

HE·AL

Guide to **H**ealthy **E**ating & **A**ctive **L**iving

Practise Healthy Nutrition: The Way to Wellness Throughout Life



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Practise Healthy Nutrition: The Way to Wellness Throughout Life



Dr Tee E Siong

Chairman, Nutrition Month Malaysia
National Steering Committee 2023

and

President,
Nutrition Society of Malaysia

Malaysia continues to deal with the double-burden of malnutrition (undernutrition and overnutrition) and escalating healthcare-related costs related to non-communicable diseases (NCDs). We should shift the mindset from only seeking treatment when we are sick to promoting wellness and preventive lifestyles. Practising healthy nutrition and active lifestyle is the way to achieving this paradigm shift.

Having healthy nutrition is vital for maintaining health and wellness at all stages of life. It plays a crucial role in improving maternal and child health, promoting optimal growth and development in infants and children, preventing all forms of malnutrition, staying strong and fostering productivity in adulthood, reducing the risk of NCDs, and promoting longevity and healthy ageing. Therefore, achieving optimal nutrition is essential throughout the entire life cycle.

Nutrition Month Malaysia (NMM) continues to provide guidance to the public in promoting healthier lifestyles and the well-being of the community across all age groups. This HE-AL Volume 5 publication is one of the key initiatives of NMM to provide simple but informative messages and practical tips for every stage of life through 9 key messages, including pregnant mothers, infants and toddlers, school-going children and teenagers, adults, elderly as well as being active and keeping track of your health status.

It is never too late or too early to take the first step to be healthy. Adopt these simple yet effective tips and habits early for a better, healthier future.

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Nutrition is Crucial for

Healthy Nutrition – Cornerstone to Good Health



Normal bodily functions



Healthy immune system



Optimal growth and development



Prevent nutrient deficiencies

Optimal Nutrition Is Vital for All Ages

Nutritional needs change throughout the life cycle to meet different physiological needs. Key nutritional focus and consequences in each life cycle stage:

	PREGNANT MOTHERS 	INFANTS & PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN 	SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN 
NUTRITIONAL IMPORTANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increased energy and nutrient needs to support foetal growth and development ✓ Achieve appropriate gestational weight gain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Most important period of life for rapid and healthy growth and development ✓ Lays a foundation for good health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increased energy and nutrient needs for optimum growth and development ✓ Period for activity and learning ✓ Age of shaping eating habits
CONSEQUENCES OF IMBALANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prone to anaemia • Inappropriate gestational weight gain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Excessive: Increases risk of gestational diabetes mellitus ~ Inadequate: Increases risk of preterm babies, low birth weight babies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prone to underweight, stunting, and micronutrient deficiencies • Poor brain development • May increase the risk of being overweight and obese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturbance to learning capability • Risk of anaemia, underweight, stunting, micronutrient deficiencies • Risk of being overweight/obese

or All Stages of Life



**Prevent
diet-related
chronic diseases**



Healthy ageing

Nutritional imbalances result in undernutrition and overnutrition.

Malaysia is faced with both extremes of undernutrition and overnutrition issues.



TEENAGERS



- ✓ Second most rapid growth period, growth spurts
- ✓ Age of reaching puberty
- ✓ Increased need for nutrients

- Risk of anaemia (especially adolescent girls), underweight, micronutrient deficiencies
- Risk of being overweight/obese
- May develop eating disorders

ADULTS



- ✓ Maintain healthy body weight
- ✓ Lead an active lifestyle
- ✓ Live a productive life

- Increased risk of being overweight/obese and related metabolic diseases
- Poor performance at work

OLDER PERSONS



- ✓ Changes in dietary needs – increased need of certain nutrients; decreased need of calories
- ✓ Changes in type/texture of foods consumed

- Reduced bone mineral density
- Muscle wasting (sarcopenia)
- Risk of cognitive impairment
- Sarcopenic obesity

