

KKM sasar haramkan jual vape seawal pertengahan tahun depan

Kementerian kekal komited laksana larangan, ambil pendekatan berperingkat

Cyberjaya: Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) menyasarkan pengharaman penjualan rokok elektronik atau vape seawal-awalnya pada pertengahan tahun depan.

Menterinya, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, berkata Kementerian kekal komited untuk mengharamkan produk rokok itu, namun akan mengambil pendekatan secara berperingkat.

"Saya berharap ia dapat dilaksanakan pertengahan 2026. Jika tidak, pada separuh kedua tahun depan. Tetapi perlu diingat terdapat banyak faktor lain yang perlu dipertimbangkan. Bagaimanapun, kita (KKM) tetap mahu

haramkan penjualan," katanya selepas melancarkan Pelan Induk Nasional Tingkah Laku dalam Kesihatan, di sini semalam.

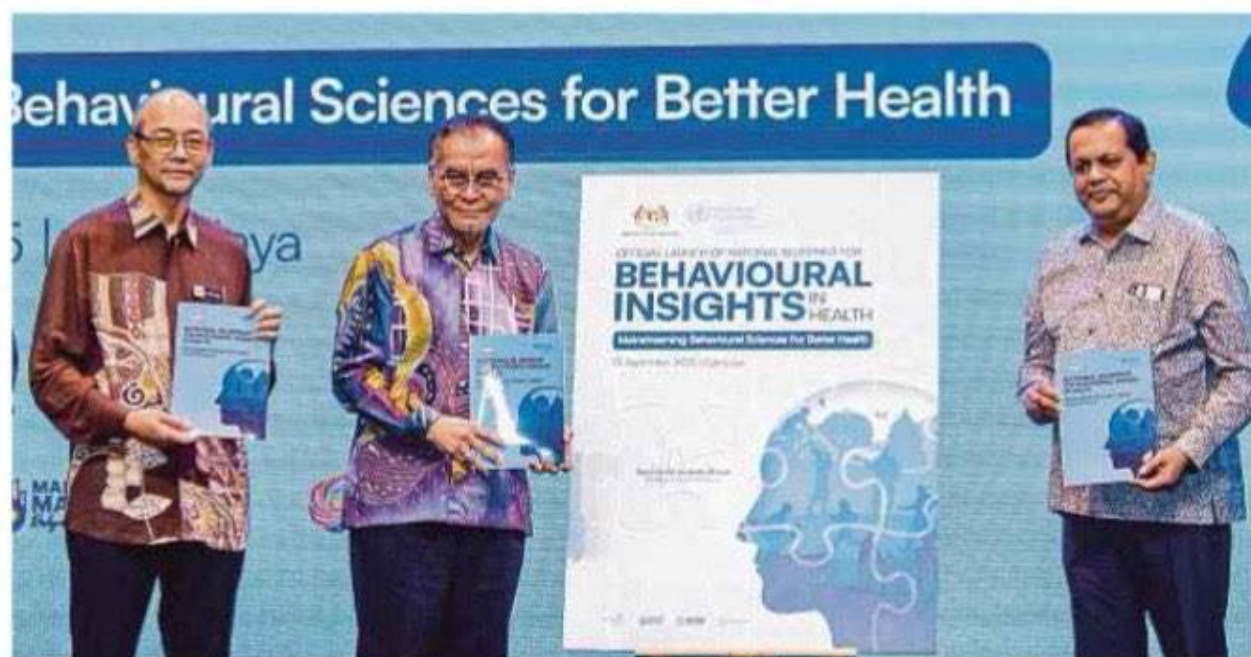
Sebelum ini, Dr Dzulkefly dilaporkan berkata KKM dalam proses merangka Memorandum Jemaah Menteri (MJM) mengenai pengharaman vape bagi memastikan pelaksanaannya dirancang secara intensif dan menyeluruh.

Pelaksanaannya akan dibuat secara berperingkat, bermula dengan pengharaman sistem terbuka, sebelum diperluas kepada semua jenis vape sehingga meliputi keseluruhan produk.

Perluas tebus SARA

Dalam perkembangan lain, Dr Dzulkefly berkata, KKM akan mencadangkan kepada Jemaah Menteri agar penebusan Penghargaan Sumbangan Asas Rahmah (SARA) diperluas kepada produk buah-buahan dan sayur-sayuran bagi menggalakkan tabiat pengambilan makanan sihat dalam kalangan rakyat.

"Ini boleh menjadi sebahagian



Dr Dzulkefly (dua dari kiri) melancarkan Pelan Induk Nasional Tingkah Laku dalam Kesihatan di Cyberjaya, semalam. (Foto BERNAMA)

daripada strategi dorongan kerana kita tahu ada kelompok umur tertentu yang tidak gemar makan sayur-sayuran dan buah-buahan," katanya.

Ketika ini, penerima penghargaan SARA boleh menebus barangan keperluan asas daripada 14 kategori produk seperti beras, roti, minyak masak, tepung, bis-

kut, mi segera, minuman, produk kebersihan diri, barangan kebersihan, kelengkapan rumah, ubat-ubatan dan barangan persekolahan. BERNAMA

Phased nationwide vape ban by 2026, says minister

CYBERJAYA: Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad yesterday said Malaysia is moving towards a phased nationwide ban on vaping products by 2026 as part of a sweeping health agenda anchored in behavioural science.

"The question is no longer if we ban vaping, but when," he said after launching the National Blueprint for Behavioural Insights in Health (NBBI).

"We are planning a gradual approach, starting with open-system products before phasing in a complete prohibition."

He said the Health Ministry has briefed the Cabinet on the proposal and would soon table a memorandum for final approval.

While Dzulkefly expressed hope that the first phase could begin by mid-2026, he added that the Cabinet would decide the final timeline.

He underscored the importance of behavioural insights, science-based "nudges" that encourage healthier choices, in ensuring the success of the ban.

"(The) law has its limits. Behavioural insights could help smokers and vapers choose to quit on their own, without relying solely on enforcement. That is crucial for long-term success."

He added that an expert committee is considering the best methods to help current users transition away from vaping even before restrictions take effect.

At the same event, he unveiled the NBBI, making Malaysia the first country in the western Pacific region to adopt a nationwide strategy applying behavioural science to improve public health.

The plan aims to "make the healthier choice the easier choice" at home, schools, workplaces and communities.

"Health is not built in hospitals alone."

"People often know what is good for them, but real change happens when the healthier option is made easier and more attractive."

He said the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2023 found that 54.4% of Malaysian adults are overweight or obese, 29.9% are physically inactive, 95% eat too few fruits and vegetables and 20% still use tobacco.

These behaviours drive chronic illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension, which account for 72% of premature deaths and cost the economy RM64.2 billion a year.

According to the ministry, effective

behavioural interventions could save 180,000 lives, add 400,000 healthy life years and return RM30 billion in value over the next 15 years.

Dzulkefly pointed to early successes: women-led malaria campaigns in Sabah cut cases by nearly 80% across six districts, behaviour-based messaging reduced congestion at Hospital Tengku Ampuan Rahimah in Klang and a small change in fruit display tripled weekly fruit sales.

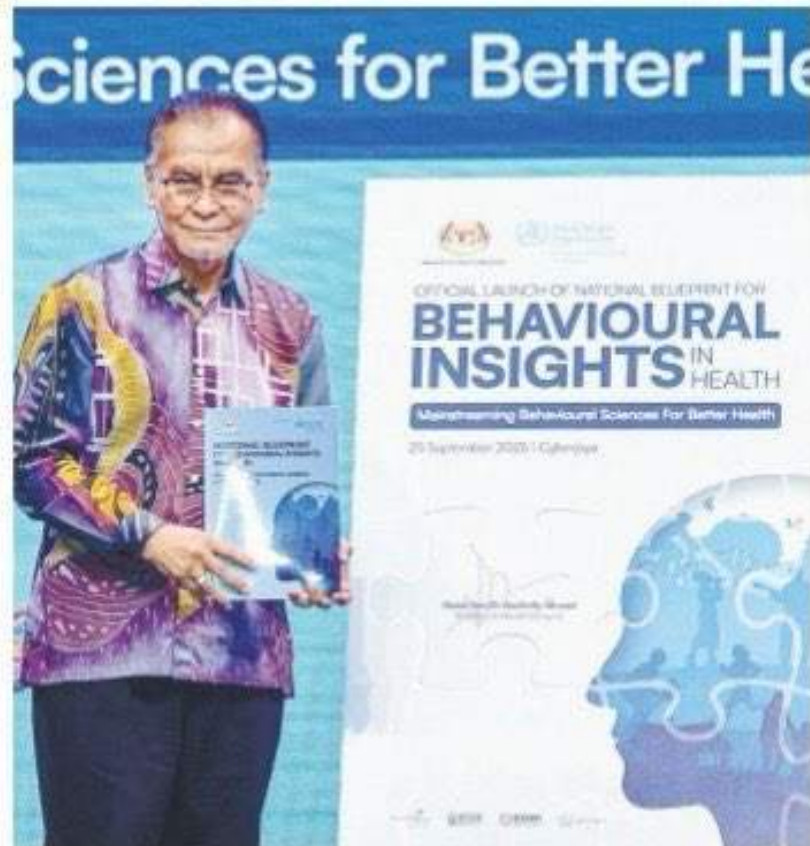
"These examples prove that small, low-cost adjustments could drive big changes."

