

Experts to tackle jellyfish threat

Scientists to create risk profile of Chenang Beach and train stakeholders

By IMRAN HILMY
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GEORGE TOWN: Marine scientists are ready to head to Langkawi to tackle the jellyfish threat that killed a Russian boy at Chenang beach.

Any action must be coordinated through the Langkawi Development Authority, Fisheries Department, Health Ministry and other agencies, said Prof Datuk Dr Aileen Tan, director of Universiti Sains Malaysia's Centre for Marine and Coastal Studies.

She said the team can be deployed once it receives basic information such as hospital sting cases, fisheries monitoring records, rainfall and water quality trends, recent photographs or samples and exact beach locations.

Tan said rapid sampling at the beach and nearby stretches would then allow the drawing up of a short-term risk profile.

But she said long-term safety depends on building local capacity.

She stressed that hotel staff, lifeguards, water sport operators and other frontliners must be trained to observe, document and identify the jellyfish so that monitoring continues even when scientists are not present.

On whether Langkawi is seeing



Staying alert: A sign warning beach-goers of the potential risk of jellyfish was put up by the authorities on Chenang Beach in Langkawi, Kedah. — Image from social media

an unusual spike in jellyfish activity, Tan said there was not enough data to confirm any long-term ecological trend.

She said occurrences in Malaysian waters were natural and often influenced by rainfall, tides, nearshore currents and coastal water quality.

"Preliminary clinical observations from the recent incident point to a box jellyfish (cubozoa),

based on tentacle-contact marks on the victim.

"But a definitive identification cannot be made without a captured specimen or nematocyst sample, underscoring the need for a proper documentation system," she said.

Tan urged for immediate measures, including multilingual warning signs at popular beaches, stronger vinegar-based first-

aid readiness and routine shoreline checks.

She said frontliners should be trained to recognise jellyfish, administer correct first aid and report sightings promptly.

Night-time light-detection work and simple drift-net surveys, however, can begin at once.

For the next three to five years, Tan said Langkawi should focus on improving coastal water quality

management, especially reducing nutrient-rich run-off that may contribute to jellyfish blooms.

She said others include setting up monitoring stations, upgrading beach infrastructure, creating managed swimming zones and developing a "Jellyfish Safety Standard" for resorts and tourism operators.

Tan said prevention requires both scientific and non-scientific approaches, combining environmental monitoring and species identification with public awareness, safe-swimming practices, clear risk communication and trained responders.

To maintain tourist confidence, she proposed a balanced advisory system featuring multilingual boards on seasonal risks, flag indicators on high-risk days, QR-code updates and hotel-issued advisories.

On Nov 19, two-year-old Vladimir Lakubanets died after being stung by a box jellyfish at Chenang beach on Nov 15.

Box jellyfish, named after their box-shaped body, are known to actively move in the water unlike other jellyfish that drift with the current.

It has two dozen eyes that seek small prey and has a highly venomous sting with some species capable of killing humans in just minutes.

New clinic site will help reduce stresses at HSI

By YEE XIANG YUN
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PARTS of Sultan Ismail Health Clinic (KCSI) located at Hospital Sultan Ismail (HSI) will move to a new site to ease congestion.

Johor health and environment committee chairman Ling Tian Soon said work was ongoing to turn a long-abandoned market in Taman Mount Austin, Johor Baru, into a health clinic.

He said with no federal allocation, the state government was fully funding the RM4mil project, which included site selection, equipment purchase and renovation works.

"KCSI has seen its patient load double from 700 to 800 a day to nearly 1,500 daily, overwhelming both space and staff.

"After several rounds of discussions with Johor Health Department, we agreed that the best solution was to move part of the services to reduce the burden on the staff and disperse traffic," he said in response to a question from Azizul Bachok regarding congestion issues at



Ling (centre, in blue shirt) says some services at Sultan Ismail Health Clinic in Johor Baru will be relocated to a new site next month.
— Courtesy photo

Hospital Sultan Ismail during the state assembly sitting at Bangunan Sultan Ismail in Kota Iskandar.

The new clinic was sited in a spacious commercial area near HSI, offering ample parking and

easier access, Ling said, adding that the Women and Children unit was slated to move into the new repurposed building starting Dec 15.

"The unit receives about 300 to 400 patients daily, including

expectant mothers and infants coming for check-ups and follow-up care.

"The health clinic's drive-through pharmacy service will also be shifted to the new site soon," he said.

Fenomena penghijrahan tenaga mahir beralih daripada *brain drain* kepada *brain circulation*

KUALA LUMPUR

Fenomena penghijrahan tenaga mahir Malaysia kini menunjukkan peralihan daripada *brain drain* kepada *brain circulation* berikutan pelaksanaan beberapa inisiatif yang menghubungkan diaspora dengan peluang ekonomi dan pembangunan negara.

Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Lukanisman Awang Sauni berkata, antara inisiatif yang menyumbang kepada peralihan itu ialah program *Malaysia at Heart* (MyHeart) yang membolehkan bakat profesional Malaysia di luar negara terus menyumbang kepada ekosistem domestik tanpa perlu kembali menetap sepenuhnya.

"Inisiatif ini menghubungkan diaspora Malaysia dengan peluang ekonomi, sosial dan budaya di tanah air yang boleh mewujudkan jalinan hubungan berterusan serta memanfaatkan kepakaran jaringan dan sumbangan mereka untuk pembangunan negara," katanya pada sesi Kamar Khas di Dewan Rakyat pada Isnin.

