

The Starlifestyle M/S 7

MANY of us keep our medication in sight so we won't forget to take it.

But that is not a good idea if you have young children in your household, as accidentally taking medicine poses a health risk to them.

Even a single tablet intended for adults can be life-threatening if swallowed by a child, says the Lower Saxony Chamber of Pharmacists in Germany.

Because children have a lower body weight, medication has a stronger effect on them.

Here are three examples of how medication – even in small doses – can affect a child's body:

> Beta blockers such as metoprolol can cause dangerous irregular heartbeat in children.

> Painkillers that affect the central nervous system can cause slower and shallower breathing, as well as loss of consciousness and seizures.

> Medicines for depression and delusions can also cause sei-

zures in children, as well as confusion and disturbances of consciousness.

**How should parents respond in an emergency?**

Caught red-handed with the blister pack in their hand? Or has the child confessed that they found and swallowed some "sweets"?

Parents should take a deep breath and stay calm – even if that's difficult. Remove any remaining medication from the child's mouth but don't induce vomiting, partly because of the risk of suffocation.

Instead, call your local emergency services, says Germany's State Chamber of Pharmacists. Or contact your poison emergency centre immediately. Check online to find out what poison emergency numbers to call.

(In Malaysia, you can contact the Drug and Poison Information Service at 04-6536 999 or via Telegram Chat: t.me/

# When a child swallows medicines



Keep medicines out of the reach of children – Mascha Brichta/dpa-trn

khidmatnasihatkeracunanPRN.

Its operating hours are Mon-Fri 8am to 10pm; Sat, Sun and public holidays 8am-5pm.

Outside of these hours, if your child ingests medicine, bring them to the nearest hospital

emergency room or clinic.)

Talking to a specialist can help clarify how dangerous the medication is for your child and what is the best course of action.

To do this, you need to provide information about which

medication is involved and how much you think your kid has taken and when.

**How can parents prevent poisoning with medicine?**

Ideally, keep blood pressure medication, thyroid tablets and so on out of the hands of children. Pharmacists advise you keep medicines in a lockable cupboard, including herbal preparations and vitamin tablets as these can also harm youngsters, says Germany's State Chamber of Pharmacists.

Medicines that need to be stored in the refrigerator are best kept in a container that is difficult to open.

Take your medicines out of sight of children to prevent them from imitating the action, says the Federal Institute for Public Health (BIOG). – dpa

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# ITOs still under pressure from surging medical claims

**PETALING JAYA:** Domestic insurance and takaful operators (ITOs) can expect elevated medical claims to remain a near-term headwind, says BIMB Securities Research.

The research house forecast Malaysia's medical inflation to reach 16% this year.

"This will continue to pressure medical claims ratios, which are likely to improve only gradually upon full implementation of the diagnosis-related group (DRG) framework," it said.

The DRG payment system is expected to be implemented alongside the rollout of the basic medical and health insurance and takaful (MHIT) plan in 2027 to manage surging medical inflation and enhance the efficiency of ITO medical claims processing. A pilot rollout of the base MHIT plan is scheduled for the second half of 2026.

"Over time, this initiative is expected to broaden market penetration, particularly among uninsured individuals seeking basic medical coverage.

"It also provides an option for existing policyholders who have been affected by significant premium increases due to rising medical inflation.

"The transition to the DRG framework presents challenges, as it must reconcile the need for ITOs to maintain sustainable margins with profitable insurance and takaful offerings, with the need for private hospitals to preserve healthy profit margins – particularly amid intense competition in major urban centres," BIMB Securities said.

"For those whose revised premiums have become unaffordable, the new base

MHIT plan offers a more affordable alternative, enabling them to switch over to maintain medical insurance coverage," it said, adding that delays in introducing affordable products could further constrain new family takaful business growth.

The research house has maintained a "neutral" recommendation on ITOs.

It expects general takaful contributions to grow by 10% to 15% this year driven mainly by fire and motor, with family takaful to post mid-single-digit growth.

However, the research house further pointed out that the claims environment remains challenging, with claims likely to stay elevated in the near term, reflecting higher motor bodily injury claims and sustained medical inflation pending full DRG implementation.

