

# 10,000 steps daily to healthier students

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**KOTA KINABALU:** The Health Ministry has started a pioneer project to encourage students at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) to walk 10,000 steps daily to a healthier body.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Rosnah Abdul Rashid Shirlin said in her speech at the launch of the 2011 Sabah Zone Healthy Students 1Malaysia Programme at UMS yesterday that they were also encouraging students to reduce their daily fat intake.

She said the programme had already been implemented at Universiti Utara Malaysia (representing the North zone), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (Central zone) and Universiti Terengganu (East zone).

"UMS, which is representing Sabah, is the last university in this programme series for this year," she said.

She added that it was imperative to adopt healthy and balanced eating habits based on the food pyramid advocated by the Health Ministry to ensure students in the country remained healthy and had a reduced risk of contracting illnesses.

"It is important for us to reduce our intake of fatty food, yet for most of us, we're more inclined towards fried food rather than those prepared by steaming or boiling," she said.

"We fry our cakes and vegetables, coating them with flour to add taste."

In terms of exercise, Rosnah said 43.7 per cent of Malaysians aged 18 years old and above do not lead active lifestyles.

This finding was derived from the third National Health and Morbidity Statistics in 2006.

"This signifies that 44 out of 100 adults in this country are not active," she said.

Rosnah then explained the significance of the 10,000 step daily programme.

"It is an effort by the ministry to encourage the community to lead healthy lifestyles. Walking is beneficial to health. It can help reduce the risk of illnesses, reducing our blood cholesterol, as well as our stress level," she said.

She added that walking 10,000 steps a day was equivalent to walking between six and eight kilometers, and that it was capable of burning 387 kilocalories or a

plate of fried noodles.

She said that her ministry launched the Healthy Living Lifestyle campaign in 1991 striving towards the reducing of morbidity and illness mortality rate that are linked with the way we live.

And in 2010, the ministry also launched the National Strategic Plan for Non Infectious Diseases which outlined seven main strategies which includes promotional and prevention strategies.

During an interview later, Rosnah elaborated that 60 per cent of worldwide deaths were due to non-infectious diseases, and that 25 per cent of these deaths were classified as premature deaths (involving people below 60 years old).

"Premature deaths are preventable," she said.

She also said that in Malaysia, 1.5 million of Malaysians above 18 years old suffer from diabetes and that 4.8 million people above 30 years old in the country are suffering from hypertension.

She also said that 70 per cent of patients seeking treatment at government clinics in the country suffered from non infectious diseases.



Rosnah signs a poster promoting a healthy lifestyle at the event yesterday.