

Diabetics can now enjoy a healthier version of Bubble Tea

January 20, 2020



A Malaysian-owned company has developed pearls, sugar syrup and sugar caramel with low Glycemic Index (GI) for bubble tea that is safe for diabetics.

The global bubble tea market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 7.4% from 2017 to 2023, hitting US\$3.21bil (RM13.46bil) by 2023 according to research firm Allied Market Research (The Star Online).

According to Straits Research, it is estimated that Malaysia's bubble tea market was valued at US\$49.8mil in 2018 and is expected to grow at the rate of 6.9% from 2019 to 2026 (The Star Online).

Holista CollTech Ltd in collaboration with local fruit processing company SunFresh Fruit Hub Sdn Bhd (Fruit Hub).

Datuk Dr Rajen Manicka, Holista founder and chief executive officer, said "***The bubble tea fad is not going to go away. The challenge is to offer a healthier version which can significantly reduce the potential of higher incidence of diabetes and obesity.***"

Dr Rajen further says "***We are combining science with the market reach and understanding of the needs of bubble tea manufacturers and vendors to offer a healthier alternative without increasing cost of production .***"

A typical 500ml bubble tea drink contains at least 8.5 teaspoons of sugar. The sugar is then stored in the blood glucose which then flows through the bloodstream. A lower GI is healthier as it takes more time to digest and absorb glucose.

One of Holista's patented formulas combines with the tapioca starch to lower the GI of the "pearls" without any distinguishable change in taste or texture.

The second is sugar syrup using Holista's low-GI and low-calorie sugar, which has 80% less calories than regular sugar, but still has the same sweet taste.

Third is Holista's low-GI sugar caramel (brown sugar), which retains its sweetness with lower calories.

Molasses are used as a pre-pour to sweeten the pearls or as a medium to cook them.

Dr Rajen said this would give the company access to a wider market for its healthy ingredient products. Currently Holista has gained global market acceptance for its low-GI noodles, roti canai and chappati.

Fruit Hub has begun manufacturing pearls at its facility in Lanchang, Pahang, with production expected to hit 300,000 tonnes a month by year end.

by Aaron

20th January 2020 18:53

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