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theSun NATIONAL

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## Case-by-case aid for fire victims

**PUTRAJAYA:** With more than 9,000 individuals displaced and entire houses reduced to ashes, the government has yet to determine how many victims of the Kampung Bahagia fire may be lacking proper identification documents.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said any documentation issues would be handled on a case-by-case basis only after the ongoing registration exercise is completed.

He emphasised that the immediate priority was to ensure all affected residents are placed in temporary relief centres as state and federal agencies continue gathering details of victims from the April 19 inferno.

"Because more than 9,000 victims were involved and more than 1,000 houses over the water were affected, the Sabah government together with all relevant state and federal agencies is currently carrying out the registration process.

"Our immediate priority is to first provide them with temporary evacuation or relief centres."

Saifuddin said it was premature to draw conclusions on documentation issues, as verification efforts were still ongoing.

"During the registration process, if we later find cases involving individuals or family members who do not have identification documents, we will handle those cases one by one. We cannot make a blanket statement."

He added that the ministry would assist genuine citizens who had lost their documents in the fire, including facilitating replacements.

"As is normally the case, personal documentation is very important and must be properly held. At the same time, such documents also cannot simply be issued to individuals who are not entitled to them.

"So the more accurate position is that the Home Ministry will do its best to assist, especially those who genuinely have citizenship status.

"If an incident such as this causes them to lose their documents, we can facilitate replacement documents."

However, he emphasised that not all victims would automatically qualify for assistance.

"This does not mean we will simply approve everything across the board. Not every victim automatically qualifies. We will deal with each case individually."

The pre-dawn fire on April 19 destroyed about 1,000 of Kampung Bahagia's 1,200 water village homes, displacing 9,007 residents.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim previously said the federal government was working closely with Sabah to ensure immediate aid and temporary shelter for those affected.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said on Monday that the ministry stood ready to deploy personnel to assess the situation on the ground. – **By Falz Ruzman**

# Fluid loss during a heatwave

**Q**UITE often during very hot weather people think they are doing enough by sipping water, but heavy sweating can cause the body to lose both fluid and important electrolytes such as sodium and chloride.

When these losses accumulate, the body may struggle to maintain normal circulation, muscle function and temperature regulation.

Alpro Pharmacy pharmacist Ng Yi Ling says sweating is the body's natural cooling system. It helps lower body temperature, but it also causes water and salt loss. In high heat, especially during outdoor work, sports or long walks, this loss can happen faster than many people may realise.

"Water helps replace fluid volume, but after prolonged sweating, the body may also need electrolytes. In some situations, drinking large amounts of plain water without replacing electrolytes can worsen an imbalance and contribute to low sodium levels," explains Ng.

Common warning signs of heat exhaustion include headache, dizziness, weakness, thirst, nausea, heavy sweating, reduced urine output and muscle cramps.

Outdoor workers (such as delivery riders) and athletes are at high risk because they may sweat heavily for long periods. Older adults are also more vulnerable.

In addition, certain medications can

increase the risk, including diuretics that affect fluid balance or how the body responds to heat.

Ng says for mild daily fluid replacement, plain water remains the preferred option. But if someone has been sweating heavily for hours and is starting to feel unwell, an oral rehydration solution or oral rehydration salts may be more suitable, as they are designed to replace both fluids and electrolytes in a balanced way.

It's also important to drink water not only when you feel thirsty. Thirst can be a late sign that mild dehydration has already started. Take small, regular sips during the day rather than waiting until you feel exhausted.

If you need to be outdoors, try to reduce direct sun exposure during the hottest hours, rest in shaded or cool areas and wear light clothing.

For those doing physical work outdoors, planning hydration breaks is just as important as carrying a water bottle.

"If you take regular medicines for blood pressure, fluid retention, allergies or other chronic conditions, check with your pharmacist whether hot weather changes how you should manage fluids or monitor symptoms," says Ng.

Do not stop prescribed medicines on your own, but do ask whether you need to take extra precautions.



# Coping with burnout and stress

The emphasis on productivity has led to more people developing chronic stress and burnout. PICTURE CREDIT: PCH-VECTOR - FREEPIK

**T**HE Malaysian workplace operates at a high speed, which forces employees to stay at work for extended periods while keeping their devices connected.