When asked if the government would expand its MySara subsidy programme to include fresh produce, Dzulkefly said he is open to the idea.

"Many Malaysians do not eat enough fruits and vegetables. Making fresh produce more affordable and accessible is itself a behavioural nudge. I will take this proposal under serious consideration."

Malaysia will further showcase its leadership by hosting the First National Conference on Behavioural Science for Health in April 2026.

"Today we move forward with urgency, unity and conviction towards a healthier, more resilient Malaysia." — *By Kirtinee Ramesh*



Dzulkefly showcasing an official report at the launch event yesterday.
— ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN

Vape ban by mid-2026

TheStar 26/2025 ms:4



Towards a healthier Malaysia: Dzulkefly (third left) at the launch of the first National Blueprint for Behavioural Insights in Health in Cyberjaya. With him is WHO representative to Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore Dr Rabindra Abeyasinghe (second right).

Dzulkefly: Govt aims to curb smoking through phased measures

By TEH ATHIRA YUSOF

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CYBERJAYA: The Health Ministry is targeting the middle of next year to ban vape products to emphasise its commitment against the smoking habit, says Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad.

"We are taking a phased approach. The effort is ultimately to finally ban vapes," said the Health Minister.

An expert committee has provided its recommendations on banning vape products, he said.

"The committee is looking into the matter in detail," he added.

On Sept 11, Dzulkefly said the ministry is finalising a Cabinet memorandum on the proposed vape ban, but he could not disclose the details until it has been deliberated at the Cabinet level.

"I cannot pre-empt the Cabinet's decision," he told reporters yesterday.

Dzulkefly explained that the final timeline would depend on the Cabinet's approval, but the ministry would continue to push for a ban by setting the mid-2026 deadline.

"I am hoping it is going to be

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Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad

somewhere in the middle of next year. If not, then in the second half of 2026, but we definitely want to have the ban," he added.

At the launch of the first National Blueprint for Behavioural Insights in Health yesterday, Dzulkefly highlighted the importance of behavioural insights that could promote healthier choices.

He said laws and regulations have their limits and science-based behavioural insights could help those with vaping habits to have the option to quit on their own, without relying on coercion or enforcement.

In his speech, Dzulkefly

revealed that pilot projects that include "nudging" strategies have been successful in encouraging people to pick healthier habits.

For example, he said there was a three-fold increase in weekly fruit sales at the supermarkets when fruit displays were located prominently with added positive verbal prompts.

"It's not that people do not know fruits are good for them. But by making them more visible and attractive, it becomes easier to make the healthier choice," he added.

The National Blueprint for Behavioural Insights in Health was done by the ministry in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Dzulkefly said it is a landmark roadmap highlighting that health and well-being must be transformed not only through medicine, but through behaviour, systems and shared responsibility.

"This blueprint shifts the focus from awareness to action, and from treatment to promotion and prevention by addressing the behaviours, environments, and systems that shape health.

"It is about giving Malaysians

the support they need to act on what they already know is good for them," he added.

As part of this agenda, Dzulkefly said Malaysia will host its first National Conference on Behavioural Science for Health next year.

The conference will bring together policymakers, health professionals, researchers and community leaders to exchange knowledge, showcase innovations, and strengthen collaboration.

Replying to a query from the press later, he said the ministry might propose that fruits and fresh produce be included in the Sumbangan Asas Rahmah (Sara) redemption list to promote healthier eating habits among Malaysians.

"This is a good suggestion," he said in response to a question about whether the ministry would make such a proposal to the Cabinet.

Currently, Sara recipients can redeem food items such as rice, bread, cooking oil, flour, biscuits, instant noodles, milk and personal care products such as shower gel and sanitary pads.

Larangan jual vape pertengahan 2026

KKM kekal haramkan produk rokok itu secara berperingkat

CYBERJAYA

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Sebelum ini, Dr Dzulkefly dilaporkan



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DR DZULKEFLY

Over 40? It's time to get your ticker checked

KLANG: When should you go to have your heart checked?

There is no firm rule, but those aged 40 and above should go for a heart examination if they have never had one before, according to consultant cardiologist Dr Kannan Pasamanickam.

"People who are younger and who have illnesses like diabetes and high blood pressure should get their heart checked at an earlier age," said Dr Kannan.

He added that those with a family history of heart disease at a young age must also get their hearts checked at an early age.

"People should first go and see their doctors, who can review their medical history and do a clinical examination as well as a blood test.

"Further investigations like an ECG or a treadmill test can then be organised for those who

need this evaluation," said Dr Kannan.

He explained that a decision about whether the person requires a CAC or a CT coronary angiogram would be made based on the findings of these basic tests.

Dr Kannan said patients with risk factors included those with high blood pressure, diabetes, a smoking history, high blood cholesterol and, most importantly, a

family history of early heart disease.

Consultant cardiologist Dr Onn Akbar Ali said that while inflammation was a crucial part of the body's defence mechanism, it can become a problem when it is chronic, prolonged and goes unchecked.

He said heart disease often starts with irritation or injury to the inner lining of a blood vessel, such as tiny scratches caused by

high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes or "bad" cholesterol.

"The body tries to heal it with inflammation, but this "repair job" traps fat and builds up plaque.

"Over time, the arteries narrow and harden, and if a plaque bursts, a clot can form, causing blockages, reduced blood flow, and damage to heart muscle. Then, the heart attack comes," said Dr Onn.

Heart attack can come as a shock

'Don't ignore symptoms, be wary of lifestyle'

By SHYAFIQ DZULKIFLI,
FAZLEENA AZIZ
and WANI MUTHIAH
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: Muhammad Asraf Sukadi was once a dedicated cyclist, riding between 60km and 80km each week. At 47, he thought he was hale and hearty.

Then, one day, he had what he thought was severe gastritis. It was actually far worse – it was a heart attack.

"I thought it was severe gastric pain. After a week of suffering, I went to the emergency room, and I was told I had actually suffered a heart attack," said the National Registration Department officer.

"I was down and sad, but I knew I had to move on and follow the treatment plan," he said.

Cycling is now off-limits for him. Even work must be paced carefully.

Asraf has since become meticulous about his diet and medication.

"Once you're past 40, don't wait until it's too late. Go for regular check-ups."

"Don't think that just because we exercise regularly and feel healthy, we don't need health check-ups," he advised.

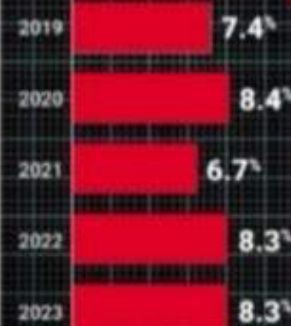
He is not alone. Heart disease, the world's leading killer, often strikes without warning. The message is clear – it can happen to anyone, at any age.

Homemaker Azura Abdul Rahman was only 24 when she was told she had severe heart valve damage caused by rheumatic fever. She required a mechanical valve replacement.

The lifelong medication that followed has brought challenges, especially during pregnancy.

"I have to be on warfarin (a blood-thinning medication) for life."

Share of medically certified deaths from ischaemic heart disease in Malaysians aged 15–40



Source: Statistics on Causes of Death Malaysia 2024, DOSM

TheStar graphics

"Warfarin is not safe for pregnancy, so the process of conceiving and delivery for patients on warfarin is very complicated and requires close monitoring by doctors and specialists," said the now 34-year-old.

She added that parents must take childhood illnesses seriously.

"If your children have prolonged fever, please do not delay in getting treatment. A fever left untreated can lead to lifelong heart problems," she said.

Retiree Alladin Ariffin, 73, vividly remembers the shock he experienced upon receiving his diagnosis.

In 2010 – when he was 58 – he woke up in the middle of the night

with severe chest and back pain. Doctors told him his heart artery was blocked and that he needed immediate bypass surgery.

"I was terrified. I thought about my wife and children, and whether I would survive," he said.

