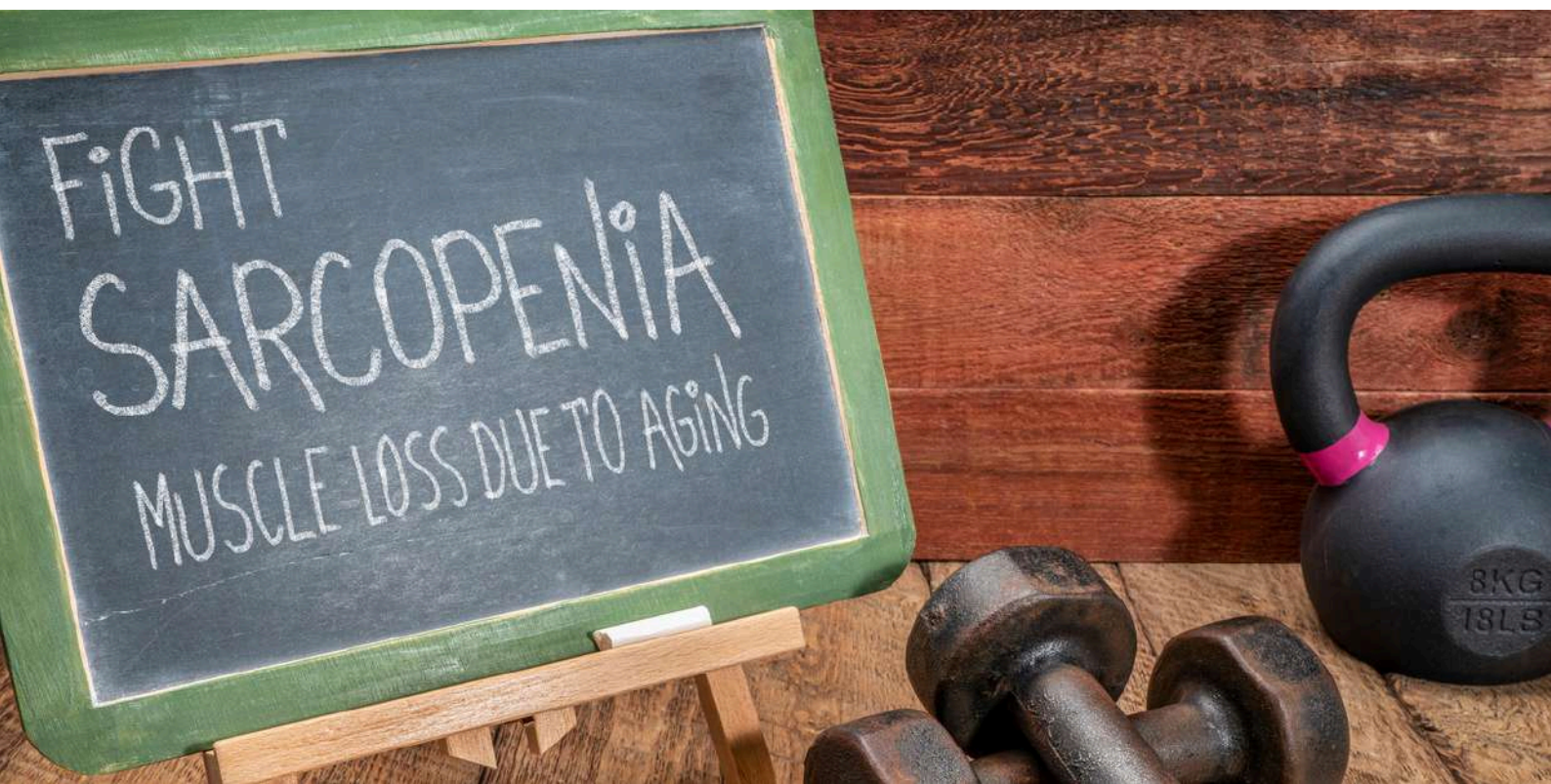


# Sarcopenia

## What is Sarcopenia?

Sarcopenia is an age-related condition characterized by the progressive loss of muscle mass and strength. It significantly affects the musculoskeletal system, increasing the risk of frailty, falls, and fractures. This can greatly diminish quality of life by impairing daily tasks, potentially leading to loss of independence and necessitating long-term care. Early detection is crucial for identifying those at risk and ensuring timely, effective treatment.