This emphasis on productivity has led to more people developing chronic stress and burnout.

Employment Hero's Wellness at Work Report for 2024 and 2022 shows an alarming burnout rate among Malaysian employees, with 67 per cent of workers reporting burnout in 2024, a significant jump from 58 per cent in 2022.

Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City resident medical officer Dr Wee Hui Yin says mid-life adults may be especially vulnerable as they are the "sandwich generation", balancing careers with caring for both children and ageing parents and often internalising stress instead of addressing it, which raises their long-term health risks.



Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City resident medical officer Dr Wee Hui Yin. PICTURE CREDIT: SUNWAY MEDICAL CENTRE, SUNWAY CITY

disturbances and dangerous drinking habits, which can create additional health issues.

"These changes significantly increase the risk of diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. Stress also causes inflammation and stiffening of the arteries, which helps explain why some people develop heart problems even without obvious risk factors," says Dr Wee.

Company health screening programmes will not achieve meaningful results if they focus only on annual tests, without appropriate post-screening medical follow-up and lifestyle interventions, she adds.

## MEANINGFUL ACTION

## THE IMPACT OF STRESS

Two health problems develop when stress persists, says Dr Wee.

First is the physiological problem, where prolonged exposure to stress hormones, such as cortisol, can lead to increased blood sugar levels, higher bad cholesterol, greater visceral fat accumulation and elevated blood pressure.

Patients can also experience psychological distress, where they develop depression, anxiety, sleep



Some patients come every year, but their results remain the same.

"Often, it is not lack of awareness, but a lack of time, guidance and support, accompanied by long working hours, poor routines and the feeling of not knowing where to start. That means no real changes are made."

A preventive health routine requires regular monitoring of blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol levels, BMI, waist circumference, kid-

ney function, stress levels and sleep quality. These results should guide lifestyle adjustments and follow-up care, rather than exist as standalone diagnostic checks, she explains.

"Health is more than avoiding sickness, it means living well."

Dr Wee advocates a holistic approach that combines medical care with lifestyle, diet and mental health. The goal should be to encourage healthy eating, stress management and better sleep as chronic diseases continue to increase in Malaysia.

She points to the world's "Blue Zones", places like Okinawa (Japan), Loma Linda (California, US) and Sardinia (Italy), where people consistently live longer, healthier lives with fewer chronic diseases.

These communities share a simple formula called the "Power of 9". They move naturally every day, eat mostly plant-based meals, manage stress well and maintain strong social bonds.

It is not about rigid routines or unrealistic health goals, but about helping people make small, practical changes they can actually stick to, says Dr Wee.

"People can achieve this by walking more at work and preparing nutritious home-cooked meals and by dedicating more time to family relationships."

Dr Wee notes that workplace culture plays a key role. Expectations of long hours and constant connectivity can negatively affect employees' physical and mental health, leading to reduced work quality.

"Being at work longer doesn't

## BACK TO BALANCE

REGAINING your health does not require a complete lifestyle overhaul.

Here are some ways to get started:

- Movement need not be formal exercise. Stand up often, use the stairs, park farther away or take brief walks.
- For acute stress, try square breathing: inhale, hold, exhale and pause for four seconds each for one to two minutes.
- Quality sleep is essential. Aim for seven to nine hours nightly. Late-night screen time can disrupt recovery.



Company health screening programmes will not achieve meaningful results if they focus only on annual tests without appropriate post-screening medical follow-up and lifestyle interventions. PICTURE CREDIT: SENIVPETRO - FREEPIK

mean being more effective," she stresses.

Offering practical support like childcare, clear work boundaries, self-care and healthy leadership helps reduce stress and burnout, especially for mid-career caregivers.

Healthy employees are more productive, so seeking help promptly is important.

More importantly, stress and burnout are not personal failures. When you take care of yourself, you are not being selfish, you are making it possible to care for others and sustain your life and career in the long run. [meerafanst.com.my](https://meerafanst.com.my)

## M'sian doctor leads breakthrough pancreatic cancer trial, drug doubles survival rate

**KUALA LUMPUR:** A Malaysian doctor has led a breakthrough clinical trial in Chicago, where an experimental drug doubled one-year survival rates for patients with advanced pancreatic cancer—offering fresh hope against one of the deadliest cancers.