His recovery was slow. He could not drive or do gardening for months, but with his family's support, he regained his strength.

He now adheres to three principles: abstaining from smoking, maintaining a healthy diet, and taking daily brisk walks.

"Don't ignore the symptoms. Prevention is far easier than going through surgery," he said.

Missy, now in her 60s, was another person who had a nasty surprise. A routine abdominal ultrasound six years ago indicated a gallbladder problem.

And when she was wheeled into surgery, the ECG (electrocardiogram) showed a very erratic heart rhythm and rapid heart-beat. After her gallbladder was removed, Missy's surgeon recommended that she consult a cardiologist. She was then told she had coronary artery disease. She is currently on medication.

Retired businessman Bashir Ahmad Ibrahim, aged 73, experienced a heart attack at the age of 57.

"I was driving when it happened, and my kids took me to the hospital where doctors inserted a stent," he said.

Several years later, his condition worsened.

An angiogram showed his earlier stent had become blocked, requiring more procedures.

"I've had several angiograms and more stents since then. I will admit my diabetes is probably the main cause of my heart condition," he said.

Bashir Ahmad believes that

Tips for Preventing Heart Disease



Manage stress

Practise the "108" methods (e.g. deep breathing, resting, exercising, positive thinking) to reduce stress.



Be physically active

Do at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity, five days a week.



Eat a healthy and balanced diet

Follow a healthy and balanced eating habit based on the #QuarterQuarterHalf concept (¼ vegetables/fruit, ¼ protein, ¼ carbs).

Don't smoke/Quit smoking

All types of smoking products, including e-cigarettes (vape), are harmful to the heart.



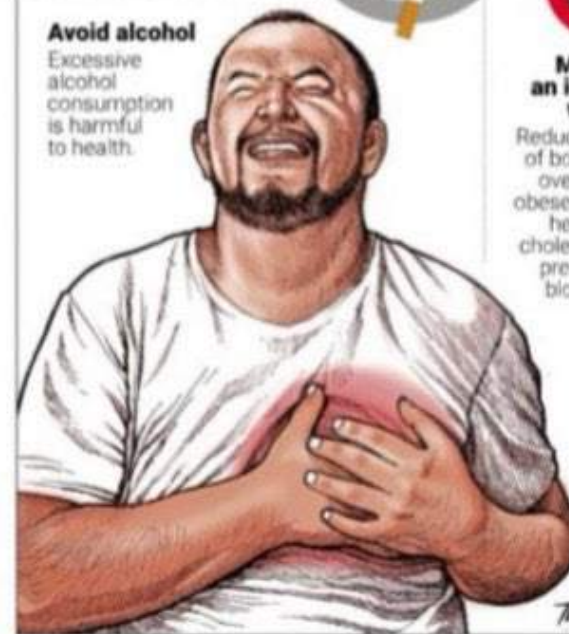
Avoid alcohol

Excessive alcohol consumption is harmful to health.



Maintain an ideal body weight

Reduce 5% to 10% of body weight if overweight or obese. Weight loss helps lower cholesterol, blood pressure, and blood sugar.



Source: MyHealth portal, Health Ministry

TheStar graphics

heart disease is the number one cause of death in Malaysia likely due to people's lifestyle and eating habits.

He said Malaysians are known

to eat rich and oily food and also consume sugary drinks.

The younger generation, he said, had to be more wary about their life choices.

The minor ailments that may hide a major attack

PETALING JAYA: It's a problem so easy to be missed. Dizziness, fatigue or jaw pain may seem like minor ailments, but they could be hiding a far worse problem – an impending heart attack.

Not all heart problems begin with chest pain, says Malaysian Medical Association president Datuk Dr Thirunavukarasu Rajoo.

The fear now is that more

younger people could be at risk due to sedentary lifestyles, poor diets, stress and smoking.

Another concern is that many only seek help when the disease is already advanced, often because early symptoms are ignored or mistaken for minor issues.

"This is why regular, scheduled medical check-ups are so important.

"Early detection can help

improve outcomes and even save lives. A heart-healthy lifestyle of staying active, eating well and avoiding smoking are equally important," he said.

Dr Thirunavukarasu said urgent awareness can be created through consistent public education, stronger community engagement and visible campaigns.

"The simple messages are: eat

healthily, stay active, go for scheduled check-ups. These must be repeated and reinforced at every level, from schools to workplaces," he said.

Dr Sathvinder Singh Gian Singh said awareness of the factors that give rise to heart disease, symptoms and one's risk profile are among the early steps needed in tackling heart disease.

The consultant cardiologist and

electrophysiologist said it is wise to be aware of some non-specific symptoms.

"Symptoms like fatigue, leg swelling, dizziness, palpitations, abdominal discomfort, jaw or neck pain and even unexplained sweating might be early signs of heart diseases. It's not just chest pain.

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Fight misinformation and fake news on heart health, media urged

> FROM PAGE 8

"Patients can do simple tests like an electrocardiogram (ECG) or blood investigations to look for diabetes or hyperlipidemia and blood pressure checking as early steps. Any abnormalities need to be rectified early," he said.

On what can be done to create more awareness on heart disease, Dr Sathvinder said the media should help fight misinformation and fake news.

Some patients think vaping is

better than smoking, exercise can be detrimental to heart health, alcohol is helpful for heart disease and medications prescribed by a doctor can cause more harm, he said.

"Thankfully, we are also seeing good trends like the use of smart watches or wearables to keep track of heart rate and activities, as well as more information on new medications and treatment," he said.

Dr Nor Halwani Habizal, a consultant cardiologist and cardiac

electrophysiologist, said epigastric pain (sometimes treated as gastritis), profuse sweating and palpitation are some symptoms people may overlook.

For women, it may be interscapular pain, vomiting and profuse sweating.

"We are also seeing younger people suffering heart attacks and more women being affected.

"Early medical check-ups, including ECG and cardiovascular (CV) risk factor screening should be done. You also have to factor in

family histories of ischaemic heart disease (IHD), hypercholesterolemia (high cholesterol) and sudden death," she said.

As such, Dr Nor Halwani called for more forums and talks by experts as well as free or affordable basic medical check-ups to create awareness.

Recently, the deputy director-general of health (public health) Dr Ismuni Bohari said heart disease remains a threat to the country as it is the leading preventable cause of death.

IHD is the second-highest cause of medically certified deaths, accounting for 15.1% and the leading cause of death among those aged 41 to 59, with men more affected than women, according to data from the Statistics Department in 2024.

Dr Ismuni said diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol and prolonged stress are the main contributors to heart disease, apart from smoking, obesity, sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy eating habits.

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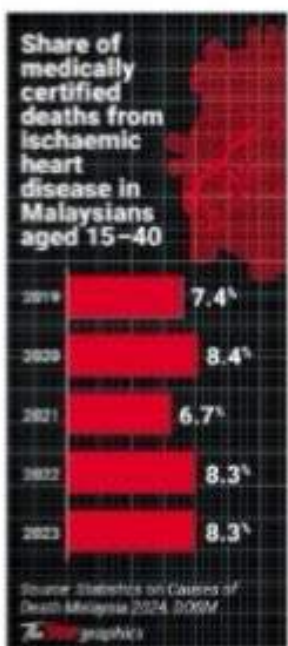
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Source: MyHealth portal, Health Ministry
Infographic by The Star

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electrophysiologist said it is wise to be aware of some non-specific symptoms.

"Symptoms like fatigue, leg swelling, dizziness, palpitations, abdominal discomfort, jaw or neck pain and even unexplained sweating might be early signs of heart diseases. It's not just chest pain."

STRUCTURAL DAMAGE

Temporary relocation of Kuala Tahan clinic to Kampung Padang next week

JERANTUT: A half-century-old health clinic has been declared unsafe due to structural damage, said authorities.

The Kuala Tahan clinic will temporarily operate from Penghulu Reja Hall in Kampung Padang, Kuala Tahan, beginning next week.

Pahang Health Department di-

rector Dr Saiful Azlan Sharif said an inspection by the Public Works Department (PWD) found that the clinic, which began operations on June 1, 1977, suffered damage to the main structure due to soil movement.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had announced last year that a new health clinic

would be built in Kuala Tahan, Jerantut.

Saiful Azlan said as a short-term measure, an application would be submitted to repair the existing clinic, pending the outcome of an inspection and assessment by PWD's structural forensics division.

He said the construction of a

new health clinic, equipped with an X-ray machine, had already been approved under the Fourth Rolling Plan of the 12th Malaysia Plan, with works expected to begin next year.

He added that the department remained committed to ensuring that residents could continue to receive quality healthcare ser-

vices and healthcare workers could carry out their duties in comfortable conditions.

