



# Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

檳城消費人協會 பினாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

Websites:  
[www.consumer.org.my](http://www.consumer.org.my)

10 Jalan Masjid Negeri, 11600 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia  
Tel: 604-8299511 Fax: 604-8298109  
email: [consumerofpenang@gmail.com](mailto:consumerofpenang@gmail.com)

**Press Statement**

**14 November 2020**

## **CAP: Practice healthy lifestyle to curb diabetes**

Today November 14 is World Diabetes Day, and on this occasion, the Consumers Association of Penang calls on Malaysians to practice healthy lifestyle to reduce the risk of diabetes which is increasing at an alarming rate.

Diabetes is an important public health concern. Globally there is a rising trend in the prevalence of diabetes due to many factors such as population growth, aging, urbanisation and increasing prevalence of obesity and physical inactivity.

We are the top country in ASEAN for having the highest number of diabetics and sixth in the Western Pacific region.

The WHO estimated that more than 200 million people worldwide are living with diabetes and each year another seven million develop it. In 2019, there were more than 500,000 deaths among those aged 60 years and younger due to diabetes in South East Asia.

According to the Malaysian 2019 Social Statistics Bulletin diabetes is one of the ten principal causes of death in 2018.

In Malaysia in spite of numerous campaigns against diabetes its prevalence especially that of Type 2 has increased to epidemic proportions? According to the 2019 National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS 2019), one in five adults or about 3.9 million people aged 18 years and above in Malaysia, suffer from diabetes. Diabetes prevalence in Malaysia has increased to 18.3 per cent, compared to only 1-2 percent in 1960.

Diabetes is a chronic disease that can be prevented and for those affected, diabetes can be managed to delay or prevent its complications by maintaining a healthy lifestyle and making better choices in their diet.

Diabetes in Malaysia is expected to continue to climb at an increased rate due to our unhealthy lifestyle.

Let us see how unhealthy Malaysians are:

- Malaysia has the most number of overweight and obese people in Asia; obesity is a main cause of diabetes. This is attributed to Malaysian eating too much, eating the wrong food and exercising too little.
- We consume 20 teaspoons of sugar daily. The World Health Organisation (WHO) in its campaign against obesity had recommended a sugar consumption limit of 5 teaspoons daily.
- Our per capita consumption of meat is 55 kilograms compared to 30 kilograms in Japan and only 23 kilograms in Thailand.

- Malaysians, above the age of 18, on the average consume 7.15gm of salt daily, two grams higher than the five grams recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- We are not getting enough sleep which is the key to good health. According to a regional survey Malaysians get only 6.3 hours of sleep on average. This leads to a sleep gap of 1.7 hours short of the recommended 8 hours of sleep. Mobile devices and spending time online is one of the leading causes of this sleep deprivation.
- Malaysians spend on an average of 12 hours daily talking on the phone and browsing the net. Out of the 12 hours, 3 hours 3 minutes were spent on cell phones, 5 hours 36 minutes on computers and 3 hours 27 minutes on social media.

While sleeping less might seem to be just a lifestyle choice, studies have shown that a chronic lack of sleep can lead not only to poor performance and decreased productivity, but also significant health consequences, such as obesity, heart disease and diabetes and it shortens the life expectancy.

Surveys have shown that for every two known diabetics, there is at least one more that is undiagnosed and untreated until irreversible complications set in.

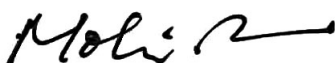
Over time, high blood sugar due to diabetes can seriously affect every major organ system in the body, causing heart attacks, strokes, nerve damage, kidney failure, blindness, impotence and infections that can lead to amputations.

Diabetes does not only take a toll on the country's resources, but also on the limbs (amputation), eyesight (blindness), kidney (failure), heart (failure) and nerve (damage) of its sufferers.

The alarming increase in Malaysia's prevalence of diabetes needs strong measures by the Government to stem this epidemic.

The Consumers Association of Penang urges the Ministry of Health to:

- Educate Malaysians on the dangers of obesity and diabetes
- Unhealthy foods that is high in fats, sugar, salt and additives should be discouraged by the introduction of taxes on such foods
- Provide adequate recreational amenities in all residential areas.
- Make it compulsory for food manufacturers to label the amount of sodium on the labels
- Ban vending machines in schools, hospitals and other public places
- Mandate clear labeling on fat content of all foods, including fast foods
- Run education campaign for parents and children on the dangers of obesity and diabetes



**Mohideen Abdul Kader**  
**President**  
**Consumers Association of Penang**