Dr Devalingam Mahalingam, who heads the study at Northwestern University, said the treatment significantly improved outcomes among patients with advanced pancreatic cancer, a disease where most survive less than a year after diagnosis.

The phase two clinical trial found that patients treated with elraglusib alongside standard

chemotherapy were twice as likely to be alive after one year compared to those receiving chemotherapy alone, while the treatment also reduced the risk of death by 38 per cent.

The findings, published in the journal *Nature Medicine*, mark one of the few significant advances in recent years to demonstrate a meaningful survival benefit for a broad group of pancreatic cancer patients.

"Pancreatic cancer remains one of the most challenging solid tumours to treat, but these findings provide cautious optimism," Dr Mahalingam said.

Dr Mahalingam and his team are now pursuing a phase three trial to validate the findings,

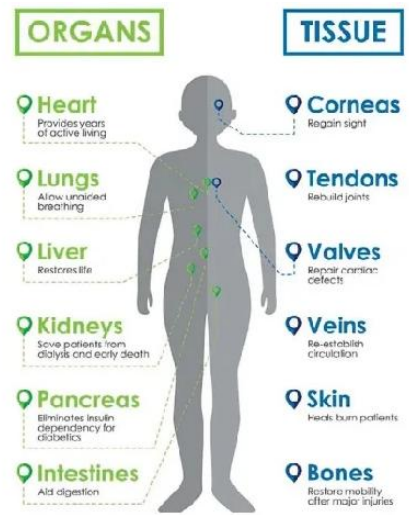
raising hopes that the treatment could eventually benefit patients globally.

The trial involved 233 patients across 60 sites in North America and Europe, focusing on those with metastatic pancreatic cancer. Patients receiving elraglusib recorded a median survival of 10.1 months, compared to 7.2 months for those on chemotherapy alone.

Notably, 44 per cent of patients in the treatment group were alive after one year, compared to 22 per cent in the control group, while about 13 per cent survived up to two years—a milestone not observed among those receiving chemotherapy alone.  
—Bernama



Once brain death has been confirmed, the medical team will complete a comprehensive evaluation of organs that may be suitable for donation, ensuring that they are safe and viable for the recipients.



UMMC head nurse Farahliza says a structured approach helps families better understand the medical procedures involved, the types of organs that may be donated, and how such donations can offer new hope to patients awaiting transplants.

# No coercion in organ donation

The second of this three-part series on organ donation in Malaysia explores how the process is carried out in practice.

Muhammad Basir Rodan

ORGAN donation after death plays a critical role in the national transplant system as living donations are limited to certain organs, such as the kidney.

However, experts stress that there is no element of coercion in organ donation cases involving brain-dead patients in any hospital.

Decisions regarding organ donation ultimately rest with the family or next-of-kin, even if the deceased had registered as an organ donor, said Dr Yap Mei Hoon, an anaesthetist and intensive care specialist at Universiti Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC).

She added that not all brain-dead patients are eligible for organ donation as strict screening processes must be carried out by specialists from various medical disciplines.

According to Dr Yap, it is crucial to clarify organ donations involving patients declared as brain dead as there is a common misconception that the patients concerned are still alive and may recover.

"Our priority is to save lives and patients with severe brain injuries will receive the maximum possible intervention in the intensive care unit (ICU).

"However, there are times when patients cannot be saved and are clinically declared brain dead," she said in an interview.

## Clinical procedures

Elaborating, Dr Yap explained that declaring a patient brain dead is a process that requires multiple layers of clinical assessment, conducted by two independent specialists who are not involved in organ procurement or transplantation. This process goes beyond

routine clinical procedures, involving strict protocols to ensure that the diagnosis is accurate, transparent and free from any conflict of interest.

"Clinical tests are carried out twice, at specific intervals, to confirm the complete absence of brain function before death can be declared," she added.

Among the tests conducted are assessments of neurological reflexes, the ability to breathe independently, and responses to external stimuli. In certain cases, additional tests to examine cerebral blood flow through radiology and electroencephalogram (EEG) are performed to confirm that there is no electrical activity or blood circulation in the brain.