Beliau yang mewakili Menteri di

Jabatan Perdana Menteri menjawab usul **Suhaizan Kaiat (PH-Pulau)** mengenai keperluan mewujudkan Akta Saraan Pekerjaan Kritikal di Malaysia.

Mengulas lanjut, Lukanisman berkata, TalentCorp turut melaksanakan beberapa strategi tuntas untuk menarik semula diaspora, termasuk program *Knowledge Worker* di Zon Ekonomi Khas

Johor-Singapura (JSS) yang menawarkan kadar cukai rata 15 peratus selama 10 tahun kepada tenaga mahir Malaysia yang kembali bekerja di kawasan itu.

Beliau berkata, TalentCorp turut menjalankan Kajian Penanda Aras Gaji JSS bagi menilai perbandingan struktur gaji dan kos sara hidup antara Malaysia dan Singapura sebagai asas kepada strategi menarik dan mengekalkan tenaga profesional.



LUKANISMAN

Selain itu katanya, program Kepulangan Pakar (REP) terus menjadi instrumen penting dalam membawa pulang rakyat Malaysia untuk kembali berkhidmat di tanah air.

"Sejak pelaksanaan REP pada 2011 hingga Oktober 2025, TalentCorp telah menerima sebanyak 12,050 permohonan... 7,627 permohonan telah diluluskan dengan 4,963 individu telah kembali dan berkhidmat di tanah air," katanya.

Menurutnya, pelbagai insentif disediakan di bawah REP, termasuk kadar cukai rata 15 peratus selama lima tahun, pengecualian cukai ke atas barangan peribadi serta pengecualian duti eksais sehingga RM100,000 bagi kenderaan pemasangan tempatan (CKD).

"Melalui pelaksanaan strategi bersepadu ini, kerajaan yakin fenomena penghijrahan bakat dapat dikurangkan seterusnya memastikan Malaysia kekal

berdaya saing dalam menarik dan mengekalkan modal insan berkemahiran tinggi," katanya.

Sementara itu, Lukanisman berkata, cadangan untuk mewujudkan Akta Saraan Pekerjaan Kritikal perlu diteliti secara menyeluruh dalam kerangka Sistem Saraan Perkhidmatan Awam (SSPA) bagi mengelakkan gangguan kepada keseimbangan struktur saraan sedia ada.

Beliau berkata, SSPA yang berkuat kuasa pada 1 Disember 2024 dirangka untuk meningkatkan daya tarikan dan keadilan struktur saraan perkhidmatan awam, sementara konsep pekerjaan kritikal telah digunakan sejak 1992 melalui pemberian Bayaran Insentif Perkhidmatan Kritikal (BIPK).

"Selepas pelaksanaan SSPA, tiada peluasan baru BIPK... kerana berdasarkan penilaian semasa, isu penawaran yang terlalu rendah dan pengisian jawatan yang sukar bagi skim-skim tersebut tidak lagi berbangkit pada tahap yang sama," katanya. - Bernama

Warga emas terkandas perlu ubat

Lebih 40 rakyat Malaysia termasuk sekumpulan warga emas terperangkap di Hatyai

Oleh WAN MOHD NOOR HAFIZ
WAN MANSOR
BUKIT KAYU HITAM

Lebih 40 rakyat Malaysia termasuk sekumpulan warga emas dan Kelab Warga Emas Pontian, Johor masih terkandas di Hotel Paradise, Hatyai, selatan paras air kembali meningkat.

Pengurus Besar Club Cuti Longkawi Seri Duta, Dr. Baharom Baharom berkata, hujan berterusan sejak Ahad menyebabkan paras air terus naik dan menenggelamkan beberapa kenderaan yang sebelum ini masih kelihatan.

"Semalam (Ahad) air sempat surut dan kita masih nampak kereta, tetapi hari ini (senin) sudah ada yang tenggelam," katanya ketika dihubungi media pada Isnin.

Menurut bekas kumpulan warga emas yang terkandas amat memerlukan bantuan segera khususnya bekalan ubat-ubatan untuk penyakit kronik seperti darah tinggi dan jantung.

"Saya mohon pihak Konsulat Malaysia di Songkhla dapat segera menghantar bantuan ubat atau membantu memindahkan mereka dan hotel ini."

"Ketika ini, bekalan elektrik sudah terputus dan tiada lagi bantuan generator," ujar bekas.

Tambahan, hotel masih menyediakan makanan, namun hanya untuk waktu pagi dan tengah hari sahaja manakala makan malam tidak lagi disediakan kerana kekurangan logistik.

Sementara itu, seorang mangsa, Baiyati Suwanto, 54, berkata, beberapa ahli rombongan sudah menghubungi pihak keselamatan untuk meminta bantuan dengan keadaan semasa.

"Kami sudah hubungi pihak keselamatan dan dipaparkan proses pemindahan mungkin mengambil masa. Tapi kami warga emas sangat bergantung kepada ubat-ubatan, jika elektrik dan telefon terputus, amat sukar untuk kami berkomunikasi dengan pihak luar," katanya.



Hujan yang tidak berhenti sejak Ahad menyebabkan paras air terus naik dan menenggelamkan beberapa kenderaan yang sebelum ini masih kelihatan.

Seorang lagi mangsa, Baharom Dorkan, 63, turut mengadu pihak berkuasa Malaysia dan Thailand segera mengambil tindakan bagi membawa keluar mereka dari kawasan terjejas.

"Kami amat perlukan bantuan segera. Ramai antara kami sudah berusia dan tidak sihat. Harap sangat pihak konsulat atau kerajaan dapat bantu kami keluar dari sini," ujarnya.



