

# When adequate sleep is rewarding

Insurance company launches programme to benefit those who have longer hours of shut-eye

By ERIC QUAH  
ericq@thestar.com.my

THE National Sleep Survey conducted by the Nielsen Company last year revealed that nine in 10 Malaysians, or about 89%, suffer from one or more sleep problems.

Recognising this extremely high national statistic, AIA Berhad launched a first in the industry – a sleep tracking benefit through its AIA Vitality programme that encourages its members to sleep longer by providing rewards – at Bangsar Baru.

“When we launched AIA Vitality in 2016, it was to switch everything that we do – we turned to make it about the customer – the people in Malaysia,” said AIA Berhad chief executive officer Anusha Thavarajah.

Anusha recounted previous statistics that showed Malaysia as the most obese nation in South-East Asia where one in five Malaysians are at risk of Type 2 diabetes and one in four at risk of cancer.

“It struck us that being in the insurance industry is one thing,

but how do we integrate what we do every day to help Malaysians, as our brand promises to lead ‘Healthier, Longer and Better Lives?’”

As part of that commitment, AIA is raising awareness of the importance of sleep, emphasising that resting well is no less important as being physically active and maintaining a balanced diet for a holistic well-being.

Anusha also shared how with AIA Vitality, the company could be a health influencing mobiliser with its unique, science-backed health programme, spurring members to make healthier choices.

“We started off by rewarding our members for taking steps to exercise more, and later gave them benefits for practising healthy eating,” she detailed.

“And now, we want to reward them for incorporating sufficient rest into their lives.”

The new sleep tracking benefit rewards members with 10 AIA Vitality points per day, with an annual cap of 2,000 points per

membership year if they achieve a minimum of 420 minutes (seven hours) of accumulated sleep within a 24-hour period.

The hours are tracked by syncing the AIA Vitality mobile application to a fitness tracking device such as Fitbit, Garmin and Misfit, which records the amount of sleep a person gets.

AIA Bhd chief marketing officer Heng Zee Wang said the sleep tracking benefit is the easiest way for members to earn points and receive better rewards.

“To date, we have over 100,000 active AIA Vitality members. We aspire to grow the number and reach out to more Malaysians by providing a platform that motivates them to make little changes and healthier choices every day.

Heng added that with the extra hours of sleep, members can achieve a higher AIA Vitality status and unlock even greater rewards, such as additional insurance or takaful coverage and discounts from its various AIA Vitality partners, which includes AirAsia, BP Healthcare, Fitness



Anusha (left) and Heng launching the AIA Vitality's sleep tracking benefit. – Photos: LOW LAY PHON/The Star

First, Guardian, Jaya Grocer and TGV Cinemas.

AIA customers can sign up as an AIA Vitality member for a fee of RM10 per month.

The programme encourages members to know and improve their health as well as to enjoy their rewards.

Consulting otorhinolaryngologist Dr Jeevanan Jahendran from Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur said at the launch that sleep is the only thing that provides maximum benefits with the least effort, yet people are willing to give that up for their handheld devices such as smartphones and tablets and even television.

Later, sound therapist Elizabeth Huxtable demonstrated how sound can be used to promote better quality sleep.

Details on AIA Vitality's sleep tracking benefit and programme are at [www.aiavitality.com.my](http://www.aiavitality.com.my)



Huxtable leading a session on how sounds can promote better relaxation and sleep.