

Spreading awareness of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is the focus of this year's Nutrition Month Malaysia.

NUTRITION Month Malaysia (NMM) has returned for the 11th consecutive year, with the theme this year being "Eat Right, Be Active: Stay Free From Diet Related Diseases".

Recognising a significant increase in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer amongst Malaysians, Dr Tee E Siong, chairman of the NMM National Steering Committee, highlighted that the focus this year is to promote greater awareness on the importance of healthy eating and active living in order to reduce the prevalence of diet-related chronic diseases.

Dr Tee revealed worrying statistics from the National Health & Morbidity Survey 2011:

- The incidence of obesity has increased about three-fold, from 4.4% in 1996 to 15.1% in 2011, and this puts the number of obese Malaysians at about 2.5 million people.

- Diabetes numbers in Malaysia has also increased, from 11.6% in 2006 to 15.2% in 2011, and this accounts for about 2.6 million adults.

- The incidence of hypertension remains high at 35.1%, which represents about 5.8 million Malaysians, and an estimated 32.7%, or 6.2 million Malaysians, have been diagnosed with hypercholesterolaemia.

"It is disturbing when we think of the future, because these figures are projected to continue rising," added Dr Tee.

Dr Tee attributes this rise in NCDs to an unhealthy diet and lifestyle. "Various nutrition-related activities will be carried out as part of NMM's initiative to reinforce the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle to

Beware NCDs



"Various nutrition-related activities will be carried out as part of the initiative to reinforce the message of leading a healthy lifestyle to prevent diet-related chronic diseases," says Dr Tee.

young adults and families," he explained.

The NMM 2013 commenced with the launch of the Nutri-Fun Land Carnival at the Mid Valley Megamall, Kuala Lumpur, an interactive, educational event where families learnt about non-communicable diseases (NCDs), ways to prevent NCDs, and discovered more about the Food Pyramid and ways to choose healthier foods and jumpstart their fitness regimes.

The two-day event also featured free nutrition screenings such as Body Mass Index (BMI), blood pressure, blood cholesterol,

blood glucose and body fat measurements, as well as free dietary advice by trained professionals and other activities and games.

During the event, two new publications were distributed to the public. The first was NMM's booklet, *Prevent NCDs - Staying Free From Diet Related Diseases*, which focused on identifying NCDs and its risk factors. It has 10 key messages on preventing NCDs.

The second publication was a cookbook for children (*My Cookbook with Bread*), which was a collaborative effort with Gardenia Bakeries (KL) Sdn Bhd that aimed to encourage young

kids to eat healthily by starting to prepare their own meals from young.

Several other outreach activities have also been lined up in conjunction with NMM 2013. They include a mini Nutri-Fun Land Community Carnival organised in collaboration with local authorities such as Majlis Perbandaran Subang Jaya to further reach out to the community at suburban areas.

The mini-carnival is intended to be an educational, fun-filled and interactive event for the entire family. It will also include free nutrition screening, nutrition and dietary advice by nutritionists and dietitians as well as other activities by NMM and its sponsors.

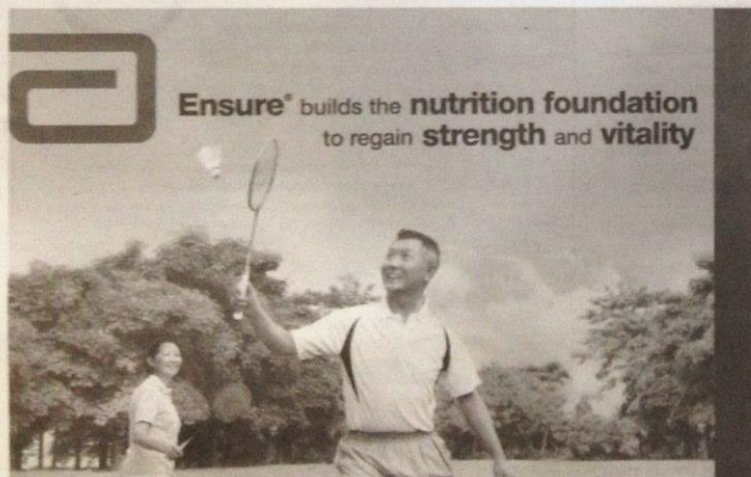
There will also be primary school roadshows in the Klang Valley where educational kits will be distributed to students who participate in the roadshows.

NMM 2013 has also planned seminar-cum-forums that will highlight NCD awareness and its prevention, targeting working adults at their workplace. This activity will include nutrition talks by experts with Q & A sessions and free health screening and 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 (NSM), Malaysian Dietitians' Association (MDA), and Malaysian Association for the Study of Obesity (MASO). This programme also receives support from the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH), particularly the Nutrition Division.

Sponsors of the event include Danone Dumex (M) Sdn Bhd, A Clouet & Co (KL) Sdn Bhd, Dutch Lady Milk Industries Bhd, Gardenia Bakeries KL Sdn Bhd, Legosan (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, Malaysia Milk Sdn Bhd, Nestlé Products Sdn Bhd, Serba Wangi Sdn Bhd and Yakult Malaysia Sdn Bhd.

For more information, or to obtain educational materials produced by the Nutrition Month Malaysia 2013, members of the public can contact the secretariat at tel (03) 5637 3526 or visit www.nutritionmonthmalaysia.org.my.



The two-day carnival featured many educational activities to encourage Malaysians to adopt a healthier lifestyle.