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Ajinomoto committed to helping reduce table salt intake via umami seasoning

KUCHING: Salt consumption is only one contributor to high blood pressure but, when compared to other factors such as heredity or stress, is slightly easier to control.

A guide issued by the World Health Organisation (WHO) advises people to consume less than two grammes of sodium per day – the equivalent of about five grammes of table salt.

Ajinomoto Co Inc, in a press statement yesterday, said umami seasoning (monosodium glutamate, or MSG) is not table salt, as it contains 12 per cent sodium compared to table salt which has 39 per cent sodium content.

“In keeping with our commitment to help people eat well and live well, Ajinomoto Co is engaged in a variety of activities around the world to help people reduce their table salt intake.

“For example in Japan, we have established an official ‘Salt Reduction Day’ with the Japanese Society of Hypertension, during which Ajinomoto Co promoted low-salt food items at major stores throughout Japan,” said the company.

It added that events held in other countries included cooking and umami demonstrations at the Food Nutrition Conference and Expo in the United States, as well as the publication of a low-salt, umami-rich cookbook in Malaysia, in consideration of the WHO recommendation for daily salt intake.

“Compared to table salt, a much smaller amount of MSG is required to make food taste delicious. This means that the total amount of sodium intake from umami seasoning is substantially smaller than that from table salt.

“This leads to an interesting question: Due to the comparatively small amount of umami seasoning required to make food delicious, together with the comparatively small amount of sodium content in umami seasoning, can the use of umami seasoning help people reduce their salt intake?”

The company said that according to at least one study, the answer to the question appears to be ‘yes’.

“Subjects evaluated the palatability of a Japanese clear soup seasoned using table salt, and another seasoned using substantially less table salt and umami seasoning.

“The result showed that, with the addition of umami seasoning, the same level of palatability could be achieved using 30 per cent less salt.”

The press release stated that Ajinomoto Co believes it can achieve a similar reduction in salt intake for a wide variety of traditional dishes around the world, as it is committed to contributing to the worldwide effort, through evidence-based communication and demonstration, on how to effectively use umami seasoning as part of a healthy, balanced, and lower-salt diet.