The Kuala Tahan health clinic, located along the road connecting Jerantut town and Ulu Tembeling, currently serves about 6,000 residents, including the Orang Asli community, with an average of 60 patients daily.

NST 26/9/2025 MS/10

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NST 26/9/2025 MS/10

'Paracetamol **safe** for expectant women'

➤ Trump remark linking painkiller to autism in children not supported by science: Experts

■ BY KIRTINEE RAMESH
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: United States President Donald Trump has stirred debate after urging pregnant women to avoid Tylenol, claiming the common painkiller could cause autism in children.

However, Malaysian specialists say his remarks are not supported by science and emphasised that paracetamol, the generic name for Tylenol, remains safe for expectant mothers when taken appropriately.

Universiti Sains Malaysia Centre for Drug Research professor Dr Zurina Hassan said paracetamol has long been considered safe in pregnancy when used in moderation.

"Current scientific evidence

does not show that taking paracetamol causes autism or ADHD in children."

She cited a 2024 study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, which examined sibling pairs to account for genetic and environmental factors.

"The analysis found no association between acetaminophen (paracetamol) use during pregnancy and a child's risk of autism, ADHD or intellectual disability.

"This suggests that earlier signals of risk in other studies were likely due to confounding factors, not a causal link."

She said while paracetamol does cross the placenta and the blood-brain barrier, possible harms remain theoretical, with

hypotheses ranging from oxidative stress to hormonal disruption.

"These are theoretical pathways. We are only seeing correlation, not causation."

Trump's comments, delivered alongside Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr on Sept 22 at a White House press conference, were quickly dismissed by medical professionals as unsubstantiated.

Universiti Putra Malaysia obstetrics and gynaecology specialist Dr Nurul Iftida Basri said the bigger risk lies in untreated illness.

"Unresolved fever raises the mother's core temperature, which in turn increases the temperature in the womb.

This could harm the unborn foetus, particularly if birth occurs while the mother still has a high fever."

She added that pain itself could also have significant physical and psychological effects.

"Paracetamol remains the

first-line analgesic for pain during pregnancy."

She also said there was no need to revise Malaysia's obstetric guidelines, despite recent headlines suggesting otherwise.

"A recent statement by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency confirmed that paracetamol remains safe in pregnancy and that there is no evidence it causes autism in children. No change is needed for now."

Both experts advised expectant mothers to use paracetamol judiciously and consult healthcare providers if in doubt.

"Any statement on the dangers of medications during pregnancy must be based on rigorous scientific evidence.

"A single study does not necessarily represent the true relationship, and news headlines may not reflect professional consensus."

PM briefs King on pressing issues

■ BY IKHWAN ZULKAFLEE AND FAIZ RUZMAN
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia, granted an audience to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at Istana Bukit Tunku, Kuala Lumpur yesterday where he was briefed on several pressing national issues.

One of the main issues raised was the RON95 petrol subsidy under the Budi95 initiative launched by the Finance Ministry. Under the initiative, the price of RON95 has been subsidised to RM1.99 per litre. The government expects savings of between RM2.5 billion and RM4 billion per year through the removal of blanket subsidies. Officials said the initiative is intended not only to shield vulnerable groups from rising living costs but also to free up national resources for healthcare, education and public transport.

Budi95 will be rolled out in phases, starting with 300,000 members of the armed forces and police this Saturday. On Sunday it will be extended to B40 recipients currently receiving the Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah cash aid.

By Tuesday next week (Sept 30) the subsidy will cover about 16 million Malaysians aged 16 and above who hold a valid MyKad and driving licence.

Under Budi95, eligible individuals are entitled to a monthly quota of up to 300 litres of subsidised RON95 petrol. E-hailing drivers, however, are exempt from this cap and may apply for a larger quota. Malaysians can now check their eligibility for the fuel subsidy via the official Budi95 portal.

Motorists can also opt to pay for the subsidised fuel using the Touch 'n Go eWallet. By completing the electronic-Know Your Customer (eKYC) verification in the app, users can buy fuel through a dedicated Budi95 function without presenting their MyKad at the pump.

The system lets motorists select a station, enter pump details and amount, generate a QR code and receive automatic refunds for any unused balance.

Anwar also updated His Majesty on preparations for the upcoming 47th Asean Summit, which will be hosted in Kuala Lumpur next month.

The summit is expected to gather Southeast Asian leaders for discussions on regional cooperation, economic growth and pressing geopolitical challenges facing the Asean bloc.

Ahli farmasi wira tak didendang mantapkan khidmat kesihatan

Oleh Dr Irma Wati Ngadimon
bhrencana@bh.com.my

Semalam, dunia meraikan Hari Ahli Farmasi Sedunia sebagai tanda penghargaan terhadap profesion yang menjadi antara tulang belakang sistem kesihatan. Malaysia memiliki lebih 19,000 ahli farmasi berdaftar di hospital, farmasi komuniti, industri farmaseutikal, akademik dan penyelidikan.

Di hospital, ahli farmasi bukan hanya membekalkan ubat kepada pesakit luar, sebaliknya menguruskan ubat untuk pesakit di wad, memastikan ketepatan dos setiap preskripsi dan mematuhi faktor keselamatan.

Ahli farmasi di hospital juga sebahagian pasukan rawatan yang turun ke wad bersama doktor dan jururawat untuk menilai keberkesanan terapi, mencadangkan pelarasan dos serta memantau kesan sampingan.

Di unit penghasilan sediaan khas, ahli farmasi menyediakan ubat khusus seperti kemoterapi, ubat-ubatan untuk kanak-kanak atau ubat steril untuk pesakit kritikal yang memerlukan ketelitian dan kepakaran tinggi kerana kesilapan kecil membawa risiko besar kepada pesakit.

Peranan ahli farmasi juga merentasi bidang industri farmaseutikal kerana bertanggungjawab memastikan setiap ubat sampai kepada pengguna adalah selamat, berkualiti dan berkesan.

Pandemik COVID-19 menjadi detik bersejarah menyingkap nilai sebenar profesion farmasi. Ahli farmasi terbabit secara langsung dalam memastikan bekalan vaksin sentiasa mencukupi, disimpan mengikut piawaian rantai sejuk agar vaksin kekal efisien dan selamat serta diedarkan ke seluruh negara.

Paling dekat dengan rakyat

Di farmasi komuniti, ahli farmasi menjadi titik akses kesihatan paling hampir dengan rakyat. Ketika hospital sesak dengan pesakit COVID, farmasi komuniti menyediakan akses berterusan kepada ubat-ubatan dan produk kesihatan.

Malah, ramai pelanggan mengunjungi farmasi untuk mendapatkan bekalan seperti pelitup muka, pembersih tangan dan vitamin. Laporan Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) mendedahkan lebih 60 peratus rakyat bergantung kepada farmasi komuniti sepanjang tempoh Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (PKP).

Jika pandemik menguji daya tahan negara secara mendadak, beban penyakit tidak berjangkit pula menjadi cabaran berterusan. Tinjauan Kesihatan dan Morbiditi Kebangsaan (NHMS) 2023 melaporkan 15.6 peratus orang dewasa menghidap diabetes, manakala hampir satu pertiga berdepan hipertensi dan kolesterol tinggi.

Ahli farmasi mendidik pesakit mengenai keperluan kepada rawatan, memberi panduan penggunaan ubat dan membantu dalam mencegah komp-

likasi berbahaya seperti strok atau kegagalan buah pinggang.

Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO) melaporkan lebih 50 peratus ubat di dunia digunakan secara tidak betul. Ada pesakit berhenti mengambil ubat separuh jalan, menggandakan dos tanpa nasihat pakar dan mencampurkan ubat dengan herba tanpa maklumat jelas.

Ahli farmasi menjadi benteng terakhir memastikan ubat digunakan secara selamat. Mereka meneliti preskripsi, mengenal pasti interaksi berbahaya dan memberi kaunseling sebelum pesakit melangkah keluar dengan ubat di tangan.

Dalam dunia digital yang dibanjiri maklumat bercampur-baur tanpa validasi, ahli farmasi berperanan membawa pencerahan berasaskan sains dan bukti.

Ahli farmasi juga berperanan penting di peringkat dasar kesihatan negara. Mereka memastikan hanya ubat berdaftar dan berkualiti dibenarkan di pasaran, membanteras ubat tiruan serta mengawal iklan produk kesihatan agar tidak mengelirukan masyarakat.

Hari Ahli Farmasi Sedunia mengingatkan kita bahawa sistem kesihatan tidak akan lengkap tanpa peranan mereka.