**"1 in 5 Singaporeans above 65 has low muscle mass."**



## Common Risk Factor for Sarcopenia

- Older age
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Malnutrition or inadequate protein intake
- High alcohol intake
- Current smoking
- Chronic disease (e.g. diabetes, cancer, chronic kidney disease)
- Female



## What are the symptoms of Sarcopenia?

- Muscle weakness (most common!)
- Loss of stamina
- Difficulty performing daily activities
- Walking slowly
- Trouble climbing stairs
- Poor balance and falls
- Decrease in muscle size



## How is Sarcopenia diagnosed?

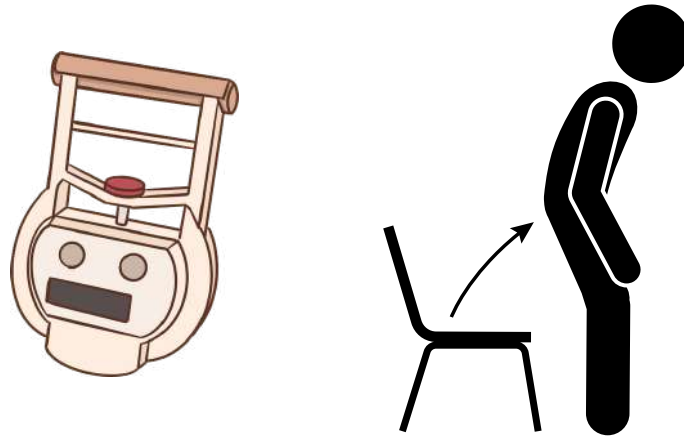
At SARC-F screening, you may be asked to complete a questionnaire based on your symptoms.

SARC-F represents:

- Strength - How much difficulty do you have in lifting and carrying 10 pounds (4.5kg)?
- Assistance in walking - How much difficulty do you have in walking across a room?
- Rise from a chair - How much difficulty do you have in transferring from a chair or bed?
- Climbing stairs - How much difficulty do you have in climbing a flight of ten stairs?
- Falls - How many times did you fall in the last year?

Additional testing may be required based on SARC-F screening tool, which includes:

- Muscle Strength Test: Handgrip test
- Physical Performance: 5-times chair rise test, gait speed



You may be recommended by your healthcare provider to do further imaging to assess your muscle mass:

- Dual-energy Xray Absorptiometry (DXA): Uses low-energy X-rays to measure your muscle mass, fat mass and bone density



## What is the treatment for Sarcopenia?

Treatment for sarcopenia typically involves lifestyle changes. These modifications to your lifestyle habits can treat and help to reverse sarcopenia. There is currently no FDA-approved medication to treat sarcopenia.

- **Physical activity:**

You may be referred to a physiotherapist (PT) who will recommend resistance-based strength training. This type of exercise can help improve your strength and reverse your muscle loss. You may begin with simple exercises as shown in the QR code below to help work towards a healthy and active lifestyle.

### 7 Easy Exercises to an Active Lifestyle

The Health Promotion Board has prepared a group of 7 exercises that can be done 3 times a week to help work towards a healthy and active lifestyle

(Source: Health Promotion Board)



Scan the QR code for more details!







- **Well-balanced diet:**

When paired with regular exercise, eating a well-balanced diet can also help reverse the effects of sarcopenia. It is important to ensure adequate protein intake to help build and repair muscle tissue and reduce the loss of muscle mass.





The Health Promotion Board (HPB) recommends consuming 1 serving (20-25g) of protein per meal. You will need 3 servings of protein-rich foods a day to meet your daily protein requirement. If food intake alone is inadequate to meet your nutritional requirements, oral nutritional supplements may be considered. You may be referred to a dietitian if necessary.

Examples of 1 serving (20-25g) of protein:

- **Animal-based proteins**

 <p>3 eggs (150g)</p>	 <p>2 glasses of low-fat milk or soy milk (500ml)</p>
 <p>1 palm-sized lean meat, fish or poultry (90-100g)</p>	 <p>5-6 medium prawns (90g)</p>
 <p>Half a can of canned tuna (100g)</p>	 <p>4 slices of low-fat sliced cheese (80g)</p>

- **Plant-based proteins**

 <p>3/4 small cup of cooked pulses (peas, beans, lentils) (120g)</p>	 <p>4 pieces of tempeh (120g)</p>
 <p>2 small blocks of firm tofu (150g)</p>	 <p>Small bowl of edamame (200g)</p>



Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) is one way to guide your grocery purchases to incorporate healthier options into your diet.

(Source: HealthHub, Nov 2023)

## Can Sarcopenia be prevented?

You may not be able to completely prevent sarcopenia because this condition happens as part of the natural aging process. However, you can take steps to slow down the progression of this disease.

These includes:

- Having a well-balanced diet that includes the recommended protein intake.
- Maintain an active physical lifestyle by exercising and including resistance training in your routines.
- Continue regular follow up with your healthcare provider. This is crucial for managing and optimizing your chronic conditions. These regular visits will help to ensure that your chronic diseases are well-managed, reducing the risk of complications and improve your overall quality of life.



Contributed by Nursing, Gerontology & Allied Health Services

This brochure is produced for educational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek the advice of a qualified healthcare provider before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health or medical condition.

Information shared is accurate as of June 2024 and subject to revision without prior notice.



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