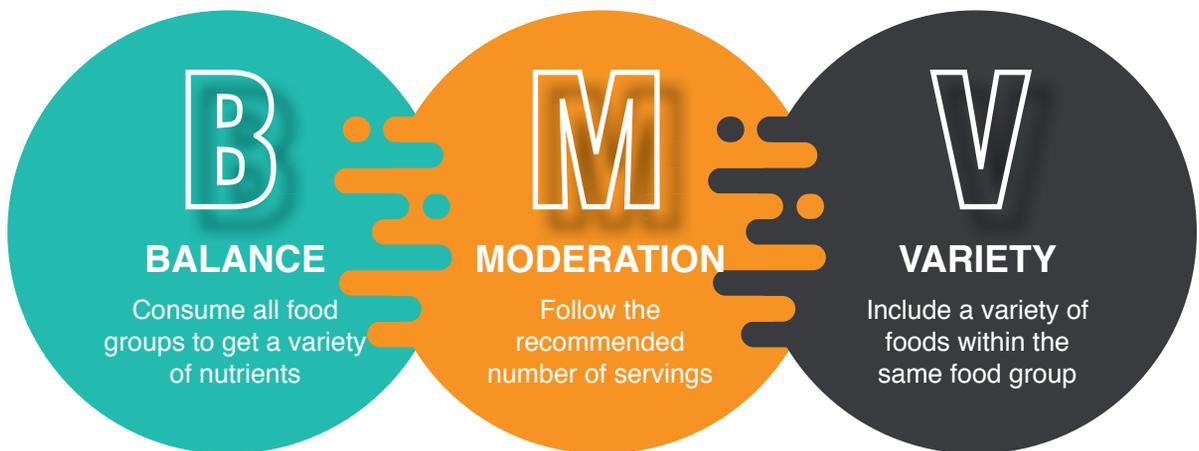
Eating Right for E

Practise Healthy Eating with Malaysian Dietary Guidelines (MDG)

Healthy eating is achievable for all ages – follow recommendations of the MDG.

Basic principles of healthy eating for all ages:

- A healthy, nutrient-dense, and varied diet
- Follow the concept of Balance, Moderation and Variety



Healthy Eating Made Simple



EAT PLENTY
Vegetables and fruits every day



EAT ADEQUATE
Whole grains, e.g. brown rice and wholegrain products



EAT MODERATE
Fish, meat, poultry, egg, legumes and nuts



CONSUME ADEQUATE
Milk and milk products



REDUCE
Foods high in fat and limit saturated fat intake



LIMIT
Food with high salt, sauces and flavourings



REDUCE
Sugar in foods and beverages



DRINK
Plenty of plain water daily

every Stage of Life

The Malaysian Food Pyramid Visual Guide to Healthy Eating Daily

- Simple guide to diversify food intake

- Be mindful of appropriate servings per day

- Milk and milk products: 2 servings
(Adolescent: 2-3 servings)

