

Jamaican Cherry for Diabetes Patients

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Diabetic patients cannot freely choose their meals. Wrong choice of meal will only increase their blood sugar level. Health Research Data of Health Ministry in 2013 said the prevalence of diabetes mellitus (DM) in Indonesia increased from 5.7 percent in 2007 to 6.9 percent or 9.1 million people in 2013 with the highest prevalence being in Yogyakarta.

"One of the manifestations of DM in the mouth cavity is oral diabetic that affects the occurrence of periodontal diseases such as dry mouth, gingivitis, calculus, resorption of alveolar bones, and periodontitis," said Vega Putri Endah Sari at UGM on Wednesday (11/9).

Vega Putri suggested patients of DM to consume low calories diet, sugar-free diet by not consuming sugar or minimising sugar intake, and fibre-rich diet. Alternative sugar is therefore necessary for the patients.

"One of the sugar alternatives is organic sugar from cherry," she said.

These include Jari Gula (Jamaican Cherry Organic Sugar) which is the product made by five UGM



students: Vega Putri Endah Sari, Naurul Izzah Nazhifah, Dilla Darista Putri, Abdurrahman Wahyu Utomo, and Fathul Huda Al Faruqi.

"This sugar is suitable for DM patients because it is low in calories," she said.

Vega Putri explained the Jamaican Cherry or *Muntingia calabura L.* contains ascorbic acid, fibre, beta-carotene, thiamine, riboflavin, and niacin that are useful as antidiabetes due to their ability to reduce blood sugar level by blocking the blood sugar absorption from the colon and accelerate digestion in digestive system.

"The main compounds- flavonoid and saponin - in the cherry serve as antioxidants that can secrete insulin hormones that work for sugar metabolism," she added.

The students opted for the Jamaican cherry due to availability and sweetness while it can grow anywhere. The production of the sugar is also cheap and easy to do.

The students hoped the Jamaican Cherry Organic Sugar would be able to reduce the risk of periodontal diseases among DM patients.

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