Penggerak Ramah Ngaji Komuniti Teluk Maroh, Datin Mariah Kadir (kanan) bersama ahli rombongan nakal meredah banjir hampir satu kilometer selepas terkandas di Hatyai.



Pasukan Bomba Sukarela (PSS) Sungai Teritri menyertai misi bantuan untuk membawa rakyat Malaysia terkandas pulang dari Thailand.



Penasir Lentera, Kamaruddin Man, 55, menunjukkan ikan keli dan ikan yang ditangkap di kawasan parkir yang dinaiki air sekitar Satu 40, Kampung Tengah, Beraas.



APM bantu memindahkan mangsa terjejas banjir di Kubang Pasu.



Mangsa banjir membuat pemeriksaan kesihatan di Pusat Pemindahan Sementara (PPS) Seletah Kebangsaan (SK) Simpang Tiga, Parit pada Isnin.

>> LAGI BERITA DI MUKA 28

Newer hospitals, cost optimisation to bolster KPJ

PETALING JAYA: While KPJ Healthcare Bhd continues to see payor pressure impacting its profitability, CGSI Research says the pressure remains “benign for now”, as current agreements with payors should pave the way for more amicable discussions surrounding diagnosis related groups (DRG) measures.

Payor pressure in healthcare refers to the influence that health insurance companies and other payers have on healthcare pro-

viders and the healthcare system as a whole.

KPJ reported record revenues of RM1.12bil in the third quarter of this year (3Q25), driven by higher outpatient volumes and surgeries.

However, the group's 3Q25 earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation dipped 0.2 percentage point year-on-year, due to payor pressure.

CGSI Research said, according to KPJ's management, negotia-

tions between KPJ and its payors to reduce insurance claims have led to higher discount rates for payors, as well as restricting claim eligibility for certain procedures.

The Malaysian government's plan to introduce DRG payment rules – meant to regulate hospital reimbursements and control insurance costs – has been postponed to 2027.

CGSI Research said the healthcare group will slow the pace of its organic bed-capacity expan-

sion to ensure additional beds are only added to hospitals that are operating at optimal bed occupancy rates of about 75%.

The research house said continued growth in KPJ's newer hospitals and cost optimisation will support its earnings growth in 2026 and 2027.

CGSI Research reiterated its “add” call on KPJ but trimmed its 2025 to 2027 earnings per share forecast by between 1.5% and 4.9%.

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Bridge between hospital and home



Selfless service: (Left) Lee briefing two guardians about the patient's condition and (above) speaking with two other patients under her care. — RAJA FAISAL HISHAN/The Star

Former corporate worker forgoes salary to provide guidance for at-home care

By DIVYA THERESA RAVI
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PETALING JAYA: For 28 years, a former corporate staff member has dedicated her life without salary to ensure patients continue to receive proper care after they leave the hospital.

Adrine Lee Moni Keow has become the bridge between hospital and home for those struggling to care for their loved ones. "Recovery doesn't stop at the hospital door. Families need guidance and support once their loved ones are discharged but many are left on their own."

"That's why post-discharge care is so important. It helps patients recover safely while easing the emotional and financial burden on families," she said.

Her turning point came when she realised post-hospital care was needed when her mother had a debilitating illness but not many who took care of them knew what to do.

"When my mum was bed-bound, we weren't lucky enough to have someone to teach us how to care for her."

"We needed simple things like a ripple mattress, which is very important for bedridden patients to prevent bedsores."

"We didn't know about this even though it cost less than RM500 at that time as my family of 10 siblings could afford it."

"That's when I realised how important proper guidance and education are for families caring for loved ones at home," she said.

Lee not only provides post-discharge home care services through a service called Lifelink Homecare, but she also supplies essential medical equipment such as oxygen tanks and ventilators whenever hospitals reach out to her.

"I also run a small care centre where we look after a few patients who require closer, long-term support and care planning."

"Sometimes, I make home visits



2025 Winner

Adrine MK Lee

Delivers vital home healthcare solutions to vulnerable patients, fostering a sense of hope and security.

Scan the QR at the end of this article to see the full list of winners and their impact. Details on more winners will be published tomorrow.

to check on patients after they are discharged when the families call me.

"There's no charge for the initial visit but if they need continued support, I'll recommend suitable care services or equipment based on their needs," she said.

Lee also provides guidance on nutrition and feeding regimes, including teaching families how to manage feeding tubes safely within a few hours of training.

"Our society really needs this kind of service because many people are suffering at home after being discharged from the hospital."

"Hospitals are doing diagnosis, treatment and all the necessary procedures but eventually, patients need to return home for recovery."

"When they're back home, it's a completely different scenario," she said, adding that families are left to look after the patients.

Lee described the gap between

hospital and home care as "two different worlds".

"Without proper guidance and support, families suffer emotionally and financially, which I have personally experienced during my mother's predicament in 1995."

"Since then, I realised that Malaysia needed a bridge between hospital and home, and I wanted to offer this through Lifelink Homecare," she said.

On how she can continue the effort without getting a salary, Lee said: "With my high-paying job, I can dress well and live better but these are not as important as helping the community in providing support to people in their times of need and moments of uncertainty."

"I once earned well and lived comfortably but those things fade over time. What remains is the joy of knowing I've helped others in their darkest hours."

Lee also said her willingness to



Mobility aid: Lee performing a demonstration on how to use the electric stair-climbing wheelchair she uses to help patients move up and down safely. — RAJA FAISAL HISHAN/The Star

learn is her strongest point.