- Fish: 1 serving
- Poultry/eggs/meat: 1-2 servings
- Legumes: 1 serving

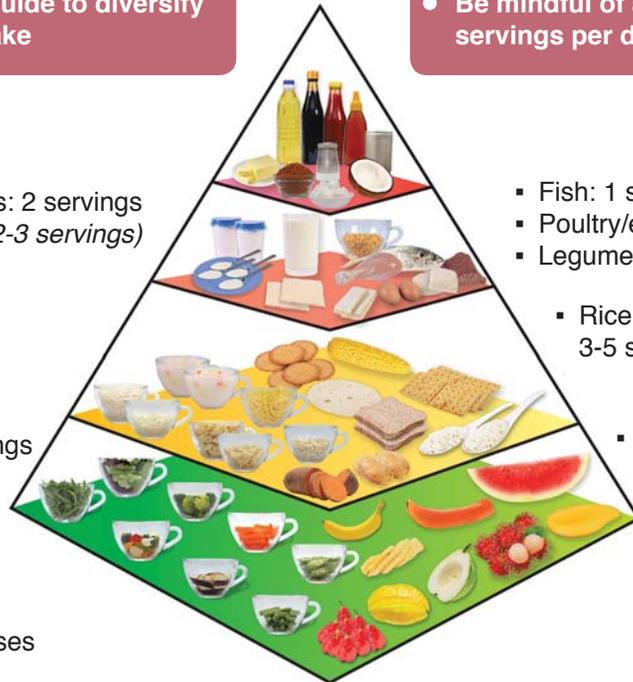
- Vegetables: ≥ 3 servings

- Rice, cereals, whole grains: 3-5 servings

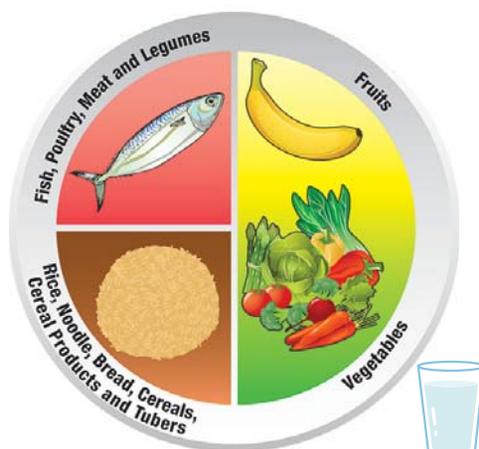
- Fruits: 2 servings
(Adolescent: 2-3 servings)



- Plain water: 6-8 glasses



Malaysian Healthy Plate Visual Guide to Healthy Meals



The Healthy Plate concept applies for all ages. Appropriate food amounts are important for children.

Use the Quarter-Quarter-Half Concept:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ plate of grains or grain products, preferably whole grains
- $\frac{1}{4}$ plate of fish or, poultry, meat, or egg, plant proteins e.g. tofu, tempeh
- $\frac{1}{2}$ plate of fruits and vegetables
- A glass of plain water

Eating Right for th

Pregnancy – Nutrition is More Important than Ever



- Pregnancy is the start of a child's crucial first **1000 days of life**
- Foundation of optimum health and well-being throughout life

Why is healthy nutrition important for the foetus?

A foetus is dependent on the mother for all its nutritional needs for growth and neurodevelopment



To achieve appropriate birth weight

Meeting Nutritional Needs during Pregnancy



Practise **healthy eating principles** for general adults



Obtain **additional energy and nutrients**; but not double the amounts you eat before pregnancy



Ensure sufficient intake of **folate, iron, iodine and dietary fibre**



Practise **Balance, Moderation, Variety (BMV)**



Drink plenty of **water** daily

Meeting additional nutrient needs through healthy snacks

1 st trimester (+80 kcal/day)	2 nd trimester (+280 kcal/day)	3 rd trimester (+470 kcal/day)
Add 1 healthy snack	Add 2 healthy snacks	Add 3 healthy snacks
	 	  
morning tea	morning tea afternoon tea	morning tea afternoon tea supper

Note: Healthy snack is characterised as a nutrient-dense meal.

e Expectant Mum

Body Weight Before and During Pregnancy is Important!

For women of reproductive age, aim to achieve normal body mass index before pregnancy

- ✓ Crucial for the health of both the mother and the baby
- ✓ Reduce health risks during pregnancy
- ✓ Give birth to a healthier baby

Appropriate total weight gain during pregnancy

If you are:	Aim for:
• Underweight before pregnancy	~ 12.5-18.0 kg
• Normal weight before pregnancy	~ 11.5-16.0 kg
• Overweight before pregnancy	~ 7.0-11.5 kg
• Obese before pregnancy	~ 5.0-9.0 kg

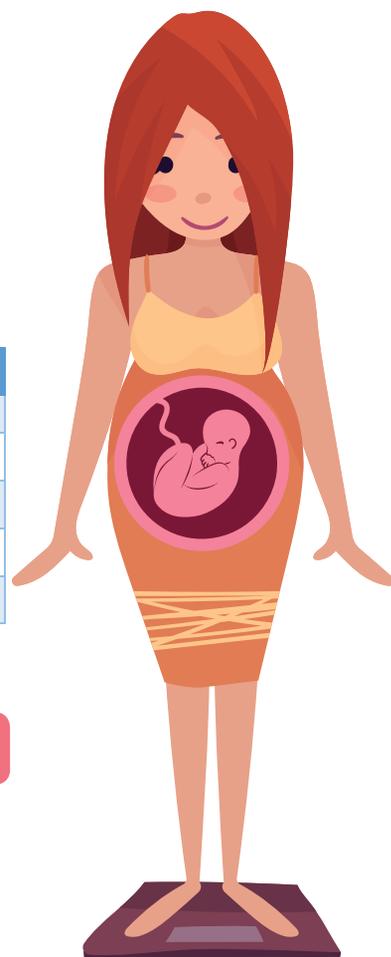
Consequences of inappropriate weight gain

Excessive gestational weight gain

- Increased risk of gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) and preeclampsia
- Higher risk of premature birth
- Increased risk of baby being born larger than average, or obesity during childhood

Insufficient gestational weight gain

- Increased risk of premature birth
- Increased risk of baby born too small
~ Possibility of more frequent infection



Look Out for Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM) A diet-related pregnancy issue

Common risk factors:



Overweight/
obese



Physically
inactive



Eating healthily

Ways to control:



Exercising



Medication
(if necessary)

Getting the Right Start to Opti

Infants and Toddlers Have Greater Nutritional Needs

Differing amounts of energy and nutrients are needed for babies and toddlers

Start Right with Breastfeeding

Breast milk is the best food for babies



Why?

