

Millions of Indonesian Toddlers Have Nutrition Problems

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Thousands of toddlers in Indonesia suffer from double burden of nutrition problems, malnutrition and lack of nutrition. Some experience obesity, some other stunting or malnutrition.

Primary Health Research Data (Riskesdas) 2013 recorded some 18.8 % of infants at 0-5.9 months old experiencing malnutrition, 29% stunting and 1.6% obesity.

“Toddlers in Indonesia face double burden case, malnutrition on one side, but overnutrition on the other side,” said nutritionist from Universitas Gadjah mada, Dr. Toto Sudargo, SKM., M.Kes., on Tuesday (24/1) in his office at Faculty of Medicine UGM.

Toto said malnutrition case was found in most of Sulawesi, Kalimantan, West and East Nusa Tenggara, North Sumatera, Aceh, and Maluku. It is not only because of lack of nutrients in infants, but also due to infections such as respiratory tract infection and diarrhea, low weight of babies, not exclusive breastfeeding, and wrong child rearing patterns.

“Stunting, malnutrition, and weight in infancy will affect the developments of children whilst

growing up, physically and mentally,” he said.

According to Toto, although malnutrition is still found in many areas in the country, but the prevalence is decreasing from year to year. On the contrary, obesity is increasing each year. It happens because of several factors, such as genetical, physiological, social, environmental, endocrine, and drugs.

Cases of obesity is mostly found in Kalimantan, North Maluku, Gorontalo, Jakarta, and North Sulawesi. Toto said obesity contributed significantly to the increase in the prevalence of degenerative diseases, such as hypertension, heart problems, and diabetes mellitus.

Celebrating the National Nutrition Day on 25 January, Toto explained that the role of family was vital to improving the nutrition. “Families are expected to be nutrient-aware by adopting the principle of balanced diet,” he said.

This is done by practising consumption of balanced food varieties that is in balance with the need of each family member; also practising healthy lifestyle.

“The adoption of a balanced diet is very important to support the growth and development of children optimally,” he concluded.

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