

NTU team makes skin patch to combat obesity

SINGAPORE: Researchers have come up with a skin patch that allows anti-obesity drugs to be administered with a lower risk of side effects.

A team from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) shared details of the skin patch with the media yesterday.

Each skin patch contains hundreds of micro-needles and allows anti-obesity medication to be delivered directly to the fat under the skin.

Such medication helps to reduce unhealthy white fat, converting it into an energy-burning brown fat which is healthier.

At the media briefing, researchers explained how the skin patch is used.

The patch has to be pressed into the skin for about two minutes, during which the micro-needles will become embedded in the skin and detach from the patch.

From its tests on mice, the NTU team found that the patches can reduce weight gain and fat mass in mice on a high-fat diet by more than 30% in under four weeks.

Prof Chen Peng, one of the team's two principal investigators, noted that not many adult anti-obesity drugs are approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration, as a high dosage is often required.

It carries a risk of side effects, which could include heart palpitations and increased blood pressure, he added. — The Straits Times / Asia News Network