Provides all nutrients needed in the first six months

Supports development of baby's immune system

Protects against chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in later life

How?

Give your baby only breast milk for the first 6 months, without giving other foods or drinks (exclusive breastfeeding)

Continue breastfeeding for up to 2 years

Feed on demand – when signs of hunger are shown

Introduce Complementary Feeding in a Timely Manner

Start at 6 months of age in addition to breast milk. Baby's needs from 6 months onwards:



6-8 months

2-3 main meals per day with 1-2 healthy snacks



Pureed, mashed and semi-solid foods



9-11 months

3-4 main meals per day with 1-2 healthy snacks



Chopped, finger foods, soft biscuits and fruits



1-3 years

4-5 main meals per day with 1-2 healthy snacks



Solid foods can be consumed

mal Growth and Development

Feed Toddlers Creatively

To enable them to grow taller, gain weight, be active, explore and learn.

Young active children need continuous nourishment. Some can be picky too when it comes to eating.
Tips for feeding picky toddlers:



Be creative with recipes and presentation



Keep exposing your child to new foods



Be patient in attempts to get new food accepted



Get your kids involved in meal planning and preparation



Reward your child the right way, positively reinforcing behaviour



Pay attention to child's taste and texture preferences

Common nutrition issues for children under 5 years of age:

- **Stunting, about 1 in 5 children**
- **Underweight, > 1 in 10 children**
- **Overweight/obesity, about 1 in 16 is overweight**

Monitor and track their growth regularly during these crucial growing years!

Healthy Eating for Sc

Preschool to Teenage Years

Need sufficient energy and adequate nutrients to achieve academic excellence

Healthy nutrition is key to enable children to:



Achieve optimal growth and development



Concentrate during school lessons



Improve memory



Have less sick days & absenteeism

Undernutrition and overnutrition problems exist among Malaysian school children

Common Food & Nutrition Concerns



Underweight



Overweight



Skipping breakfast



Body image issues



Unhealthy eating behaviours



Iron deficiency (iron is lost with blood through menstruation)



Increased calorie needs



Availability of nutritious food at school

chool-Going Children

Tips to Cultivate Healthy Eating Among School-Aged Children

Healthy eating and active lifestyle, established during the school years, lowers the risk of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in adulthood.



Involve them in food selection/preparation



Teach how to eat healthily and make healthy food choices at the school canteen



Ensure kids do not skip main meals



Pack healthy foods for school recess



Keep healthy snacks in the home refrigerator or pantry



Provide healthy snacks: e.g. smoothies, fruits, nuts and crackers



Avoid meal time interruptions, e.g. no gadgets during eating time



Limit screen time



Get them to be physically active daily

Make Time fo

Unhealthy Lifestyle of Many Malaysians:

Do not prioritise healthy eating and being active daily



Frequently eat out, tapau foods and consume less healthy foods



Reasons for these practices:



Work starts early morning



Traffic jam



Long working hours/
meetings

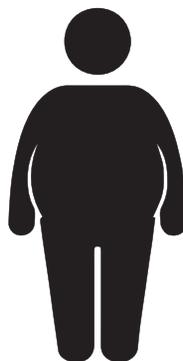
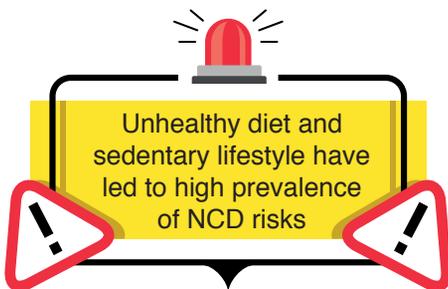


