

## **Addition of charcoal into coffee is an offence: Health Ministry**

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KUALA LUMPUR : The addition of charcoal into coffee, which has become a trend, is an offence under the Food Regulations 1985 and can be prosecuted, according to the Health Ministry.

The ministry in a statement said any food premises operators found serving coffee with charcoal can be fined up to RM10,000 or face imprisonment for a maximum of two years if convicted.

"Coffee intended for consumption is regulated under Regulation 269A, Food Regulations 1985, and this regulation only permits the addition of sugar, dextrose, glucose, honey, milk, creamer, other permitted foods, and approved flavorings. Charcoal is not categorised as food," it said.

This statement is in response to a report on Nov 16 that highlighted the trend of serving coffee with charcoal in a dining establishment here, which sparked debate among netizens on social media over the past few weeks.

It all started due to claims that coffee mixed with charcoal, also known as "Kopi Joss" in Indonesia, has a unique taste and is said to be a way to eliminate toxins from the body. However, health experts have expressed concerns about consuming this beverage, as it could have adverse effects such as cancer due to its carcinogenic nature and the potential for intestinal blockage if consumed regularly for a prolonged period.

According to the ministry, hot charcoal (charred coal) added directly to coffee is different from activated charcoal, commonly used in the food industry as it has been processed and purified, therefore safe for use.

"However, it cannot be guaranteed that the hot charcoal directly added to coffee, as circulated, has been properly processed or safe for direct consumption in beverages because there may be other foreign or toxic substances present.

"Therefore, as a monitoring measure, investigations will be conducted after the ministry receives complete information about the food premises involved," it said.

The ministry also urges the public to report any food premises suspected of not complying with the provisions under the Food Act 1983 and its regulations to the nearest District Health Office or State Health Department or contact the ministry via <http://moh.spab.gov.my> or the Facebook page of the Food Safety and Quality Division at [www.facebook.com/bkkmhq](https://www.facebook.com/bkkmhq).

"At the same time, the public is advised to choose clean food outlets or restaurants, especially those that have obtained recognition for Clean, Safe, and Healthy practices from the ministry," it said.