

When losing weight can be dangerous

BATTLE OF THE BULGE: Images of those who are slim have always been favoured by society. This has led to those who are overweight resorting to drastic measures in a bid to reduce their weight. Kanyakumari Damodaran looks at eating disorders, its consequences and listens to the plight of those suffering from it

EATING disorders such as anorexia and bulimia, though caused by serious psychological issues which may lead to death, are usually left unattended due to lack of awareness.

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) physician and gastroenterologist Professor Dr Loong Yik Yee said losing weight may not be all that of a good thing.

"The Malaysian media constantly highlights the harms of being obese, leaving out the harms of being the total opposite.

"It is important for people, especially teenage girls and young women, to not be vulnerable to the 'ideal' form portrayed in movies."

Dr Loong said an individual should lose no more than 1.6kg per



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Generally, everyone who is either extremely thin or obese, should first consider a balanced diet. File pic



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week in order to maintain a healthy body system.

"Regardless of the metabolic rate, a person who loses too much weight in a short period is prone to many diseases."

He said there are many different anorexia cases and people should be aware of the symptoms.

"A person who practices healthy eating habits but continues to lose weight unnaturally might be prone to diabetes, hyperthyroidism or malabsorption.

"In cases where the individual

has a poor appetite, there is a possibility of getting cancer, tuberculosis and kidney or liver complications."

The physician said being too thin would make them prone to injuries as the organs were not cushioned with sufficient fats and muscles.

"People who blindly subscribe to diet plans and supplements do not know that their organs will not function normally due to lack of energy.

"Such situations are the first signs to heart and liver failure, and many a times these situations have

led to death."

Dr Loong said for patients who are genetically thin, building muscle mass while maintaining a healthy diet is needed.

"Generally, everyone who is either extremely thin or obese, should first consider a balanced diet. Once that is in place, the weight loss should take place gradually.

"The trick is moderation, everything should be done at a steady pace in the right amount to ensure no damage is done along the way."