

High fibre food for better heart health

Three medical experts to discuss importance of healthy diet and lifestyle at StarLIVE talk this Saturday

By EDWARD RAJENDRA
edward@thestar.com.my

FIBRE, or roughage, are fruits, vegetables, grains and nuts that keep the digestive tract in good health, as it eases bowel movement and flushes out harmful substances along the way.

Ara Damansara Medical Centre consultant physician and cardiologist Dr Zubin Othman Ibrahim said people who choose to eat food high in dietary fibre can lower the risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

"High-fibre food such as whole grains increase roughage and can improve heart health. People who choose to eat wheat, oats, corn, brown bread and oatmeal as part of an overall healthy diet can protect their heart.

"Fibre lowers cholesterol, reduces the risk of stroke and type 2 diabetes, and also helps with weight loss," he said.

Dr Zubin who will be one of three speakers at the StarLIVE talk themed "A Healthy Heart for a Healthy Life", to be held on Sept 29, added that there are two categories of fibre – insoluble that does not dissolve in water and soluble that dissolves in water.

"Insoluble fibre is bulky fibre that helps to prevent constipation.

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"We get it in wheat cereals and vegetables such as tomatoes, carrots and celery while soluble fibre helps control blood sugar levels and lower cholesterol levels," he said.

He added that good sources of soluble fibre are oatmeal, beans, nuts, and fruits such as soursop, papaya, berries, oranges and mangoes.

Dr Zubin, 43, who has a medical degree from Otago University, New Zealand, added that the more natural and unprocessed the food, the more fibre it contains.

"Refined food such as white bread, white rice, meat, sugar and dairy has no fibre, or has had all or most of the fibre removed in the food process," said the cardiologist who holds a fellowship in interven-

tional cardiology in green lane cardiac services, Auckland, New Zealand.

Soluble fibre is a crucial component of any heart-healthy diet.

"People need a diet high in fibre as it can improve cholesterol levels by lowering bad cholesterol. A high-fibre intake can also reduce risk factors linked to coronary heart disease and diabetes.

"Fibre can help to lower blood pressure, reduce inflammation and improve levels of good cholesterol. For those who want to shed excess weight around the abdomen, a high-fibre diet helps," he said.

Dr Zubin said for diabetes, a diet high in fibre, chiefly insoluble fibre from cereals, will help lower the risk of type 2 diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes is a chronic condition in which the body is unable to produce insulin, or does not produce enough to meet the needs of the body.

"For those who have diabetes, eating soluble fibre can slow down the absorption of simple sugars and improve their blood sugar levels.

"Managing blood sugar levels can help maintain the body's fat-burning capacity and avoid insulin spikes that leave people feeling drained and craving unhealthy foods," he said.

Dr Zubin said it is good to start



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the morning with high fibre, for example, adding flaxseed which contains high fibre and omega-3 fatty acids, to breakfast cereals, to lower total blood cholesterol.

"I would advise people to replace white rice, white bread and pasta with brown rice and whole grain. Choose barley, whole wheat pasta and whole grain bread for toast and sandwiches.

"Add fruits to your breakfast. Mangoes are high in fibre and having a few slices with cereal or yoghurt is good for your diet," he said.

Dr Zubin also stressed that one should eat whole fruits instead of juicing them.

"Eating the whole fruit will give more fibre and fewer calories," he said.

He urged people to exercise on a regular basis to strengthen heart muscles.

Star Media Group Bhd and Ramsay Sime Darby are collaborating to hold the StarLIVE talk ses-

sion to create a healthier society.

Two other medical specialists – Subang Jaya Medical Centre consultant cardiologist Dr Koh Kok Wei and ParkCity Medical Centre consultant cardiologist Dr Chong Yoon Sin – will discuss how one can correct lifestyle habits and get early treatment for a greater chance at a longer and healthier life.

Dr Koh said it is important for those who have suffered their first heart attack to follow a proper diet and exercise; lowering their cholesterol and blood pressure will help reduce the risk of future heart attacks.

Dr Chong said early detection and treatment have been proven to help people maintain a good health.

The StarLIVE talk will be held from 10am to noon at Menara Star, 15, Jalan 16/11, Petaling Jaya. Admission is free and will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

Those interested can register at <http://starlive.eventbrite.com>

Exciting activities for museum's 135th anniversary

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The Perak Museum in Taiping. — filepic

IPOH

THE Perak Museum will organise various activities in conjunction with its 135th anniversary celebration to educate and get the people acquainted with museums in the country.

National Museum director-general Datuk Kamarul Bahrin A. Kasim said among the programmes would be the Perak Museum 135th Special Exhibition, an art competi-

tion and cultural performances from Oct 31 to March 31 next year.

He said at the special exhibition, 3,000 exhibits from 10,000 artefacts relating to the history and development of this first museum in the country would be on display.

"The artefacts here are unique and contemporary as they are a collection of objects of artistic, cultural and historical importance from the time the museum was established in Malaysia in 1883,"

he said after launching a cycling event to mark the pre-launch of the Perak Museum 135th Anniversary Celebration in Taiping.

Kamarul Bahrin said museums in developed countries were devoted to developing the education role in enhancing visitors' interest on the exhibitions and collections.

He added that the Perak Museum received between 200,000 and 300,000 visitors each year.

— Bernama