No time to cook at home



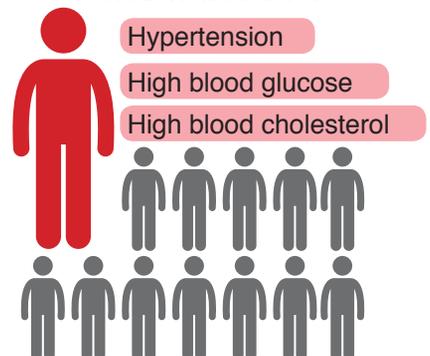
No time to exercise

Malaysian Adults are Unhealthy



1 in 2 Malaysian adults are overweight/obese

1 in 12 Malaysians have all 3 NCD risk factors:



So, make time to eat right for you and your spouse. And for the kids!

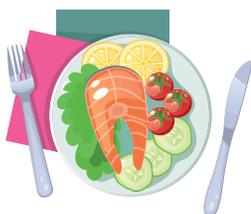
r Eating Right

Healthy Lifestyle Tips for Busy Adults

Even if we are busy, it is still possible to have healthier meals



Start your day with a healthy, quick & easy breakfast



Make healthier food choices when eating out



Pack healthier snacks to the office



Drink plain water to stay hydrated



Cook on your day off/ weekends

MYTH:
Healthy eating
is expensive

FACT: Healthy meals can be inexpensive!



Make wise food choices
~ Choose more local produce
~ Not necessary to go for expensive 'superfood'



Practise meal planning



Eat more plant-based foods



Go for balance and variety

Staying Healthy in

Establish A Good Foundation for Healthy Ageing

Malaysia - an ageing society:

- 1 in 5 in 2040 will be 65 years and above

Seniors are more susceptible to diseases and malnutrition

Increased risk of functional, cognitive, mobility, immunity decline with age

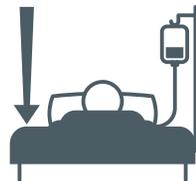
Healthy ageing helps:



Increase quality of life in golden years



Improve cognitive function



Reduce risk of hospitalisation



Live independently

Dietary Practices to Help

Tips to Meet Nutrient Needs



Enjoy a variety of foods from each food group



Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables



Take both animal and plant protein sources



Aim for 6 to 8 glasses of plain water per day



Choose foods with less salt, fats and sugar



Consume calcium-rich foods

Maintaining/Imp



Eating with family members



Eat smaller, but more frequent meals



Fix ill-fitting dentures



Get help with grocery shopping and food preparation

Your Golden Years

Common Health Issues in Older Adults:

Sarcopenia (loss of muscle mass, strength and function)

Sarcopenic obesity (loss of muscle mass and strength + excessive body fat)

Increased risk of falls

Constipation



Undernutrition:
Unintended weight loss

Osteoporosis (loss of bone density)

Cognitive impairment
(risk of Alzheimer's disease/dementia)

To prevent/delay health issues: practise healthy eating and active lifestyle

You Enjoy Quality Ageing

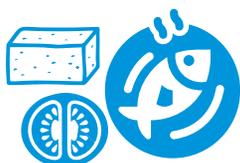
Improving Appetite



Make available a variety of foods at home



Get moving



Go for foods with the right texture
e.g. easy to chew, swallow

Use Nutritional Supplements Wisely

- Health supplements
 - Products that are used by some older persons include
 - multivitamins, multimineral, herbal products, extracts, fish oil, tonics, etc.
- Before taking any supplements, seek advice of nutritionists, dietitians, doctors or pharmacists
- Be wary of supplements that make sensational claims, e.g. cures diseases, helps live longer, stops ageing
- Remember: taking more supplements does not necessarily result in better health



Make Active Lifest

Physical Activity is Important t

1



Maintains healthy body weight

2



Develops muscle and bones

3



Reduces risk* of NCDs

Plan and

Despite your busy schedule, you should plan

1 – 5 years old



Swim



Climb



Throw/catch

180 mins per day

5 – 18 years old



Sports (racquet, football)



Cycling

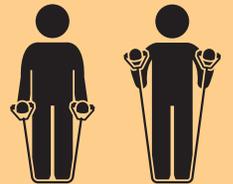


Swim

At least 60 mins per day across the week

Adults & Older Person

Muscle strengthening



Cardio & endurance



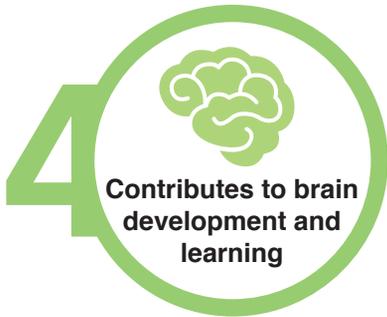
Brisk walk / jogging

Older persons should exercises. Be caut

At least 150 mins of modera

Physical Activity: A Healthy Part of Your Life

For Everyone, at All Stages of Life



REMEMBER!