"The second test is crucial in this process because only after it is confirmed as the official time of death is recorded by the hospital. This step is essential to ensure the diagnosis is absolutely accurate and to avoid any confusion.

"Every stage in the brain death confirmation process is meticulously documented, including the timing of each test and the results obtained. This documentation is vital to ensure transparency and to build public confidence in the national organ donation system," she said.

Once brain death has been confirmed, the medical team will complete a comprehensive evaluation of organs that may be suitable for donation, ensuring they are safe and viable for recipients.

This assessment includes blood tests, radiological imaging, and functional evaluations of organs such as the liver, kidneys, heart and lungs. These screening procedures are critical to ensure that transplanted organs are in optimal condition.

"Even if the organs are still functioning, we must ensure that all clinical criteria are met before proceeding. The safety of the recipient must always remain our top priority," she explained.

## Multi-disciplinary effort

The type of organ being donated determines which surgical specialists will be involved in the transplantation surgery.

Logistical coordination and mobility are also extremely critical as each organ has a limited window of viability before it is no longer suitable for transplantation.

"Careful planning with all involved parties is essential to ensure that the organ reaches the recipient in the best possible condition," she said.

Dr Yap noted that between 2023 and January 2026, UMMC recorded nine organ donation cases involving brain-dead patients.

Meanwhile, describing organ donation as part of end-of-life care, Dr Yap highlighted the importance of clear communication with families or next-of-kin throughout the process.

"In this regard, we avoid using the term 'organ harvesting' as it can create misunderstandings, suggesting that organs are taken forcibly or unethically.

"We prefer the term 'organ procurement' as it is more accurate and better understood by the public. In modern medical practice, this process is a form of organ donation carried out with family consent and in strict accordance with clinical procedures," she said.

## Compassionate approach

UMMC's Organ Donation and Transplantation Management

(ODTM) unit also plays a crucial role in ensuring that communication with donors' families is handled with care, heeding their sensitivities and emotional well-being.

UMMC head nurse Farahliza Ismail, who also serves as an ODTM coordinator, explained that the unit is responsible for ensuring the entire organ donation process runs smoothly and transparently, in line with established clinical procedures.

"Usually, once we inform the family that the patient has passed away due to brain death, they are in a state of shock, grief and sometimes, confusion. So, the best approach is not to immediately bring up organ donation.

"This is because we want to give them time to process the situation and come to terms with the patient's condition before any further discussion takes place," she said.

This approach allows families to gradually accept their loss before making what is often a deeply difficult decision.

Only after the family has fully understood the patient's condition is the topic of organ donation introduced carefully, with each step explained clearly and presented as a choice.

Farahliza said at this stage, thoughtful and empathetic communication is essential as many families may have little or no prior exposure to the concept of organ donation.

A structured approach helps families better understand the medical procedures involved, the types of organs that may be donated, and how such donations can offer new hope to patients awaiting transplants.

"When families are given time and clear information, they are able to make decisions more

calmly and fully understand the implications of their choice," she added.

## Surgical coordination

Farahliza said if the family agrees to proceed with the donation, several immediate steps are taken to ensure that viable organs are safely transplanted.

The patient is temporarily supported by a life-support machine to preserve organ function, while surgical coordination is carried out by multiple specialist teams depending on the organs involved.

"In certain cases other hospitals will also be informed to participate in the organ procurement and transplantation process, particularly when recipients are from these institutions," she explained.

She also stressed that throughout and after the donation process, the dignity of the donor's body remains a top priority.

Usually, once surgery is completed, all incisions are carefully sutured and the body is cleaned before being returned to the family for funeral arrangements.

"Every surgical area is meticulously closed to ensure there are no visible signs that could cause discomfort or concern. For example, internal

sutures are used and wounds are properly sealed so the donor's body appears whole, allowing the family to proceed with the funeral," she said.

The ODTM team also ensures that the family's cultural and religious practices are fully respected. This approach reassures families that organ donation is carried out professionally and that their loved one is treated with dignity throughout the process.

The ODTM unit also plays an important role in public education and advocacy, raising awareness about the importance of organ donation.