"I have handled patients with faeces in the bag. I began with knowing nothing about medication as I am not a doctor or a nurse. But I read a lot, find out a lot and talk a lot to doctors, professors and nurses."

Lee said that because of her diligence in learning, she can understand what illness someone has based on the medication the patient takes or is prescribed.

"I have even been taught by dietitians and nutritionists on how to count the calories required for each patient."

"Wound care nurses also guided me on how to do dressing," said Lee, who also learned to work round the clock.

She said helping patients to spend their final days in comfort and dignity is one of the greatest gifts.

"For families who cannot afford care, I will find a way to secure donors. Compassion should never depend on affordability."

"At times when we cannot

afford the assistance, we work with various partners-in-service to provide the appropriate support," she said.

According to her, the challenge now is scaling the proven infrastructure nationwide.

"This mission requires robust collaboration such as financial, operational and moral support from all stakeholders, including the government and the private sector."

Since 1997, Lee said she has cared for 15,000 patients and wishes to continue her initiatives.

For her noble efforts, Lee is named as one of the 10 winners of the Star Golden Hearts Award (SGHA) 2025.

SGHA is an annual award by The Star that honours everyday Malaysian unsung heroes.

For details, visit sgha.com.my.

WATCH THE VIDEO
TheStarTV.com



The Role of PROBIOTICS IN YOGHURT

As active women, many of them often face challenges in maintaining a healthy lifestyle while balancing work and family responsibilities, which can sometimes leave little time for self-care. Yet many are unaware that there are simple nutritional approaches gaining attention today, such as consuming probiotic yoghurt.

Probiotics are live microorganisms that provide health benefits to the body, and they are commonly incorporated into yoghurt to produce a snack that is not only delicious but also highly nutritious. For women who are constantly on the move and require support for energy and internal health, probiotics in yoghurt play a very important role.

One of the main benefits of probiotics for active women is improving digestive health. For individuals who are physically active, the body requires more efficient digestion and nutrient absorption. Probiotics help maintain a balance of good bacteria in the gut, reducing issues such as constipation, bloating, and abdominal discomfort. When digestion functions optimally, women can enjoy more stable energy levels and feel more refreshed throughout their daily activities.

In addition, probiotics in yoghurt help strengthen the immune system. Active women are often exposed to physical and mental stress, which can weaken the body's natural defences. The presence of good bacteria helps prevent the growth of harmful bacteria and stimulates the production of immune cells. With

a stronger immune system, women can reduce the risk of infections such as the common cold and other minor health issues that may disrupt workout routines or work schedules.

Probiotics also contribute to hormonal balance in women. Gut health is closely linked to hormonal stability, especially for women experiencing hormonal fluctuations due to the menstrual cycle or daily stress. Consistent consumption of probiotic yoghurt has also been associated with the reduction of issues related to vaginal imbalance and abnormal discharge.

Furthermore, yoghurt is rich in protein and calcium, two essential nutrients needed by active women. Protein aids in muscle building and recovery after physical activity, while calcium strengthens bones and helps prevent the risk of osteoporosis. With the combination of essential nutrients and probiotics, yoghurt becomes a well-balanced snack choice for women who want to maintain their fitness in a simple and healthy way.

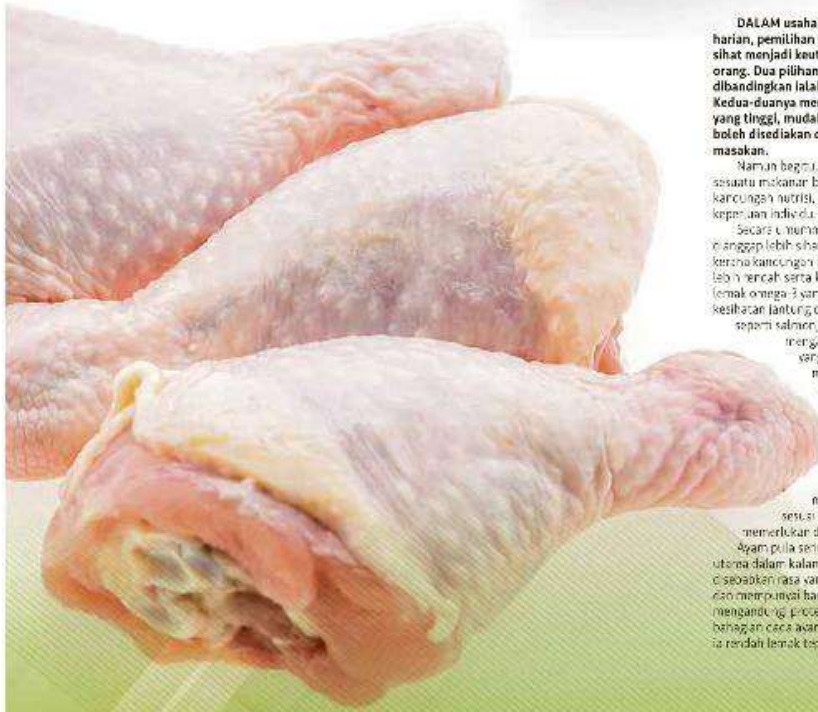
In conclusion, probiotics in yoghurt are not just a healthy eating trend but a smart choice to support the overall well-being of active women. Through their important roles in enhancing digestive health, immunity and hormonal balance, and providing essential nutrients, probiotic yoghurt is ideal as part of a daily diet. With consistent consumption, women can maintain their energy, fitness, and overall wellness to face the increasing challenges of daily life.



