

# Singapore to launch world's first HFMD kit

THE world's first hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) detection kit that gives results within two hours has been developed in Singapore.

Singapore Polytechnic (SP) announced yesterday the kit was developed by lecturer Tan Eng Lee over a period of two months.

The kit can detect all HFMD-causing enteroviruses and differentiate the fatal Enterovirus 71 from the other enteroviruses.

Over 27,000 HFMD cases were registered last year. The disease mainly affects children. "With this kit, young children's lives won't be put at risk with severe complications and (they) would be able to lead life normally upon early detection," Dr Tan said.

SP has signed two licensing agreements and a memorandum of cooperation to allow US-based biomedical organisation MP Bio-medicals (MP Bio) to sell the detection kits here.

MP Bio and SP's Technology Transfer and Enterprise Centre plan to commercialise the kits and bring them to market in Asia-Pacific, where HFMD is most prevalent.

The HFMD detection kits will be manufactured in Singapore and sold at about \$13-\$19.50 per test.

According to a joint statement released by SP and MP Bio, clinical tests carried out at the National University Hospital and Singapore General Hospital since October have registered effective results.

MP Bio senior VP and chief financial officer Thomas Stankovic said MP Bio intends to re-invest income from sales of the kits in its Singapore plant.