Dari wad hospital hingga ke farmasi komuniti, dari makmal penyelidikan hingga ke dasar kesihatan negara, ahli farmasi hadir mendidik, membimbing, melindungi dan menyokong keperluan negara.

Program Changing Diabetes in Children dan Universiti Harvard bekerjasama menangani diabetes jenis 1 di Malaysia

Kerjasama bagi kumpul data pesakit, status kesihatan serta corak pengurusan penyakit

Oleh Nurulhikmah Arshiyah Hassan
nurulhikmah@nbc.com.my

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia terus memperkukuh langkah menangani diabetes jenis 1 dalam kalangan kanak-kanak dan remaja berumur bawah 20 tahun melalui pelaksanaan program kerjasama bagi peringkat nasional dan antarabangsa.

Usaha ini dijalankan bersama program Changing Diabetes in Children (CDiC), inisiatif jangka panjang yang memberi tumpuan khusus kepada peningkatan kualiti penjagaan bagi kanak-kanak dan remaja muda yang menghidap diabetes jenis 1.

Presiden Persatuan Endokrinologi dan Metabolik Malaysia (MEMM), Dr Nurain Mohd Noor, berkata tumpuan diberikan kepada rawatan holistik termasuk pendidikan, latihan, penyediaan, persediaan pemantauan glukosa dan pengumpulan data penting untuk memperkukuh sistem kesihatan negara.

"Program CDiC Malaysia yang bermula pada 2025 hingga 2028, di mana pesakit diundi profil melalui hospital di bawah Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) dan Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi (KPT) yang mengumpul pakar endokrinologi," katanya.

Usaha ini telah diperkukuhkan melalui inisiatif Kajian Kumpulan Global (Global Cohort Study), hasil kerjasama strategik CDiC bersama Universiti Harvard.

"Dengan sokongan Universiti Harvard dan Novo Nordisk, kajian ini membolehkan Malaysia mengumpul data menyekut pesakit diabetes jenis 1, termasuk umur, status kesihatan, rawatan diberikan dan corak pengurusan penyakit," katanya.



Dr Lee, Dr Jaleh Eght, Harvard Health System Innovation Lab, Brookline; Dr Nurain, Prof Dr Muhammad Nazeem dan Dr Fagih Chakraborty sebagai team untuk menangani diabetes jenis 1 di Kuala Lumpur, bersama Dr Lee dan Dr Fagih Chakraborty, 2025.

tidak memberi apa-apa barangan.

Definisi yang juga Pengarah MENDM-CDiC Malaysia berkata, data berkenaan penting untuk perancangan dasar dan pemantauan kesihatan rawatan, di mana data ini akan menjadi projek pertama serumpunnya di Malaysia bagi pesakit ini.

Melayi, belah kum, diabetes

Sementara itu, Pengarah Haras Nova Nordisk Malaysia, Dr Prof Nal Chakraborty, berkata Novo Nordisk berprestasi lebih 120 tahun dalam bidang rawatan diabetes dan kini memperkukuh kerjasama kepada pesakit dengan pesakit metabolik lain seperti obesiti.

"Medan kami adalah 'mengalahkan' diabetes,"

Beliau memaklumi, secara global, kadar prevalensi diabetes jenis 1 adalah tinggi, namun rawatan dan pengurusan pesakit berbeza mengikut negara.

Di negara berpendapatan rendah dan sederhana, kadar prevalensi dan mortaliti akibat diabetes jenis 1 adalah jauh lebih tinggi.

Memeritnya lagi, projek CDiC bertujuan menyediakan sokongan holistik kepada pesakit menggunakan pendekatan, peralatan pemantauan glukosa, serta sokongan penting lain.

Sekelompok berbilang, lebih 1,400 kanak-kanak di Malaysia

telah menerima manfaat, dengan sasaran untuk mencapai sekurang-kurangnya 8,000 pesakit menjelang tahun 2028.

Kerjasama Projek Global Collaborative CDiC, Mikul Lowest Sistem Kesihatan Universiti Harvard, Dr Jaleh Eght, menyifatkan kajian holistik global ini sebagai terbesar dan pertama membolehkan banyak negara serta pelbagai pihak berkepentingan.

Memeritnya, diabetes jenis 1 sering diabaikan dan kurang mendapat perhatian dan inisiatif ini bertujuan mengatnug pengumpulan serumpun dari segi rawatan, hasil kesihatan dan gambaran sistem kesihatan.

"Ini lah torat utama Health System Innovation Lab Ramai penyediaan hebat dalam meningkatkan kajian dan ada juga me-

lir dalam beberapa area berkepentingan dengan media.

"Namun, penting ada pihak mampu memajukan penyelidikan berkepentingan bagi dan menyempurnakan kepada tindakan serta dasar berkesan."

"Medan kami adalah menyempurnakan dengan kajian holistik kepada dasar dan tindakan yang memberi impak kepada pesakit dan sistem kesihatan," jelasnya.

Medikan diabetes jenis 1

Perunding Kanan Pediatric Endokrinologi, Pusat Perubatan Universiti Malaya, Prof Dr Muhammad Yusuf Jalaludin, berkata Malaysia antara tiga negara Asia teratas dipilih sebagai 'Global Collaborative CDiC'.

Program ini membolehkan

analisis komparatif dilakukan bagi membantu kerajaan membuatkan banyak keputusan yang diperlukan.

"Kerjasama bersama Harvard memberi peluang untuk mengumpul data dan memodelkan pengurusan Diabetes Jenis 1."

"Apabila semua negara peserta ini bersama, saya memandangkan Malaysia menjadi lokasi pertama menjalankan inisiatif ini dan menjadikan ini diterima baik."

"Malaysia kemudiannya menjadi tuan rumah mengundang banyak penyelidikan holistik global dengan Harvard akan mengumpul data membabitkan 20 peserta dari Asia, selain Malaysia seperti India seperti Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Kanada dan Amerika," katanya.

Memeritnya, kehadiran platform CDiC adalah pengkalan data yang besar, termasuk akan (klinik-based) dan mampu menyempurnakan pelbagai aspek termasuk pemantauan glukosa darah.

"Pesakit diabetes adalah manusia dan bukan objek gaya hidup. Namun, manusia atau manusia wajar menjadi pelita bagi pesakit mendapat rawatan terbaik dari awal," katanya.

Katanya, dengan teknologi terkini, kawalan metabolik boleh diperbaiki, komplikasi dapat diatangkan dan pesakit dapat menjalani kehidupan produktif.

"Malapet akan pengetahuan holistik ini dapat dilihat selepas 10 ke 20 tahun, pengumpulan yang baik sejak awal diagnosis akan membolehkan pesakit hidup lebih dan menyempurnakan kepada masyarakat," katanya.



changing diabetes in children

No child should die from diabetes



Klinik Kesihatan Kuala Tahan ditutup sementara

Jerantut: Klinik Kesihatan Kuala Tahan terpaksa ditutup selepas mengalami kerosakan struktur utama disebabkan pergerakan tanah.

Pengarah Jabatan Kesihatan Pahang, Dr Saiful Azlan Sharif, berkata faktor itu menyebabkan bangunan klinik terbabit tidak selamat diduduki.

Beliau berkata, bagi memastikan perkhidmatan kesihatan kepada penduduk setempat tidak terjejas, operasi klinik itu dipindahkan ke lokasi sementara ke Dewan Penghulu Reja, Kampung Padang, di sini, mulai kelmarin.

"Klinik berkenaan mula beroperasi 1 Jun 1997 dan hasil pemeriksaan Jabatan Kerja Raya (JKR) mendapati premis terbabit mengalami kerosakan struktur utama.

"Klinik itu memberikan perkhidmatan kesihatan kepada 6,000 penduduk setempat dengan purata kedatangan harian pesa-

kit antara 50 dan 60 orang," katanya menerusi kenyataan media, di sini, semalam.

Dr Saiful Azlan berkata, semua 24 petugas klinik terbabit akan meneruskan tugas mereka di lokasi sementara itu.

Beliau berkata, Pejabat Kesihatan Daerah Jerantut sudah membuat hebahan kepada penduduk setempat mengenai perpindahan sementara itu.

"Sebagai perancangan jangka pendek, permohonan peruntukan membaiki struktur sedia ada akan dilakukan mengikut kesesuaian dan penilaian dibuat Bahagian Forensik Struktur JKR.

"Pada 2024, projek pembinaan Klinik Kesihatan Kuala Tahan dengan kemudahan X-ray di tapak baharu sudah diluluskan di bawah Rancangan Malaysia Ke-12 (RMK12).

"Kerja pembinaan bangunan baharu itu dijangka bermula tahun depan," katanya.