NST 25/11/2025 MS/C22

IKAN atau AYAM

Mana Lebih Sihat Sebagai Sumber Protein?



DALAM usaha menjaga pemakanan harian, pemilihan sumber protein yang sihat menjadi keutamaan bagi ramai orang. Dua pilihan yang paling kerap dibandingkan ialah ikan dan ayam. Kedua-duanya mempunyai protein yang tinggi, mudah didapati dan boleh disediakan dalam pelbagai cara masakan.

Namun begitu, tahap kesihatan sesuatu makanan bergantung kepada kandungan nutrisi, cara penyediaan, serta keperluan individu.

Secara umumnya, ikan sering dianggap lebih sihat berbanding ayam kerana kandungan lemaknya yang lebih rendah serta kehadiran asid lemak omega-3 yang penting untuk kesihatan jantung dan otak. Ikan

seperti salmon, sardin dan tonggoli mengandungi omega-3 yang boleh membantu mengurangkan risiko penyakit kardiovaskular, menstabilkan tekanan darah dan meningkatkan fungsi kognitif. Selain itu, protein dalam ikan juga lebih mudah dihadam dan sesuai untuk mereka yang memerlukan diet rendah lemak.

Ayam pula sering menjadi pilihan utama dalam kalangan masyarakat disebabkan rasa yang sedap, mudah dihidang, dan mempunyai banyak bahagian yang mengandungi protein, terutamanya bahagian dada ayam tanpa kulit. Kerana ia rendah lemak tepu dan tinggi protein,

menjadikannya pilihan popular bagi mereka yang ingin menguruskan berat badan. Ayam juga lebih serbi guna dalam penyediaan hidangan harian. Namun, kandungan nutrisi boleh berbeza jika dihidang menggunakan kaedah yang tidak sihat seperti menggoreng atau menggunakan terlalu banyak minyak.

Keseluruhnya, tiada satu pun makanan yang mampu memosalkan semua nutrisi yang diperlukan tubuh. Oleh itu, kita perlu memahami keperluan nutrisi harian dan memilih makanan yang sesuai. Jika dibandingkan, ikan dan ayam masing-masing mempunyai khasiat tersendiri. Mengambil kedua-duanya secara bergilir adalah pilihan terbaik supaya manfaat nutrisi daripada kedua-duanya dapat diperoleh. Individu juga digalakkan menyeimbangkan kedua-dua sumber protein ini bagi mendapatkan variasi nutrisi yang lebih seimbang dalam diet harian.

Keseluruhannya, ikan dan ayam masing-masing mempunyai kelebihan tersendiri, dan pilihan paling sihat bergantung kepada keperluan tubuh serta cara penyediaannya. Bagi mereka yang mengutamakan kesihatan jantung dan pemakanan rendah lemak, ikan merupakan pilihan lebih baik. Namun, ayam tanpa kulit yang dimasak dengan cara yang sihat tetap menjadi sumber protein yang berkualiti dan berkesan. Yang penting, amalkan pemakanan dan pilih kaedah masakan yang sihat untuk memastikan tubuh mendapat manfaat optimum daripada kedua-duanya.



Kawal Kuantiti HIDANGAN ANDA

SEPERTI yang kita sedia maklum, pelbagai hidangan enak sering disediakan di rumah, terutamanya pada musim perayaan. Namun begitu, sekiranya pengambilannya tidak dikawal dengan baik dan teratur, ia boleh mengundang pelbagai jenis penyakit.

Pengambilan makanan berkarbohidrat dalam jumlah yang berlebihan serta waktu makan yang tidak menentu boleh menyebabkan paras gula dalam darah menjadi tidak stabil. Keadaan ini boleh membawa kepada pelbagai komplikasi kesihatan, khususnya bagi pesakit diabetes.

Hidangan seperti rendang, sambal, ikan bilis, kuah laksa, dan lontong mengandungi kandungan garam serta lemak tepu yang tinggi. Oleh itu,

individu yang menghidap penyakit darah tinggi atau hipertensi perlu mengawal pengambilan garam agar tidak melebihi kadar yang disarankan.

Kaedah "Suku Suku Separuh" amat digalakkan untuk diimalkan, terutamanya oleh individu yang menghidap penyakit kronik. Dalam kaedah ini, makanan berkarbohidrat seperti nasi, bihun, mi atau roti hanya memenuhi satu perempat piringan, manakala setengah piringan perlu diisi dengan sayur-sayuran dan buah-buahan. Bahagian selebihnya boleh diisi dengan sumber protein seperti ikan, ayam, atau kekacang. Jumlah makanan tidak wajar ditambah sesuka hati kerana ia akan meningkatkan pengambilan karbohidrat dan seterusnya menaikkan paras gula

dalam darah. Untuk membantu mengawal selera, disarankan agar minum dua gelas air kosong sebelum menikmati hidangan.

Pemilihan makanan sihat sangat penting. Contohnya, pilih kesupat nasi berbanding lemak kerana lemak mengandungi kalori yang jauh lebih tinggi. Begitu juga, asam laksa lebih rendah kalori berbanding laksa kari. Elakkan makanan berkuah dan tinggi lemak seperti kuah sate, sebaliknya pilih hidangan yang lebih sihat seperti acar, kerabu sayur, kuah kukus atau buah-buahan segar.

