

# Obesity linked to focus on material wealth

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysians are advised to learn to invest more time and money in their health in order to successfully tackle weight-related issues.

Universiti Putra Malaysia's consultant and gastroenterology unit head Associate Professor Dr Loong Yik Yee said obesity stemmed from a "culture" that depended too much on material wealth instead of healthy living.

"Behavioural change is the biggest challenge as people eventually resort to medication to treat their conditions instead of daily exercise. This has to change," he said during the *New Straits Times* Live session at Balai Berita yesterday.

The session, which was the second one dealing with nutrition, weight loss and obesity, was a success as many questions, from dietary recommendations to medical problems, were raised by the public.

Dr Loong said that all the relevant parties, from the family unit to the government, NGOs and the media needed to make a concerted effort to raise awareness of obesity.

"We do not want to create an environment where obese people are stigmatised and discriminated against, but rather to raise awareness of its negative effects.

"Obesity is often viewed as merely an aesthetic problem, but there is compelling medical evidence to suggest otherwise."

He said that the effort made by the government to issue a circular for healthy foods to be served during official functions and in schools was the right move.

During the session which lasted one hour and thirty minutes, several readers expressed their laziness to exercise due to busy schedules, and the inability to lose weight easily.

**NSTLIVE**



**Professor Dr Loong Yik Yee** says behavioural change is the biggest challenge

Dr Loong responded by urging them to develop a strict exercise routine.

"Exercise between three and five times a week for about half an hour each time."

He also advised those suffering from obesity to take medical supplements which were not dangerous to maintain their weight loss.

He reminded the public to take part in the Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society's initiative, "My Weight My Health" programme that gave constant support to patients to continue maintaining their weight loss.