

## MALAYSIA



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<b>Topic :</b>	MALAYSIA BANS TOBACCO ADS
<b>Where :</b>	Malaysia
<b>When :</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2003
<b>What happened :</b>	<p>The Malaysian Health Ministry recently announced that it will ban all forms of tobacco advertising as well as promotions in Malaysia. This ban will be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004.</p> <p>However, this ban will not apply to sports such as Formula One motor racing which relies heavily on sponsorship from tobacco companies. This sport has been granted a temporary exemption.</p> <p>Currently, tobacco companies are allowed to advertise indirectly and sponsor sporting activities under the present regulations and guidelines governing advertising in Malaysia. Once the ban is effected, all forms of advertising be it direct or indirect will cease.</p> <p>The Malaysian health minister was also quoted as saying that further discussions were necessary to discuss implications on some sports which receive tobacco advertising such as soccer and Formula One motor racing to which Malaysia is involved in as hosts to one of its series.</p> <p>Three tobacco companies, British American Tobacco, Japan Tobacco Industry and Phillip Morris have agreed to withdraw all forms of cigarette-related advertisements from the end of this year.</p> <p>In a general survey by the Health Ministry, it was reported that nearly 25% of Malaysians were smokers in 1996 as compared with 21.5% in 1986. What is more surprising is that 20% of the Malaysian youth are smokers. The Malaysian Health Ministry attributes the rising number of smokers in Malaysia to increased expenditure on advertising, estimated around \$12.4 million between January and May of this year alone.</p>
<b>Comments:</b>	<p>A step in the right direction to promote health awareness and the dangers of smoking. However the forthcoming ban may have economical implications on the Malaysian economy especially sports activities which receive huge amounts of sponsorships from tobacco companies. Although most sports activities held in Malaysia have ceased to receive sponsorship backing from tobacco companies, there are some tobacco companies that are still involved albeit indirectly.</p>

<b>Topic :</b>	FOOD LABELS NOW REQUIRED TO CARRY SPECIAL NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION
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<b>Where :</b>	Malaysia
<b>When :</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> September 2003
<b>What happened :</b>	<p>The Health Ministry reported that all food products especially health products will now have to carry their specific nutritional information in order to protect consumers from misleading information.</p> <p>In their statement, the Health Ministry also said that manufacturers will now no longer be allowed to carry information that make such claims that are considered misleading or baseless, such as a product being able to cure or protect consumers from diseases and ailments.</p> <p>These changes, part of the Malaysian Food Regulations of 1995 which came into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2003 covers product labeling, wording of the nutrient content, its comparison and functions, and advertisements.</p> <p>Under the amendments, manufacturers will have to use certain wordings or those carrying similar meanings, to explain the nutritional information of their products.</p> <p>The spokesperson from the Ministry was also quoted as saying that these new amendments have been implemented to protect consumers from misleading product information and to assist the food industry to give priority to the nutrient content found in products.</p> <p>It is now evident that all advertisements through labeling will come under the purview of the said regulations.</p>
<b>Comments :</b>	<p>The new amendments aim to protect the consumer from frivolous and baseless information supplied by manufacturers. With this, consumers can now be assured that product that they purchase of the shelves correspond with the information on the labels of such products, especially pharmaceutical products.</p>