

## Malay Mail

### Unhealthy diets killing more Malaysians, statistician says

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Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said the increase in deaths due to unhealthy eating habits could be due to the easy access to food, especially among youths, and the frequency of meeting up for meals. — Picture by Choo Choy May

KUALA LUMPUR, March 17 — An increasing number of Malaysians are dying due to unhealthy eating habits, a Statistics Department official has said.

The department's social and demography deputy chief statistician Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin noted that there has been an increase in deaths of such nature although the number of Malaysians joining healthy activities such as going to the gym has also risen.

"We noted a pattern in that one of the major causes of death in the country was due to unhealthy eating and diabetes cases.

"This could be due to the easy access to food, especially among youths, and the frequency of meeting up for meals, which could have an impact on their health," he was quoted saying by local daily *The Star*.

He also said Malaysia's life expectancy rate is on par with other countries in the Asean region, attributing the country's improved rate to factors such as a better standard of living and access to healthcare, food and infrastructure.

In the department's data released last October 30, a Malaysian newborn in 2015 is expected to live for 74.8 years, continuing the uphill trend of previous years.

The life expectancy rate at birth for Malaysian women and men last year was at 77.4 and 72.5 years respectively, up from 76.6 and 71.9 years in 2010.

As life expectancy at birth for the three major ethnic groups went up during the 2010 and 2015 period, the Chinese community continued to enjoy the highest life expectancy at 80.1 and 75.1 years for its women and men in last year's estimates.

The department's data showed the Bumiputera community's women and men's life expectancy at 76.1 and 71.2 last year, while the Indian community's women and men had the lowest life expectancy at 75.8 and 67.7 years.

According to *The Star*, the United Nations' figures showed that Malaysia is expected to become an ageing nation by 2035, with the status denoting that at least 15 per cent of the population are aged over 60.