

## rising cases of diabetes: MMA

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**PETALING JAYA:** As we observe World Diabetes Day, a sobering fact to remember is that Malaysia has the highest prevalence of diabetic adults in Southeast Asia, the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) pointed out today.

According to the latest Malaysian National Health & Morbidity Survey 2019, one in five adults have diabetes, and that almost half of these are not known to have diabetes.

“This tells us that we have a silent disease among the population,” MMA president Dr Koh Kar Chai said in a statement today.

The trend of diabetes has increased from 11.2% in 2011 and 13.4% in 2015 to 18.3% in

2019.

“Why is this increase happening despite all the measures being taken to curb diabetes in this country? It seems that with each World Diabetes Day that we observe, we see an increase in the number of diabetics,” Koh said.

According to the National Diabetes Registry Report 2020, only 66.2% of diagnosed patients who claim to seek treatment at MOH primary care facilities are on active follow up. Many of these diabetics also suffer from other comorbid diseases.

“Although most of the cases of diabetes are adults, we worry about the increasing numbers of childhood obesity which may develop into diabetics,” Koh said.

“Most Malaysians acknowledge that a high calorie diet, obesity, genetics and a lack of exercise are the most common risk factors for developing diabetes but how many are willing to embrace a lifestyle change?

“This problem needs a whole of society approach to control the dreaded diabetes. We should encourage self empowerment in lifestyle changes. Provide convenient avenues for the public to exercise themselves along with tax relief for joining fitness centres or the purchase of exercise equipment.”

Apart from the sugar tax, the government should introduce proper labelling of sugar content which is highly visible instead of allowing labels which need the use of a magnifying glass to read. A viable way of labelling would be to have highly visible coloured labels for the public to distinguish between no sugar, low sugar and high sugar content.

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The image shows the front page of 'The Sun' newspaper. At the top left is the masthead 'theSun' with the date 'January 24, 2022'. To the right are two news teasers: 'Mother of Thaipusam baby says thanks' and 'Govt mulls further relaxation of SOP'. The main headline is 'Feeding green drive' in large red and black font. Below it is a photograph of a woman in a blue face mask and a white glove, serving food into many small yellow bowls. To the right of the main headline is a smaller article titled 'i Malaysia to lead movement to protect environment from fallout of food production' with a 'P17' icon. At the bottom right is an advertisement for 'Blessed by motherhood' featuring a woman and a child, with a 'P17' icon and a 'Free to enjoy' badge.

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