

STREETS YOUR STORY



Visitors checking their blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol levels at the NMM 13 carnival.



A youngster getting his body mass index calculated at the Kids BMI Corner.

# Ways to reduce diet-related chronic diseases

**KUALA LUMPUR**  
streets@mediaprima.com.my

**N**UTRITION Month Malaysia (NMM), a nutrition education programme, returned for its 11th consecutive year with the theme, Eat Right, Be Active: Stay Free From Diet-Related Diseases. Recognising a significant increase in non-communicable diseases (NCD) such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancers among Malaysians, NMM National Steering Committee chairman Dr Tee E. Siang said the focus this year is to promote greater awareness of the importance of eating right and exercising in order to reduce the risk of diet-related chronic diseases.

In his opening speech, Dr Tee revealed worrying statistics from the National Health & Morbidity Survey 2011.

"First, obesity has increased about three-fold, from 4.4 per cent in 1996 to 15.1 per cent in 2011, putting the number of obese Malaysians at about 2.5 million people.

"Second, diabetes in Malaysia has also increased from 11.6 per cent in 2006 to 15.2 per cent in 2011, and this accounts for about 2.6 million diabetic adults.

"Third, hypertension remains high at 35.1 per cent, which is about 5.8 million Malaysians, and an estimated 32.7 per cent, or 6.2 million Malaysians, are diagnosed with hypercholesterolaemia.

"It is disturbing when we think of the future and how these figures are projected to continue increasing," said Dr Tee.

He added that the rise in NCD could be attributed to unhealthy diets and lifestyles.

"Various nutrition-related activities will be carried out as part of

**HEALTH MATTERS:** An annual nutrition education programme, Nutrition Month Malaysia (NMM), promotes eating healthy and living active this year

NMM's initiative to reinforce the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle among young adults and families," said Dr Tee.

The NMM 2013 commenced with the launch of the Nutri-Fun Land Carnival, in which interactive, educational, and fun activities teach families about NCD, and ways to prevent them.

They learnt about the food pyramid and how choosing healthier foods can jump start their fitness regimes. The two-day carnival also held free health screenings (body mass index, blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose levels and body fat), provided free dietary advice by trained professionals and fun games.

At the carnival, two new publications were distributed to the public. The first was NMM's annual publication, *Prevent NCD - Staying Free From Diet-Related Diseases*, which focused on identifying NCD and the risk factors.

It also includes the 10 key points and tips on the prevention of NCD. It has many informative articles by experts in their specific fields and real-life stories to inspire readers to start living healthily.

The second NMM publication is a cookbook for children, *My Cookbook with Bread*, which is a collaborative effort with Gardenia Bakeries (KL) Sdn Bhd.

It is aimed at encouraging children to eat healthily by preparing their own meals from young.

Several other outreach activities have also been lined up in conjunc-



Dr Tee E. Siang says the rise in non-communicable diseases may be attributed to unhealthy diets and lifestyles.



Malaysian Association of The Study of Obesity president Prof Dr Mohd Ismail (right), Dr Tee and Malaysian Dietitians' Association president Indra Balaratnam at the launch of the NMM 2013 Nutri-Fun Land.

tion with NMM 2013. These include a mini Nutri-Fun Land Community Carnival organised in collaboration with local authorities such as the Subang Jaya Municipal Council and its surrounding suburbs.

The mini-carnival is intended to be an educational, fun-filled and interactive event for the entire family. It will also include free health screenings (blood pressure, body mass index and body fat percentage checks)

by nutritionists and dietitians, as well as other fun activities by NMM and the NMM 2013 sponsors. Other outreach activities consist of Nutri-Fun primary school road shows in the Klang Valley in which educational combo kits containing materials such as the Kembara Alam Sam comic books and educational DIY nutritional props (foldable food pyramids), which will be distributed to students who participate in the road shows.

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in-ar-cum-forums that highlight NCD awareness and their prevention among working adults at their workplace. They include nutrition talks by experts with interactive Q & A sessions, and free health screenings with consultation by nutritionists and dietitians.

The NMM programme has been an annual initiative since 2002, and is the collaborative effort of three professional bodies, namely the Nutrition Society of Malaysia, Malaysian Dietitians' Association and

Malaysian Association for The Study of Obesity. The programme also receives support from the Ministry of Health Malaysia, particularly its Nutrition Division.

In collaboration with these organisations, several corporate sponsors were crucial in making the NMM 2013 a success.

The sponsors included main sponsor, Danone Dumex (M) Sdn Bhd, and co-sponsors A Clouet & Co (KL) Sdn Bhd (Ayam Brand), Dutch Lady Milk

Industries Bhd, Gardenia Bakeries KL Sdn Bhd, Legoson (M) Sdn Bhd (Bigrow Oats BG22), Malaysia Milk Sdn Bhd (Vitagen), Nestle Products Sdn Bhd, Serba Wangi Sdn Bhd (Eco-Brown) and Yakult Malaysia Sdn Bhd.

For more information, or to obtain educational materials from NMM 2013, the public can call its secretariat at 03-5637 3526.

They can also go to its Facebook page, or visit [www.nutritionmonth-malaysia.org.my](http://www.nutritionmonth-malaysia.org.my).



Visitors testing their fitness level via the step test.



Visitors learning how to read food labels via the NMM giant food mock-up at the Reading Food Labels Corner.



Visitors having their photo taken with the Malaysian Food Pyramid poster as the background for the NMM 'Pose & Win' contest.