

# Malaysians Constant (DIS) Beliefs on Cholesterol

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## MALAYSIANS CONSTANT (DIS) BELIEFS ON CHOLESTEROL

- *Most Malaysians (85%) claim that their level of knowledge of cholesterol-related issues was average and good.*
- *Almost all (92%) think that cholesterol can be controlled through lifestyle changes.*
- *75% say that there would be symptoms if a person has high cholesterol.*

**Kuala Lumpur, May 8, 2023** – Based on the recent State of Health of the Nation perception survey, Malaysians believe that they are generally knowledgeable when it comes to cholesterol, with a majority (85%) claiming that their level of understanding is average and good.<sup>1</sup>

Conducted by The Green Zebras on behalf of the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) and leading pharmaceutical company, Novartis Malaysia, the survey also illustrates some of the misconceptions about cholesterol<sup>1</sup>, such as;

- *92% of Malaysians think cholesterol can be managed through lifestyle changes.*
- *Only 40% believe that cholesterol can only be controlled with medicine.*
- *75% say there will be symptoms if a person has high cholesterol.*
- *56% of the respondents aged 40 to 60 assume that cholesterol level testing is needed at least every five years or more frequently.*
- *Almost half of them (49%) disagree that someone with a healthy weight can have a high cholesterol level.*

Despite all these misconceptions, most Malaysians (89%) are aware that unmanaged high cholesterol can lead to severe diseases such as cardiovascular, stroke, and other heart problems. 84% of the respondents wish for easier ways to manage high cholesterol.

The respondents also say that the source of information for cholesterol is mainly from health websites, social media, friends or family instead of credible sources such as doctors, pharmacists, and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

**Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai, President of MMA, said;**

“While the responses in the survey show that Malaysians claim to be well-informed on cholesterol, there are some fallacies in their sentiments as well.”

“First and foremost, there are no symptoms for high cholesterol. A blood test is the only way to detect it. The recommended cholesterol screenings for adults between 45 to 65 years old are every one to two years and should be done annually for those above 65.”

“Therefore, taking charge of your health and doing regular health screenings is relatively important. Do not wait to visit the doctor when you feel unhealthy or unwell, everything may be too late.”

“As a physician, I also strongly advise the public not to solely rely on health-related information from friends,

family, and social media as this way is often skewed through the sharing process.”

**Mohamed ElWakil, Country President of Novartis Malaysia, said,**

“Many people are unaware that cholesterol is one of the silent killers, along with high blood pressure and diabetes. There are no obvious symptoms on someone.”

“However, cholesterol can be managed if it is detected early. If detected, follow the doctor’s recommended treatment plan and lifestyle changes may help prevent severe heart-related problems. In fact, there are now easier and more convenient treatment plans available. Patients should actively seek the best treatment options from their doctors.”

The State of the Health of the Nation survey was conducted online in December 2022 in both Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia. It is nationally representative of the overall population by location, gender, and race. A total of 500 Malaysians between 40 to 64 years old responded to the survey.<sup>1</sup>

References

1. Novartis Data on File. Perception survey 2023.

# # #

**About Malaysian Medical Association**

The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) is an association that has been around since 1959 and has the largest number of doctors in the country. With more than 16,000 members, they aim to promote and maintain the interest of the medical profession, both in public service and the private, while sustaining the professional standards of medical ethics. The MMA serves as the vehicle of the integrated voice to educate and direct public opinion on the problems of public health as affecting the community at large.

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**About Novartis Malaysia**

Novartis had a long heritage and legacy in Malaysia. Established in 1971, we are a leading multinational company employing over 800 associates who work in the Innovative Medicines division, Novartis Corporate Center – Kuala Lumpur and Sandoz (generics). Through our over 50-year presence in Malaysia, Novartis

Malaysia continues to deliver on its corporate purpose of re-imagining medicine to improve and extend the lives of over 32 million Malaysians.

In 2021, Novartis Malaysia was ranked as the top contributor by the Clinical Research Malaysia in sponsored research with 16 research projects. We also host a proven track record of expanding access to its Innovative medications in Private or in Public via collaboration with the Ministry of Health. Through these collaborations, Novartis has succeeded in improving and extending the lives of more than 1.3 million Malaysian patients.

Starting March 7, 2022, Novartis Malaysia's office is located in the new cutting-edge building called Plaza Imazium in Damansara Utama, Petaling Jaya. Novartis Malaysia occupies 2 floors and is one of 20 offices in Malaysia to be LEED Gold-certified, and the first office to be WELL Silver certified.

### **About Novartis Corporate Center**

Novartis Corporate Center Kuala Lumpur is one of six strategically located corporate centers established by Novartis globally. It brings together expert capabilities and talent across functionalities and is an innovation hub that drives the business forward. It is home to 500+ associates who work to deliver on the Novartis purpose of reimagining medicine to improve and extend people's lives.

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