
Tel: +65 63972688
- Novena Surgery**  
Day Surgery  
#08-18  
Tel: +65 63079956
- OrthoSm;e Dental Practice LLP**  
Dentistry  
#09-29  
Tel: +65 63976880
- Parkway Laboratory Services Ltd**  
Medical Lab Testing  
#08-01  
Tel: +65 63976930
- Preventicine Centre Pte Ltd**  
Preventive Healthcare  
#09-24  
Tel: +65 63338489
- Profile Dental Surgery Pte Ltd**  
Oral/General Dentistry  
#09-32  
Tel: +65 63396806
- Psych & Psych Consultants Pte Ltd**  
Psychological Services  
#10-25  
Tel: +65 63976554
- Radiologic Clinic**  
X-Ray Services  
#08-02  
Tel: +65 63976686
- Roots! Advanced Endodontics**  
Endodontics  
#11-32  
Tel: +65 63972939
- Shenton Medical Group**  
General Practice & Health Screening  
#08-17/30  
Tel: +65 63977255
- Singapore Aesthetic Centre**  
Aesthetic Services  
#08-12  
Tel: +65 68371000
- Singapore Lipo, Body & Face Centre**  
Aesthetic Services  
#08-05  
Tel: +65 67361000
- Singapore Sports Medicine Centre**  
Sports Medicine  
#08-08  
Tel: +65 67371000
- Smile Avenue Dentistry Pte Ltd**  
Orthodontics  
#11-18  
Tel: +65 63972818
- Smile Makers Dental Clinic**  
Dentistry  
#09-26  
Tel: +65 63972739
- Soon Diabetes Thyroid and Endocrinology Clinic**  
Endocrinology  
#10-08  
Tel: +65 63977101

**CLINIC / SPECIALTY**

- Specialist Eye & Eyelids Centre**  
Ophthalmology  
#09-11  
Tel: +65 63976101
- Specialist Oral Surgeons**  
Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery  
#09-25  
Tel: +65 63976638
- SportsMed Central**  
Sports Medicine  
#10-13  
Tel: +65 64796822
- Stellar Medical Aesthetic Clinic**  
Aesthetic Services  
#11-31  
Tel: +65 63972722
- The Implant and Oral Surgery Centre**  
Dentistry  
#11-25/26  
+65 64748468
- The Oral Care Centre**  
Dentistry  
#10-17/29  
Tel: +65 63976990
- The O&G Care Centre**  
Obstetrics and Gynaecology  
#09-12  
Tel: +65 63976138
- The Plastic Surgery Practice**  
Plastic Surgery  
#11-33  
Tel: +65 63976618
- The Rafflesian Clinic & Surgery**  
Medical & Aesthetic Services  
#11-06  
Tel: +65 63382740
- The Revival Medical Centre**  
General Aesthetic & Regenerative Medicine  
#10-16  
Tel: +65 63972472
- The Sloane Clinic Plastic Surgery Centre**  
Plastic Surgery  
#08-35  
Tel: +65 63976848
- Thomson Lifestyle Centre**  
Wellness Care  
#10-14  
Tel: +65 63526550
- Thomson Paediatric Centre**  
Paediatric Medicine  
#09-02  
Tel: +65 62563291
- Thomson Specialist Skin Centre**  
Dermatology  
#10-05  
Tel: +65 63976006
- Thomson Women Cancer Centre**  
Breast, Colorectal & Gynaecology  
#09-15  
Tel: +65 65918218
- United Specialist Centre**  
Multi-Disciplinary Medical Services, Physiotherapy and Podiatry Services  
#09-07/08  
Tel: +65 63977077
- Winslow Clinic**  
Psychiatry  
#09-23  
Tel: +65 63977309
- Yap & Ang Surgical Associates**  
General & Plastic Surgery  
#11-03  
Tel: +65 68368238

**CLINIC / SPECIALTY**

- Audrey & Alexander Centre For General Dentistry**  
General Dentistry  
#05-17  
Tel: +65 66841744
- Centre For Assisted Reproduction Pte Ltd**  
Obstetrics & Gynaecology  
#05-05/06  
Tel: +65 66596638
- Medical Associates Centre**  
General Practitioner  
#04-06  
Tel: +65 62351062
- Novena Colorectal Centre**  
Colorectal Surgery/Gastrointestinal Endoscopy  
#05-07/08  
Tel: +65 63610230

**CLINIC / SPECIALTY**

- Poon & Phay Dental Surgeons Pte Ltd**  
Prosthodontics/Periodontics  
#05-01  
Tel: +65 63383623
- Sincere IVF Center Pte Ltd**  
Fertility  
#06-09/10/11  
Tel: +65 65070766
- Sincere Medical Specialist Center For Women**  
Obstetrics & Gynaecology/Fertility/Breast Surgery/Cosmetic/Plastic Surgery/Health Screening  
#06-08/16/17/18/19  
Tel: +65 65070766

**CLINIC / SPECIALTY**

- The Resilienz Mind Psychological Medicine and Counselling Centre**  
Psychiatry  
#04-01  
Tel: +65 66596830
- Thomson Dental Centre**  
General Dentistry  
#07-08/16/17/18/19  
Tel: +65 62550770
- Thomson Dental Surgeons**  
General Dentistry/Orthodontics/Endodontics/Periodontology  
#05-12/13  
Tel: +65 67379831

**CLINIC / SPECIALTY**

- Thomson Fertility Centre Pte Ltd**  
IVF (In-Vitro Fertilisation)/Obstetrics & Gynaecology  
#07-02/03/04/05/06/07  
Tel: +65 62527766
- Thomson Specialist Dentistry**  
Orthodontics/Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery  
#07-08/16/17/18/19  
Tel: +65 62550770
- Tucker Medical**  
Medical Oncology & General Medicine  
#04-03  
Tel: +65 66596918
- WS Go Specialist Dental**  
Orthodontics/Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery  
#05-16  
Tel: +65 65702067