Regarding the selection of organ or tissue recipients, Farahliza explained that decisions are not made solely by the hospital.

Instead, the organ transplantation process is managed and coordinated by the National Transplant Resource Centre (NTRC), where matching is conducted transparently based on clinical suitability, waiting list and other medical considerations.

She added that such a system ensures every patient on the waiting list has a fair opportunity to receive a suitable organ.

—Bernama  
\*Tomorrow: NTC strengthens national transplant system, raises awareness on organ donation



According to Dr Yap, declaring a patient brain dead is a process that requires multiple layers of clinical assessment.



A medical officer captures the moment a helicopter from the Fire and Rescue Department Air Unit prepares for a mercy flight to deliver four organs for a patient at the National Heart Institute in Kuala Lumpur.



Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad (second left) officiates at the 2025 Organ Donation Awareness Week in Kuala Lumpur. Family consent rates on organ donation remain low in Malaysia, with the National Transplant Centre reporting that almost 90 per cent of potential donations fail due to family rejection.

## 'Dadah maut' dikesan dalam vape

**KUALA LUMPUR** - Op Vape 1.0 berskala besar di seluruh negara membuka sisi gelap industri vape apabila sindiket dikesan menyeludup dadah sintetik *furanyl fentanyl* yang dipercayai mula menembusi pasaran tempatan melalui premis vape.

Pengarah Jabatan Siasatan Jenayah Narkotik Bukit Aman, Datuk Hussein Omar Khan berkata, 1,670 premis diperiksa dalam operasi pada 13 hingga 17 April lalu.

"Daripada jumlah itu, 728 didapati melanggar pelbagai peraturan, manakala 20 individu ditahan atas pelbagai kesalahan di bawah undang-undang berkaitan dadah," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian dalam sidang akhbar di Ibu Pejabat Polis Kontinjen Kuala Lumpur, di sini, pada Selasa.

Hussein berkata, dalam operasi itu, polis turut merampas 8,091 peranti vape, 5,257 kartrij serta 19.67 kilogram (kg) dadah dengan nilai keseluruhan dianggarkan RM4.6 juta.

"Antara rampasan utama ialah cecair disyaki *furanyl fentanyl* seberat 18.55kg, selain cecair THC, serbuk MDMA dan air ketum," katanya.

Jelas beliau, operasi itu melibatkan 1,177 pegawai dan anggota Polis Diraja Malaysia bersama 2,011 pegawai daripada pelbagai agensi termasuk Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia, Agensi Antidadah Kebangsaan, pihak berkuasa tempatan dan agensi berkaitan.

"Operasi ini dilaksanakan serentak di seluruh negara dengan fokus kepada pemeriksaan premis vape serta pengesanan individu yang terlibat dalam pengedaran bahan terlarang," katanya.

Menurut beliau, kesemua bahan itu berupaya membahayakan kira-kira 48,050 individu.

"Kita mengesan kewujudan ba-



Di negara Amerika Syarikat dan Kanada, *furanyl fentanyl* menyebabkan peningkatan kes kematian akibat dos berlebihan."

- Hussein

han disyaki *furanyl fentanyl* yang sudah berada di pasaran tempatan, dipercayai diedarkan melalui premis vape tertentu.

"Hasil rampasan dibuat di sebuah premis menjual vape, namun siasatan masih dijalankan sama ada dijual terbuka atau hanya kepada pelanggan tertentu," katanya.

Tambah Hussein, siasatan awal mendapati bahan itu dipercayai dibawa masuk dari luar negara, berkemungkinan dari rantau Asia Tenggara dan bukan dihasilkan dalam negara.

Beliau turut menegaskan, *furanyl fentanyl* sangat berbahaya kerana kesannya dianggarkan 50 hingga 100 kali lebih kuat berbanding morfin dan heroin.

"Di negara Amerika Syarikat dan Kanada, *furanyl fentanyl* menyebabkan peningkatan kes kematian akibat dos berlebihan.

"Walaupun setakat ini belum ada kes kematian di Malaysia dikaitkan secara langsung, penemuan ini amat membimbangkan kerana menunjukkan ia mula menembusi pasaran negara," katanya.