Operasi Klinik Kesihatan Kuala Tahan pindah ke lokasi sementara

Jerantut: Klinik Kesihatan Kuala Tahan, di sini, terpaksa ditutup kerana mengalami kerosakan struktur utama disebabkan pergerakan tanah.

Pengarah Jabatan Kesihatan Pahang Dr Saiful Azlan Sharif berkata, faktor itu menyebabkan bangunan klinik terbabit tidak selamat diduduki.

"Bagi memastikan perkhidmatan kesihatan kepada penduduk setempat tidak terjejas, operasi klinik dipindahkan ke lokasi sementara di Dewan Penghulu Reja, Kampung Padang, di sini, mulai kelmarin.

"Klinik Kesihatan Kuala Tahan mula beroperasi pada 1 Jun 1977 dan pemeriksaan Jabatan Kerja Raya (JKR) mendapati, ia mengalami kerosakan struktur utama," katanya pada kenyataan, semalam.

Untuk rekod, Klinik Kesihatan Kuala Tahan memberikan perkhidmatan kesihatan kepada kira-kira 6,000 penduduk setempat dengan purata kedatangan harian pesakit antara 50 dan 60 orang.

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"Kerja pembinaan bangunan baharu itu dijangka bermula tahun depan," katanya.



PENDUDUK membantu memindahkan peralatan di Klinik Kesihatan Kuala Tahan ke lokasi sementara ke Dewan Penghulu Reja, Kampung Padang, Kuala Tahan, Jerantut.

Yakult tingkat kesedaran kesihatan usus, mental

Kuantan: Yakult (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd (Yakult) komited menyampaikan maklumat tepat berasaskan prinsip sains melalui program kesihatan komuniti termasuk berkaitan kesihatan usus.

Pengarah Bersekutu Jabatan Perhubungan Awam dan Sains, Yakult (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, Mazlyn Mena Mustapha, berkata program berkenaan diharap membantu orang ramai membuat pilihan lebih baik untuk penjagaan kesihatan.

"Kali ini, kami ingin memberi pendedahan kepada orang ramai mengenai kepentingan penjagaan usus dan hubungannya dengan kesihatan mental.

"Menurut hubungan paksi usus-otak, usus yang sihat dan seimbang bukan sahaja dapat melancarkan penghadaman, malah mampu mempengaruhi emosi, mood dan fungsi kognitif seseorang secara positif," katanya pada perasmian penutup program kesedaran kesihatan komuniti 'Usus Sihat, Minda Lagi Hebat' di Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM) Kampus Kuantan, di sini, baru-baru ini.

Hadir sama, Penolong Pengarah Unit Komunikasi Korporat, Pejabat Pengarah Kampus UIAM Kuantan, Mohammad Habib Ahmad dan Pengurus Kanan, Jabatan Perhubungan Awam dan Sains Yakult (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, Lim Siew Ling.

Mazlyn Mena berkata, pengambilan probiotik seperti *Lactobacillus paracasei* Shirota strain (LcS) secara harian boleh



Mazlyn Mena (duduk hadapan, kanan) bersama Mohammad Habib dan Siew Ling (duduk hadapan, kiri) pada majlis penutup program kesedaran kesihatan komuniti 'Usus Sihat, Minda Lagi Hebat' di Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM) Kampus Kuantan.

(Foto Astrol Awang/BH)

membantu mengekalkan keseimbangan bakteria baik dalam usus, sekali gus menyokong penghadaman dan fungsi usus secara umum.

"Kajian saintifik yang melibatkan sekumpulan pelajar universiti perubatan tahun akhir dan berdepan tekanan peperiksaan akademik di Jepun, mendapati mereka yang mengambil probiotik Shirota strain setiap hari selama lapan minggu berturut-turut menunjukkan penghasilan hormon tekanan (korti-

sol) lebih rendah berbanding dengan kumpulan pelajar yang tidak mengambil probiotik.

"Hasil kajian turut mendapati, Shirota strain mampu mengurangkan gejala ketidakselesaan abdomen seperti sakit perut dan seses akibat tekanan akademik," katanya.

Program anjuran Yakult dan berkolaborasi dengan UIAM Kampus Kuantan itu, dihadiri kira-kira 100 orang dari sekitar daerah ini.

Antara aktiviti menjadi tum-

puan adalah Pertandingan Smoothie 'Smooth Your Gut' yang menggunakan kreativiti peserta bagi menyediakan minuman smoothie berasaskan Yakult.

Kanak-kanak pula berpeluang belajar cara menyediakan hidangan sihat menerusi Bengkel Makanan Minda: Poket Mesra Usus.

Sesi forum kesihatan 'Usus Sihat, Minda Lagi Hebat' yang membabitkan dua ahli panel iaitu Pensyarah di Jabatan Sains Pemakanan, Fakulti Sains Kesihatan Bersekutu UIAM Kampus

Kuantan, Prof Madya Dr Wan Azdie Mohd Abu Bakar dan Kaunselor Berdaftar dari Pusat Asasi UIAM Gambang, Fatin Eilyana Afandi turut mendapat perhatian.

Penganjuran program ini selaras dengan falsafah korporat Yakult untuk membawa kesihatan dan kebahagiaan kepada orang ramai.

Untuk maklumat lebih lanjut mengenai aktiviti Yakult, layari laman sesawang Yakult di www.yakult.com.my

From silence to sounds

WHEN he was born, Jayden Kwan seemed like any other baby boy.

As he grew, he met his milestones and even started babbling at age one, a crucial developmental stage for infants.

But everything changed when Jayden turned 3. He suddenly became silent and unresponsive.

It was a distressful time for his grandmother, Josephine Teh, his primary caregiver at that time. She was puzzled and concerned by the sudden change in her grandson who had previously seemed normal and active.

It was also the period of the Covid-19 pandemic and with lockdowns, quarantines and travel restrictions in place, Jayden was almost 4 by the time he was seen and assessed by a specialist who diagnosed him with severe to profound hearing loss.

Jayden was eventually fitted with hearing aids to help him cope.

His family was devastated at the diagnosis because their bright little boy had always seemed normal. His grandmother gave up her job to focus on his care.

THE NEXT STEP

Jayden was fortunate that his family was determined to get the best possible solution for his hearing loss and in July this year, he was fitted with a state-of-the-art cochlear implant that essentially enables him to hear almost like a normal person.

He's the first in the country and the first paediatric recipient in the region to be fitted with this new smart implant, with the surgery conducted at UKM Specialist Centre by



Jayden prior to surgery. The surgery and implant now gives him near normal hearing. PICTURE CREDIT: UKMHC, HOSPITAL CANSelor TIANBU MUHIZ

Professor Dr Goh Bee See, who's also head of the UKM Cochlear Implant Programme.

"He was such a brave and cooperative boy throughout the surgery," says Teh proudly.

The surgery signals a new step for Jayden, providing him with the opportunity to get through life like other children.

Although a long road awaits Jayden in terms of rehabilitation as he learns to adapt to his new situation and starts therapy to acquire speech, everyone is confident he will adapt and thrive.

"I am so proud to have him as my grandson. My wish now is for him to hear the world, explore everything around him and be the boy he was meant to be."

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The earlier a child receives the cochlear implant the better he or she fares in terms of adaptability and rehabilitation. PICTURE CREDIT: UKMHC, HOSPITAL CANSelor TIANBU MUHIZ



Jayden, seen here with Dr Goh, can now look forward to a new chapter in his life. PICTURE CREDIT: UKMHC, HOSPITAL CANSelor TIANBU MUHIZ

FROM SILENCE TO SOUND

HEARING loss can have a profound impact on a child's ability to develop and learn, says Professor Dr Goh Bee See from the faculty of medicine, University Kebangsaan Malaysia, Hospital Canselor Tunku Muhriz.

The UKM Cochlear Implant Programme, which began in 1995, has since conducted over 750 cochlear implant surgeries, with the first patient operated on now an adult and lecturer at a teacher's training college in Terengganu.

If a person's hearing loss is effectively addressed, it literally changes the trajectory of their life, says Dr Goh. They go on to finish school, build families and have successful careers.

Cochlear implants are usually done for those with severe to profound hearing loss.

Unlike a hearing aid which merely amplifies external sounds, a cochlear implant is able to ensure a child or adult has near normal hearing.

In Jayden's case, he was fitted with a smart implant which was only launched globally in June.

Dr Goh says the body of the implant has a special chip with an internal memory. This chip also has upgradable software, so the implant can be upgraded in the future.

This is especially effective and relevant for children as they will be using it for life," she says.

But to speak normally, these children would still need to go for intensive speech therapy after surgery, and family

members are trained to handle the home aspects of therapy.