Elakkan menjadikan kekacang bergaram dan goreng sebagai kudapan. Sebaliknya, hidangan buah-buahan segar sebagai pencuci mulut. Bagi individu sihat yang tidak mempunyai penyakit kronik sekalipun, pengambilan makanan tinggi kalori secara berlebihan boleh menyebabkan kenaikan berat badan mendadak. Masalah obesiti ini akan meningkatkan risiko penyakit kronik seperti kencing manis, darah tinggi, penyakit jantung, dan kanser.

Bagi pesakit kronik seperti diabetes, pengambilan makanan bergula dan berkarbohidrat tinggi perlu dielakkan. Kudapan seperti kerepek dan makanan berlemak seperti kuah rendang wajar dikurangkan. Sebagai alternatif, ambil isi daging atau ayam tanpa kulit. Hal ini penting kerana kandungan garam serta

bahan perasa dalam masakan tersebut boleh menjelaskan kesihatan jika diambil secara berlebihan.

Berikut ialah beberapa tip penyediaan makanan sihat yang boleh diamalkan di rumah:

- Kurangkan penggunaan gula, minyak, dan lemak dalam penyediaan biskut serta kek. Gunakan separuh atau tiga perempat daripada jumlah gula biasa.
- Gunakan daging tanpa lemak atau ayam yang telah dibuang kulit.
- Kurangkan masakan bersantan, goreng dan berminyak.
- Gantikan santan dengan susu rendah lemak dalam penyediaan rendang atau kuah lontong.
- Potong ayam atau daging dalam saiz kecil supaya mudah dikawal kuantitinya.
- Gunakan ramuan tinggi serat seperti tepung bijirin penuh, oat, dan buah prun untuk membuat biskut.
- Kurangkan penggunaan pewarna tiruan dalam penyediaan kuih, kek,

dan puding.

Menjaga pemakanan secara seimbang amat penting untuk memastikan tubuh badan sihat dan berenergi. Kawalan terhadap pengambilan gula, garam, lemak, serta saiz hidangan harus menjadi amalan harian. Dengan memilih makanan secara bijak dan mengamalkan gaya hidup sihat, kita dapat mencegah pelbagai penyakit serta menikmati kehidupan yang lebih berkualiti.



Excessive screen time leaves children anxious, withdrawn: Psychologist

PETALING JAYA: A clinical child psychologist has cautioned that excessive smartphone use is reshaping children's emotional and cognitive development, warning that rapid-fire digital content is driving anxiety, attention problems and social withdrawal among the young.

CPC (Child Psychology Clinic) International managing director and clinical child psychologist Dr Noor Aishah Rosli said children are spending increasing amounts of time on high-stimulation platforms such as TikTok, YouTube Shorts and mobile games and the consequences are becoming visible in classrooms and at home.

"High exposure to fast-paced digital content increases stress, 'emotional dysregulation' and susceptibility to anxiety and low mood," she said, adding that it reduces a child's ability to sustain attention, weakens working memory and makes classroom learning more difficult.

(Emotional dysregulation is the difficulty in

managing emotions, resulting in mood swings, intense reactions and trouble returning to a stable baseline after feeling overwhelmed).

Noor Aishah said children who rely heavily on digital platforms often "become socially withdrawn or dependent on digital validation" for confidence and self-worth.

Asked whether basic "dumb phones" could help build healthier digital habits, she said they can play a meaningful role, particularly for younger children.

"For me, yes. Dumb phones eliminate access to social media and gaming apps, so the device becomes a communication tool rather than a form of entertainment. This may also reduce exposure to online risks like cyberbullying."

However, she stressed that a dumb phone is only one component of a broader solution and must be supported by strong parental guidance.

Noor Aishah said there is no universal age at

which a child is "ready" for a smartphone.

"Parents should think about their child's maturity, whether they can follow rules, understand online boundaries and regulate their emotions. If the smartphone is supposed to be for school use only, parents must assess whether the child can manage that responsibly."

She warned that emotionally dysregulated or impulsive children may face heightened risks of cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online manipulation.

She said families often see noticeable improvements when a child reduces smartphone use or switches to a basic device, including:

- ➡ improved attention span;
- ➡ better focus on schoolwork;
- ➡ stronger emotional regulation; and
- ➡ more engagement with family and offline activities.

"These are the developmental skills many

children are struggling with today."

However, Noor Aishah warned that children who use dumb phones may also feel socially excluded.

"They may feel left behind by their peers, experience 'fomo' (fear of missing out) or struggle with peer pressure, especially when other children have full smartphone access."

Other challenges may include:

- ➡ limited access to school apps or online homework;
- ➡ social comparison with classmates who use popular apps; and
- ➡ feeling isolated from group chats or school communication channels.

She said these issues can be reduced if parents work closely with teachers, ensure alternative access to required school platforms and support their children emotionally when they feel left out. — **By Kirtinee Ramesh**

COMMENT by Dr Chooi Kheng Chiew

When diabetes begins young

THE rising trend of diabetes among Malaysian children is becoming an urgent public health concern.

According to the Health Ministry's National Diabetes Registry Report 2023, 289 individuals under the age of 18 were recorded as living with diabetes in Malaysia.

Although this represents only 0.01% of the total registry, it is medically significant because the registry primarily captures adult Type Two diabetes cases.

Paediatric cases, especially Type One diabetes, are often not captured in adult-focused systems, which means the real number of affected children is likely higher.

Additional data referenced from the International Diabetes Federation noted that 977 Malaysian children and teenagers under 18 have been diagnosed with diabetes.

