

Lead healthy lifestyle in support of World Obesity Day

The Department of Health (DH) today (March 4) appealed to members of the public to be aware of obesity and develop a healthy lifestyle in support of [World Obesity Day](#).

World Obesity Day has been observed on March 4 since 2020 to stimulate and support practical actions that will help people achieve and maintain a healthy weight and reverse the global obesity crisis. Having the theme of "Let's Talk About Obesity And...", World Obesity Day in 2024 urges the community to start cross-cutting conversations.

A spokesman for the DH said, "Obesity is a major risk factor for a number of chronic diseases, including hypertension, heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes mellitus, cancer, musculoskeletal disorders and sleep apnoea."

In Hong Kong, a body mass index (BMI) of adults from 23 to less than 25 is regarded overweight, while a BMI equal to or greater than 25 is considered obesity. Furthermore, having excess body fat around the waist may also bring health problems. Waist circumference of men who are 90cm or above, and that of women are 80cm or above, are considered centrally obese. For students, [overweight](#) (including obesity) is defined as weight exceeding 120 per cent of the median weight-for-height (applicable to male students with height below 175cm and female students with height below 165cm).

According to the [Population Health Survey \(PHS\) 2020-22](#) conducted by the DH, among persons aged between 15 and 84, 32.6 per cent of them are obese, 22 per cent of them are overweight and 37.8 per cent were classified as centrally obese. The PHS also revealed some common unhealthy lifestyle in Hong Kong. About one quarter of persons aged 18 or above performed an insufficient level of physical activities, and about 98 per cent of persons aged 15 or above reported an inadequate intake (i.e. an average of less than five servings) of fruit and vegetables per day.

The DH's Student Health Service provides free annual health assessment service for eligible primary and secondary school students. A total of 233 000 primary school students and 97 000 secondary school students attended the Student Health Service Centres for annual health assessment in the 2022/23 school year. The detection rates of being overweight (including obesity) among primary and secondary school students were 19.5 per cent and 20.5 per cent respectively.

Leading a healthy lifestyle reduces the risk of obesity. "The fundamental cause of obesity is more calories are consumed than expended. To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, members of the public are encouraged to eat a balanced diet, be physically active and reduce the amount of time spent being sedentary," the spokesman stressed.

The DH has been promoting a healthy lifestyle through a life-course and setting-based approach. People eating out and ordering takeaway food are common in Hong Kong. The DH has been enlisting the support of restaurants to provide healthier dishes to members of the public through the [EatSmart Restaurant Star+](#) campaign. Furthermore, in collaboration with relevant government bureaux/departments and the public, private and non-governmental sectors, the DH has also launched the [StartSmart@school.hk](#), [EatSmart@school.hk](#) campaigns, and the [Joyful@Healthy Workplace Programme](#) to encourage healthy eating and physical activity in order to create an environment conducive to a healthy lifestyle in pre-primary institutions, primary schools and workplaces.

Furthermore, with an aim to advocate members of the public to lead an active lifestyle, the DH has launched "[10 000 Steps a Day](#)" Campaign since 2022 to arouse members of the public to integrate walking, which is a simple form of physical activity, into their daily life. The Walking Challenge last year further invited people to form groups with family members and friends to support each other to walk 10 000 steps a day.

The Government is committed to halt the rise of obesity. The DH will continue to step up efforts to enhance public awareness about the importance of healthy living and increase people's health literacy, as well as working in close partnership with other government departments and community partners to foster a health-enhancing environment.