For congenital hearing loss, a cochlear implant can be fitted as early as nine months of age, but many children are fitted with the device even earlier, as early as three months.

"Many experienced centres do it earlier than six to nine months as it helps babies meet their milestones as they grow," explains Dr Goh.

The development of hearing begins in the womb, she adds and if a child has hearing problems, the earlier the condition is detected, the better it will be for the child's future.

The Newborn Hearing Screening Test is a crucial step to identify infants with hearing loss and it enables doctors to work with parents to address the condition as soon as possible.

"Not being able to hear impacts a child in so many ways, from disrupting learning to causing social isolation as they grow."

Early diagnosis is important, she adds and newborn hearing screening is now available in many hospitals in the country.

Ideally infants should be screened within one month of age and a diagnosis made by three months or earlier so doctors can provide early intervention by six months of age or earlier.

The earlier the child receives the cochlear implant the better he or she fares in terms of adaptability and rehabilitation and this paves the way for them to have a brighter future.



The UKM Cochlear Implant Programme, which began in 1995, has since conducted over 750 cochlear implant surgeries. PICTURE CREDIT: UKMHC, HOSPITAL CANSelor TIANBU MUHIZ

Health Ministry to propose inclusion of fresh produce

CYBERJAYA: The Health Ministry will propose to the Cabinet that the Sumbangan Asas Rahmah (Sara) programme be expanded to include fruits and vegetables as well.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said the proposal would form part of a broader effort to encourage healthier eating habits.

"That's a good suggestion. I will consider it," he said after launching the National Blueprint for Behavioural Insights in Health.

Based on available data, many Malaysians still avoid consuming fruits and vegetables.

"This (the suggestion) is part of making it (fruits and vegetables) available and affordable."

Previously, Galen Centre for Health and Social Policy chief executive Azrul Mohd Khalib urged the government to broaden the scope of the Sara programme by including fruits and vegetables to improve people's dietary habits.

Meanwhile, Dzulkefly said the ministry was also targeting a ban on vape products by middle of next year.

"There are many other factors that we need to consider, but we definitely want to ban vaping."

Get more steps into your day

By CAMILLA HORTON

IT'S widely believed that 10,000 steps a day is the gold standard to aim for to boost health – but is this just a myth?

A new study led by researchers from the University of Sydney in Australia suggests the actual number to aim for is a much more realistic 1,000 steps.

The researchers examined data from dozens of studies from around the world on levels of thousands of adults, and found that people who walked 1,000 steps each day appeared to have a protective effect against a number of diseases including a 37% lower risk of heart disease, a 14% reduced risk of type 2 diabetes, a 30% decrease in dementia and a 22% reduction in depression.

Furthermore, when people walked 7,000 daily steps, compared to walking 2,000 steps, they were 47% less likely to die during the follow-up periods of the studies analysed.

However, the experts noted that "10,000 steps per day will still be better than 1,000 steps" – with the higher step count leading to even health benefits.

So, when are you ever going to leave your front doorstep today? The researchers' findings suggest to start with

1. Park further away

"People tend to park in the nearest possible place to their office and spend a further 10 minutes in the car, but when the charges on free parking spots are further away," says Holly Carr, master trainer and head of fitness for Keep Fitness, in Bristol.

"Choose a parking spot far from the entrance. It might only add a minute or two to your walk, but over the course of a week, it makes a difference."

"If you have a dog and are walking, it's encouraged to go to work 15 to 20 minutes early and going for a walk around the block, time yourself that extra time to get your steps in rather than rushing into work."

2. Take walking meetings

"We like to take our meetings out on the road when we're in the office," says Carr.

"Walking meetings are particularly good for 15-minute meetings. We have a couple of parks near our office, so we often go for walks around one of those during a meeting."

"It gets everyone moving, keeps us all getting some fresh air and gives everyone all in a great start to the week. If the meeting is online, just pop some headphones in and go for a stroll."

3. Set a timer to move

"A gentle reminder to stand up and take a short walk every 40 minutes can really boost your mental momentum," says Carr.

"Next, movement stands for physical activity. The average person barely moves all day, so taking any form of movement, even just a short walk, can really boost your mental momentum. It's a great way to get some extra movement and extra steps in during activities that you'd usually be sedentary for."

"If you're not a fan of walking, you can get a five-minute break at the end of the day, get up and have a stretch and go for a walk around the house or the office."

4. Buy a walking pad

"Walking pads are becoming increasingly popular," says Carr.

"You can use them when you are having a meeting and don't need your camera on, or when you are watching TV. They are a great way to get some extra movement and extra steps in during activities that you'd usually be sedentary for."

5. Use the stairs

"It sounds simple but climbing stairs can be a great way to get some extra movement and extra steps in during activities that you'd usually be sedentary for," says Carr.



There are easy ways to get more steps while walking to good exercise routines. — iStock.com/JohnHogson

6. Walk during TV time

"The young habit of people is watching the sport while watching your favourite shows," recommends Carr. "It might feel a bit odd at first but it's an easy way to move more without interfering your downtime."

7. Make phone calls

Housework and gardening are great opportunities for some movement.

A lot of people have all their housework and chores for the weekend, but I recommend spreading these out across the week so you get some movement at the end of your work day," suggests Carr.

"There's various different jobs

around the house that can all add to your step count activity such as vacuuming, cleaning and mowing the lawn."

8. Don't social with your steps

"Instead of meeting a friend for coffee or a drink, suggest a walk instead," recommends Carr.

"It's a great way to catch up, get some fresh air and exercise at the same time."

"You can also give a path, but walking is a walk, but it's a bit of a challenge to get a good pace up as they are a great opportunity to exercise with some. The walking people that are interested in being active" — says Carr.

Exercise comparison for a 70kg person

■ Brisk walking

Calories per 30min: 100-175
Impact: Low
Muscle engagement: Moderate (legs, core)
Accessibility: High

■ Running

Calories per 30min: 260
Impact: High
Muscle engagement: Moderate (legs, core)
Accessibility: Medium

■ Cycle workout

Calories per 30min: 200-300
Impact: None
Muscle engagement: High (legs, core)
Accessibility: Low (need access)

■ Swimming

Calories per 30min: 200
Impact: None
Muscle engagement: High (full body)
Accessibility: Low (swimming pool)

Source: Nur Medhatikh Makhtar

The final stretch

As you progress in their fitness journey, Nur Medhatikh says brisk walking can still remain as the foundation of their fitness programme.

"The most important part to remember is that the best exercise is one you enjoy and can sustain long-term," she says.

"Start where you are, progress gradually and remember that consistency trumps intensity

every time when building a sustainable exercise habit," she advises.

Pharrell agrees. "It's important to be small when it comes to your health. Every step counts."

"When you feel good, you look good, and when you look good, you feel even better. This synergy between inner purpose and outer results is what makes long-term change," she concludes.

For body and mind

BRISK walking has a long list of advantages, both physically and psychologically.

Physical benefits

■ Cardiovascular health

Regular brisk walking can reduce the risk of heart disease by up to 30%. It strengthens your heart and improves circulation.

■ Weight management

Paired with a healthy diet, it helps burn calories and maintain a healthy weight.

■ Disease prevention

Consistent walking lowers your risk for chronic conditions like type 2 diabetes, asthma, and even cancer.

■ Enhanced energy and mood

A brisk walk boosts circulation and releases endorphins, giving you an immediate lift and a more positive mental state.

■ Joint and muscle health

It lubricates your joints, reduces stiffness, and tones muscles in your legs and core.

■ Increased longevity

Consistent physical activity, like brisk walking, has been shown to reduce biological ageing and improve overall longevity.

Psychological benefits

■ Stress reduction

Walking is a therapeutic experience. The rhythmic motion and focus on your surroundings can ease stress and anxiety, acting as a form of moving meditation.

■ Improved mood and mental clarity

Brisk walking helps you to think more clearly and boost your mood. Focusing attention on the sights and sounds around you can be deeply calming.

■ Engagement and self-efficacy

Turning a simple act like walking into a consistent habit builds self-efficacy. Every time you choose to walk, you're "voting" for a more active lifestyle.

■ Social connection

Whether on its own, walking builds like collapsing in the couch after watching a game or in bed with a partner, it's a great way to connect with others and get a new friend, a partner, or a new energy and reduced stress.

■ Mental stimulation

Joining a walking group or walking with a friend provides a sense of community, accountability, and motivation.

■ Personal reflection

Walking offers an opportunity for quiet reflection, meditation, and a chance to recharge your mind.

Source: Nur Medhatikh Makhtar and Dr Parvika Lumbardhyan

Your four-week brisk walking plan

A 11.56 gram structure and makes it easier for you to build up a healthy habit.