The National Heart Institute has also reported treating one of the youngest-registered diabetic patients in the country, an eight-year-old child. These findings reflect a concerning shift. Diabetes can now begin in childhood, not only adulthood.

Type Two diabetes was traditionally seen as a condition among the middle aged.

Today, children and adolescents are increasingly showing signs of insulin resistance, the earliest stage of abnormal sugar regulation.

This suggests that the pancreas is under strain long before adulthood begins.

Childhood in Malaysia has changed dramatically. Many children grow up in environments shaped by:

- ② sweetened drinks and processed snacks that are easily available at home, school canteens and convenience shops. These foods cause sharp spikes in blood sugar and force the pancreas to work harder;
- ② long hours of screen time that reduce physical play. Less movement slows down metabolism, weakens

muscle activity and raises the risk of insulin resistance; and

- ② irregular meal patterns and fast-food habits due to busy family routines. High-calorie and low-nutrient meals disrupt the body's natural metabolic rhythm. These factors do not harm the body immediately, instead, they accumulate quietly over the years until the body begins to struggle with glucose control.

Early habits matter

Childhood is a critical phase for metabolic learning. The body is still developing its ability to manage insulin, regulate hunger and establish long-term eating patterns.

What children eat and how they live during these early years strongly influence their lifelong health.

Clinical observations show that:

- ② eating habits formed before the age of 10 have a powerful impact on later diabetes risk. When children grow up drinking sugary beverages or eating processed snacks regularly, their baseline glucose and insulin levels may shift permanently;
- ② Childhood obesity is now one of the strongest predictors of early onset Type Two diabetes. Excess weight, particularly around the abdomen, reduces the body's sensitivity to insulin; and
- ② Frequent snacking and skipped meals disrupt the body's internal metabolic rhythm.

When the body cannot anticipate when glucose is coming, insulin responses become less effective and resistance develops over time. These early patterns become the metabolic blueprint that continues into adulthood.

Parents shape the foundation

Parents remain the strongest influence on a child's relationship with food and activity. This influence does not come from strict control but from daily consistency and example.



When children grow up drinking sugary beverages or eating processed snacks regularly, their baseline glucose and insulin levels may shift permanently. — BERNAMAPIC

Small, steady habits at home can make a lasting difference:

- ② Choosing water or milk instead of sweet drinks;
- ② Serving whole foods such as fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and whole grains;
- ② Eating together as a family to encourage slower, healthier eating;
- ② Encouraging daily movement through outdoor play, cycling or sports; and
- ② Keeping screen time balanced with physical activity.

Children observe more than they are told. When healthy habits feel normal at home, those habits follow them into their teenage years and adulthood.

Recognising early warning signs

Type Two diabetes in children is still less common than in adults but early signs are often subtle.

Parents and caregivers should

look for:

- ② persistent tiredness;
- ② excessive thirst or frequent urination;
- ② sudden or unexplained weight loss;
- ② slow healing or recurring infections; and
- ② dark patches of skin around the neck or armpits – a typical sign of insulin resistance.

If these symptoms appear, early medical evaluation can reverse the progression and prevent long-term complications.

Life course approach to diabetes

Preventing diabetes involves taking more than a single step; it is a journey that begins in childhood and continues throughout adult life.

- ② **In childhood:** The focus is on building healthy foundations through food choices, activity and balanced routines.

② **In adulthood:** Prevention relies on regular screening, early detection of metabolic changes and maintaining an active lifestyle.

② **In older age:** Coordinated care helps prevent complications, especially for those who develop diabetes young.

Supporting children early means protecting their health far into the future. The habits formed in childhood leave a lifelong imprint.

When we guide our children towards healthier choices, we protect a future they will only understand when they are older.

Prevention begins young and protection lasts a lifetime.

Dr Chooi Kheng Chiew is a consultant physician, endocrinologist and diabetologist at Ampang Puteri Specialist Hospital. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

Online debate over devices gathers steam

PETALING JAYA: A heated debate is brewing online over whether children should be given dumb phones instead of smartphones.

A Reddit thread asking parents about simple phones for kids quickly drew dozens of responses, splitting commentators into two camps – those who favour smartphones with proper guidance and those who prefer keeping children offline.

Many argued that smartphones, when used responsibly, have become essential in modern childhood.

Reddit user karlkry wrote: "I would give them smartphones. Not teaching them how to use it properly and just removing the privilege is lazy parenting".

Father of two Dorian, Gray agreed: "I have their phones installed with Google Family Link and no social media accounts. WhatsApp and Roblox are the apps they use. I play Roblox with them sometimes. If both parents use smartphones while kids are stuck with dumb phones, what does that teach them?"

Others stressed the need for responsible use. User spaghetti94 warned that excessive social media can "train the brain for short-term gratification", affecting long-term focus and study habits.

"Parents must explain why limits exist, or children risk developing harmful habits that persist into adulthood," they added.

Reddit user Claude2422 said smartphones are not too much for children if parents stay involved.

He said: "Using a dumb phone just drops their information intake by 90%. Parents should openly discuss all kinds of information with their kids – good and bad – so they can learn to navigate the world responsibly."

Still, concerns about safety and exposure remained strong. User Punrusorth shared a harrowing experience: "I went through the trauma of being groomed by predators. I never want my kids to go through that."

Reddit user solblurgh said perspectives often depend on personal experience: "Those without kids might say yes, give them smartphones and teach them to be vigilant. Cutting off smartphones entirely is 'lazy parenting'. But as a parent, I didn't give my child access to the internet or smartphones."

