

Sweet problem

MALAYSIAN SUGAR INTAKE EXCEEDS WHO RECOMMENDED AMOUNT

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian adults consume a staggering 51g or seven teaspoons of sugar just in our drinks everyday, far exceeding the amount recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said sugar intake in drinks of adults exceeded both WHO and the Malaysian Diet Guide recommendation, that is not more than 50g or 10% of the daily energy need.

"And this is not in addition to sugar used in sweet delicacies, porridge, cakes, ice cream, chocolates and bread spreads which we eat daily," he said in his speech to officiate the Reduce Sugar Consumption Campaign 2010 here yesterday.

The six-month campaign is supported by among others the Ministry of Domestic Trade, Co-operatives and Consumerism and the Ministry of Information Communication and Culture.

Liow said one needed to climb

14 floors to burn 20 kilocalories contained in one teaspoon of sugar. "Imagine, we have to walk up 98 floors if we take seven teaspoons of sugar that supplies 140 kilocalories of energy per day," he said.

Liow said society needed to be aware that excessive sugar intake without balanced physical activity can cause an individual to become obese in the long run.

The Health Ministry's study also found that the percentage of overweight adults had almost doubled, that is from 16% in 1996 to 29.1% in 2006, he said.

"The percentage of obese adults jumped threefold from 4.4% in 1996 to 14% in 2006. Those with diabetes in the 30 years and above group increased from 8.3% to 14.9% in the same period," he said.

Liow said the government had discussions with the food industry to make products that had less sugar. - Bernama