What you need

- Comfortable walking shoes with good support
- Lightweight, moisture-wicking clothing
- Water bottle for hydration
- Fitness tracker or timer (for pace and time)

Warm-up and cool-down

- Warm-up: 5-10 minutes of easy walk and gentle stretches
- Cool-down: Slow walk and

stretches for calves, hamstrings and hips.

Week one (Five days)

- 10-15 minutes per session
- Pace: Easy to brisk (lightly faster than normal walk)

Week two (Five days)

- 15-20 minutes per session
- Pace: Brisk (noticeably faster, breathing harder but can still talk)

Week three (Five to six days)

- 20-30 minutes per session
- Pace: Moderate brisk pace, can't be consistently

Week four (Five to six days)

- 30-45 minutes per session
- Pace: Brisk (noticeably faster, breathing harder but can still talk)

Signs for success

- Start slowly and increase gradually
- Walk in safe, well-lit areas or paths
- Listen to your body. Rest if you need to
- Stay hydrated with water, particularly in a healthy for hydration

Source: Nur Medhatikh Makhtar

Pick up the pace

Brisk walking is gaining traction as an effective and attainable form of exercise. Here's how to get started.



With as little as 15 minutes daily, brisk walking can positively impact one's health trajectory, says Nur Masliah. — Photo: Nur Masliah Makmur

Stories by ENLINA ANDRIANI

If social media membership numbers are any indication, brisk walking is picking up the pace in popularity among Indonesians.

Consider this: Brisk Walk Malaysia, a Facebook community created in 2021, has already surpassed 100,000 members.

That's more than the 101,000 members of a well-known Malaysian cooking group that has been around since 2017.

Despite this apparent traction, walking is often assumed to be an exercise for senior citizens, or those in rehabilitation or recovering from injury or illness.

Younger, fitter individuals are often told they should "step up" and start running instead.

But this dismissive attitude overlooks a critical truth: Brisk walking is a legitimate and powerful form of exercise with a growing following across all age groups.

Sports therapist Nur Masliah Makmur, who has a decade of experience working with high-performance athletes, including Malaysia's elite tennis athletes, has her views.

"Brisk walking is arguably one of the most underrated forms of exercise," she says. "It's accessible to nearly everyone, requires no special equipment or skills, and provides profound physical and mental health benefits."

With as little as 15 minutes daily, Nur Masliah adds, brisk walking can positively impact one's health trajectory.

"The most important step isn't how fast or how far you walk. It's the first step out the door," says the sports science graduate, who also holds a Masters in Strength and Conditioning from Universiti Malaya.

Stepping up with purpose

For many, walking may seem like a casual, leisurely activity, much like a slow stroll in the park or a walk to a shopping mall.

However, Nur Masliah says brisk walk is an entirely different endeavor. It is a purposeful, moderate-intensity aerobic activity that elevates your heart rate and breathing.

"The key difference is intention," she explains. "A leisurely stroll is an easy pace that, while a brisk walk means you can still hold a conversation, but you can't sing comfortably."

To know if you're simply walking or actively engaging in a purposeful walk, she recommends the talk test: Can you speak in full sentences but need to pause for breath occasionally?

Another measuring tool is a heart rate monitor to watch for 50 to 70% of an individual's maximum heart rate. For someone in their 30s, that is around 130 beats per minute.

What makes this simple activity a perfect starting point for newcomers?

Nur Masliah points to its low-impact nature.

"Unlike running, brisk walking is gentle on the joints while still providing excellent cardiovascular benefits," says Nur Masliah, who owns a clinic for sports rehabilitation services.

The accessibility and flexibility, she adds, lend the mental benefits that often prevent people from starting an exercise routine.

Winning the mental game

The toughest step to any exercise — including brisk walking — isn't physical. It's the mental barrier, says clinical psychologist Dr. Farida Lourdunathan.

"It's psychological," says Farida, listing the belief that it's too difficult, a feeling of overwhelm, a lack of time or simply feeling exercise being an extra or constant burden.

However, she says brisk walking has an upper hand compared to other court sports, including going to the gym.

"Because we are, by default, already walking in our daily lives," she explains. "It feels safe and within one's control."

Farida recommends starting with small, achievable goals, which will, in time, build momentum and self-confidence. She also advises practicing an

implementation intention approach, an "if-then" plan that takes a more behavioral to an existing habit.

"For example, if I never leave home without my keys, then I will always take my walking shoes and go for a 20-minute walk," she explains.

This strategy, she says, removes the futility long, making a habit by aligning the natural flow.

Farida adds, Farida says brisk walking is also a powerful tool for mental well-being, highlighting its role in reducing stress and anxiety.

"Walking can become a therapeutic experience that helps one break mental clutter and move forward. It becomes a daily effort that, like a natural rhythm, that soothes the body and mind together," she adds.

She also notes that a mental state, especially when physical capabilities wane, as the emotional connection between body and mind, leading to even stress and anxiety while walking.

Farida cites a study where a brisk walking routine was found to be as effective as medication in treating major depression, giving participants a powerful sense of mastery and well-being.

Mastering the walk

To achieve even better walking, Nur Masliah suggests a few tips: Master the proper form and get ready to progress, says Nur Masliah.

The right walking posture, she says, is the starting point with shoulders back, with arms swinging naturally and taking shorter, quicker steps.

The advice is to aim for at least 100 minutes of brisk walking per week, which can be broken down into 10-minute sessions, five days a week.

"Consistency matters more than duration," she explains. "Daily short walks are better than occasional long ones."

For those ready to progress, she suggests incorporating intervals by alternating between brisk and slow walking or even jogging, adding challenges like hills or steps, or trying Nordic walking with poles for a full-body workout.

Farida adds that it is crucial to make brisk walking an activity one looks forward to for long-term commitment.

"Joining in a group creates accountability and a sense of camaraderie, especially in a multicultural culture like ours," she says. "It's like a social contract."

For those who prefer solitude, she notes that solo walks can be equally grounding, offering a time for spiritual reflection, mental clarity or simply enjoying the peace.

Ultimately, Farida says, the goal is to shift your identity from a non-walker to a person who walks.

In Health Psychology, she says, identity change often comes from repeating small, consistent behaviors that gradually reshape how we see ourselves, not from one big decision.

"You are making a deposit into your physical activity bank account," she says.

Over time, these small deposits accumulate, leading not just to a healthier body, but a healthier mindset.

The myths and facts about brisk walking

Myth:

You must walk 10,000 steps daily

Fact:

Health benefits start at just 4,000-7,000 steps a day

Myth:

Walking isn't "real" exercise

Fact:

Brisk walking counts as moderate-to-vigorous exercise with proven health benefits

Myth:

You need 30 minutes at once to get fit

Fact:

Several shorter walks (eg. 10-15 mins) are just as effective

Myth:

Walking is a cheap hobby

Fact:

Brisk walking reduces risk of heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, and improves mental health

Myth:

Walking doesn't aid weight control

Fact:

Combined with healthy eating, walking helps with weight loss and long-term health



Photo: Nur Masliah Makmur

Brisk walking is arguably one of the most underrated forms of exercise.

Nur Masliah Makmur

When it comes to health, no movement is too small.

Dr. Farida Lourdunathan

Junk and processed food banned in schools

By JAAYNE JEEVITA
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PETALING JAYA: Junk and processed food are among 12 categories of food and drinks that have been prohibited from being sold in schools, the Education Ministry announced.

In a Facebook post on Tuesday, it said the move was made in collaboration with the Health Ministry's nutrition division.

It said the ban was part of ongoing efforts to encourage students to adopt healthy eating habits and to support proper growth.

The first category covers food that has expired or is shaped like toys. Both are banned under the Food Regulations 1985.

Processed food such as fried potatoes, burgers, sausages, nuggets and "lok cheng" (processed meat on skewers), is also out.

Fish, chicken or meatballs sold as snacks and not as a proper dish are banned too.

Junk food or extruded snacks such as potato chips, prawn crackers, sweets and chocolates, pickled foods, and cream-filled or sugar-coated foods are also a no-no.

Instant food items, including instant noodles, vermicelli, ramen, kuey teow, instant porridge and soups, as well as seasoning, are also restricted.

The Education Ministry has also prohibited ice confectionery and ice cream products.

Sweetened beverages and toppings, such as cordials, flavoured syrups, powdered 3-in-1 drink mixes, creamers and whipping cream, are also banned.

The list also includes isotonic and energy beverages, herbal, carbonated and fruity flavoured drinks with less than 35% fruit content. Tea and coffee are only permitted for teachers.

Lastly, food and beverages containing alcohol are strictly prohibited.