"Now he's a bit behind in technology skills and socially isolated because his friends are glued to their devices, but he spends more time on sports or camping to socialise."

Others highlighted the need for parents to model healthy behaviour. TheBotMadeThis said: "The most important part is not letting kids get addicted, but that's hard when parents themselves are doom-scrolling."

For Dhurane, the issue is balance: "Not exactly the dumb phones of the past. I'd still want location sharing and a non-SMS way to chat."

Reddit user Izchiy stressed: "Prepare children for the future by teaching them to use AI and smartphones responsibly while setting clear boundaries."

User DegenNabalu: "Kids can be taught to navigate technology responsibly if parents are engaged. Set boundaries and educate them about what's right and wrong". – **By Kirtinee Ramesh**

Ops to ensure SPM exam runs smoothly

KUALA TERENGGANU: The Terengganu Education Department has activated Ops Payung since Nov 13 in all districts in the state to ensure all Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) candidates can sit for the examination without any hindrances.

State Education director Kamsah@Kamal Mohamed said alternative examination centres have been activated and will be deployed should floods or other disasters occur.

"The department has identified three candidates from Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (SMK) Alor PEROI who are housed at the Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK) Kuala Besut temporary relief centre as of 9am yesterday.

"They will be moved to the SMK Kuala Besut hostel to sit for the examination tomorrow," he said yesterday.

He added that the department has considered all aspects when making such plans to ensure all students can sit for the examination without any hassle.

"The evacuation process would be carried out if the schools, the SPM candidates' homes or routes to schools are flooded. Checkpoints have been set for students to gather should such disasters strike."

He advised SPM candidates to take care of their safety and health throughout the examination period, including undergoing a medical examination if they have symptoms of influenza or other infections.

Based on the InfoBencana portal of the Social Welfare Department, the total number of flood evacuees in Terengganu dropped to 282 people from 91 families as of 8am yesterday, compared with 359 people from 106 families at 8pm on Sunday.

All evacuees are sheltering at the SK Kuala Besut temporary relief centre in Besut. – Bernama

Inisiatif KPJ tangani inflasi perubatan

KPJ Healthcare Bhd (KPJ) dijangka dapat menangani cabaran kenaikan kos perubatan semasa dengan mengimbangi tekanan inflasi menerusi peningkatan produktiviti dalam dan kecekapan operasi yang sedang giat dilaksanakan di seluruh rangkaian hospitalnya.

BIMB Securities Research berkata, bagaimana kumpulan perubatan itu dijangka menyalurkan sebahagian daripada inflasi kos perubatan kepada pengguna bagi menampung kenaikan kos operasi.

Katanya, pengurusan KPJ memberikan panduan bahawa margin pendapatan sebelum faedah, cukai, susut nilai dan pelunasan (EBITDA) bagi tahun kewangan 2026 dijangka kekal stabil serta selari dengan tahap kewangan 2025.

Kestabilan margin itu katanya, disokong pelbagai faktor pemacu dalaman termasuk

inisiatif pengoptimuman kos berterusan seperti pelaksanaan perkhidmatan perkongsian yang lebih efisien.

Selain itu, katanya, pelaksanaan pendigitalan menyeluruh dan disiplin perolehan lebih ketat turut dikenal pasti sebagai penyumbang utama kepada pengurusan kos yang lebih baik bagi kumpulan perubatan berkenaan.

"Langkah ini dilihat kritikal dalam memastikan struktur kos syarikat kekal kompetitif, walaupun berdepan dengan trend inflasi perubatan global yang semakin meningkat.

"Dalam usaha mengukuhkan kedudukan kewangannya, KPJ kini beralih fokus kepada prosedur pembedahan lebih kompleks dalam campuran kes perubatannya.

"Strategi ini, bersama-sama dengan peningkatan intensiti hasil bagi kedua-dua segmen

pesakit dalam dan pesakit luar, dijangka menjadi katalis kepada pertumbuhan pendapatan masa hadapan syarikat itu," katanya dalam satu nota penyelidikan, semalam.

KPJ mencatatkan lonjakan hasil sebanyak 8.1 peratus tahun ke tahun kepada RM1.1 bilion pada suku ketiga tahun kewangan 2025.

Peningkatan hasil yang memberangsangkan itu didorong jumlah pesakit luar yang lebih tinggi, iaitu peningkatan 4.1 peratus berbanding tempoh sama tahun lalu.

Namun, jumlah pesakit dalam mencatatkan prestasi mendatar dengan sedikit penurunan sebanyak 0.1 peratus.

Kadar penggunaan katil (BOR) turut menyusut kepada 66 peratus berbanding 77 peratus pada tahun sebelumnya, disebabkan sekatan daripada pihak pembayar insurans ke atas ke-

masuk pesakit dalam dan ujian diagnostik.

Di sebalik cabaran makro itu, BIMB Securities berkata, KPJ Kuala Selangor berjaya mencapai tahap EBITDA positif dalam tempoh hanya lima bulan beroperasi.

Pencapaian itu katanya, disifatkan sebagai sesuatu yang tidak pernah berlaku dalam sejarah penubuhan hospital baharu di bawah kumpulan KPJ sebelum ini.

Kejayaan pantas hospital baharu itu katanya, didorong oleh kawalan kos yang ketat, strategi pemasaran awal yang berkesan, serta campuran pakar perunding perubatan yang ber-sasar.

"Pengurusan yakin cawangan berkenaan mampu mencapai purata margin EBITDA kumpulan jauh lebih awal daripada tempoh matang biasa selama lima tahun," katanya.