



Madam Ng with Mrs Teo and ConnectedLife CEO David Ng. The 78-year-old says she no longer worries about being left alone and helpless if she falls or faints. The new sensor system in her home will send a mobile phone alert to her sons if trouble is detected.  
ST PHOTO: ONG WEE JIN

## Sensor system to help keep seniors safe at home

Six-month trial will test devices set to trigger alerts to caregivers

**Amelia Teng**

Madam Ng Siew Eng has been walking around the past two weeks with a device attached to her house keys that lets her alert her sons at the

press of a button if she is in trouble.

They can also tell from the device, which is connected remotely to a server, if she is at home or out.

The technology is part of a new set-up installed in the 78-year-old's studio apartment at Golden Clover in Toa Payoh East. It is among the first two studio apartments to be part of a project to test a new wireless sensor technology for improving home care for the elderly.

Begun earlier this month, the six-month trial is a collaboration between the Adventist Home for the Elders and local technology start-up ConnectedLife.

Madam Ng also has seven wireless sensors – each about the size of a palm or smaller, weighing around 20g – affixed to walls in her living room, bedroom, toilet and kitchen. They detect her movements, while another device at her bedside

tracks her sleeping patterns.

Madam Ng, who lives alone, said in Mandarin: "Before, I was worried I might pass out and nobody would know... now, with this emergency button, I'm very happy."

The sensors, which are still being tested, can be pre-set to detect typical movements. Unusual behaviour, like prolonged inactivity in the toilet, will trigger a mobile phone alert to a family member or caregiver.

Mrs Josephine Teo, Senior Minister of State at the Prime Minister's Office, visited Madam Ng's home yesterday. She told reporters the sensors could help the elderly live more independently, and render timely help. "Timeliness when it comes to responding to seniors' needs – that is the priority."

From January next year, another 10 units at Golden Clover will join the trial. The pilot was launched yesterday, while a senior activity cen-

tre at the foot of the block was officially opened by the Adventist Home for the Elders.

The Adventist Active Centre @ Golden Clover, which started operating in November last year, is the second such centre set up by the voluntary welfare organisation.

Bank officer Leong Chee Kong, 60, who lives with his 86-year-old mother, Madam Han Tew Chin, said she enjoyed going to the centre every day. "She knows quite a few neighbours, and they are very friendly and take care of her. It's a blessing."

The sensor system, which is also being tested in their home, could give him greater peace of mind, he said, as she is alone on weekdays when he goes to work. "We had a few scares in the past year when she slipped in the bathroom and hurt her thigh, or when she felt giddy."

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