

1 in 5 Malaysians have diabetes; MMA calls for intervention

By [Jaden Lim](#)

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FILE: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has called for urgent action to curb the rising number of diabetes cases in the country. — FILE PIC

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has called for urgent action to curb the rising number of diabetes cases in the country.

Recent reports indicate that 21 per cent of Malaysians — or one in five adults — have diabetes.

Malaysia ranks 13th in the world and the highest in South-East Asia for diabetes prevalence.

The National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2023 found 15.6 per cent of adults have diabetes, while more than half are overweight or obese.

"This is not just a health issue anymore. It is a national concern," said MMA President Datuk Dr Thirunavukarasu Rajoo in statement today.

He added that the government, private sector, schools, and public must work together.

Diabetes can cause serious health problems such as heart disease, kidney failure, blindness, stroke, and amputations. These complications require long-term care and are costly.



MMA President Datuk Dr Thirunavukarasu Rajoo this is not just a health issue anymore. It is a national concern. — PIC FROM PRINCE COURT MEDICAL CENTRE'S FB

A Health Ministry and World Health Organisation (WHO) report showed diabetes cost RM4.38 billion in direct healthcare in 2017.

Without prevention, the costs and burden on families and the health system will rise.

Dr Thirunavukarasu added that early detection saves lives.

He recommended Malaysians go for yearly health screenings to catch diabetes early and prevent complications.

The MMA also suggested stronger public education on healthy eating and exercise, in schools, workplaces, and media campaigns.

They called for policies to reduce sugar in foods and drinks, expand the sugar tax, and provide clear nutrition labels to help Malaysians make healthier choices.

The MMA said it wants a long-term plan involving ministries, health agencies, schools, and communities.

They believe united action is needed to prevent diabetes and protect future generations.