Be consistent

Make it a habit

Be disciplined

Make time!

and make time for physical activities regularly:

** Blood glucose level (BGL), blood pressure (BP), total cholesterol (TC)*

Balance

Balancing

Flexibility

Stretching

practise gentle activities to avoid falls.

150 minutes of moderate intensity activity per week

Pregnant women

Brisk walk

Yoga

Pelvic floor exercise

At least 150 mins of moderate intensity activity every week

Moderate intensity exercises refer to working hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat.

Keeping Tabs on Y

Benefits of Regular Health Screening & Check-Ups



Keep track of physical well-being



Detect health issues and risks early



Get proper treatment early *(if needed)*



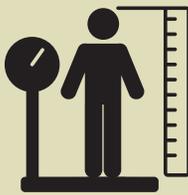
Manage existing conditions, and prevent them from getting worse



Reduce healthcare cost

Simple Tests to Keep Tabs on Your Vital Stats

Body mass index BMI (kg/m²)



Underweight	<18.5
Normal Weight	18.5 – 24.9
Overweight	25 – 29.9
Obese	≥30

Body fat percentage (%)



Male	<25%
Female	<35%

Waist circumference (cm)



Male	< 90 cm
Female	< 80 cm

Blood cholesterol level (mmol/L)



Total cholesterol	< 5.2 mmol/L
-------------------	--------------

Blood glucose level (mmol/L)



Normal (fasting)	<5.6 mmol/L
Normal (random)	<7.8 mmol/L

Blood pressure (mmHg)



Normal	<120 – 129 mm/Hg (Systolic)
	< 80 – 84 mm/Hg (Diastolic)

our Health Status

What & When to Do Health Screenings?

Beside carrying out the rapid screenings highlighted in this message, more detailed health screenings may be required. These include full blood test, stress test, eye test, bone density, cancer markers, scans etc.

Discuss with your healthcare professionals to find out suitable screenings based on individual health condition/history.



Adults



For adults above 30 years old, **screen annually**



Individuals with family history of NCDs should **have screening earlier and monitor more closely** their health status



For pregnant mothers, **go for check-ups as scheduled**

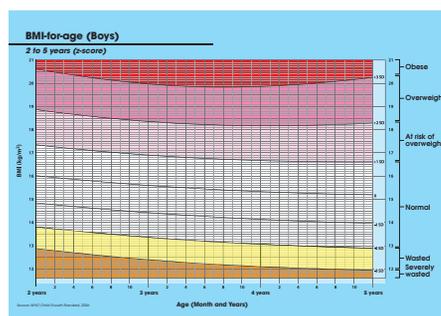


Children

Parents can measure weight and height of their children and **monitor their BMI every 6 months.**

Determine whether they are underweight, overweight or stunted by **using the BMI-for-age growth charts.**

(scan QR code to download the charts)



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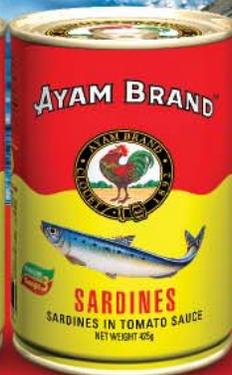
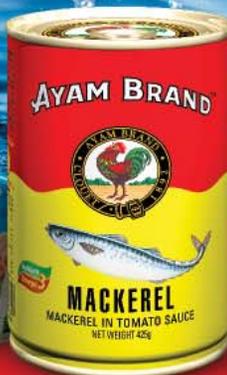


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*Comparing Ayam Brand Sardines In Tomato Sauce against home-cooked sardine fishes.
Reference: Muhammad Ezzudin et al. (2021)



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Achievements of NMM

Aimed to promote greater awareness of healthy eating and active living among Malaysians, it is a strategic partnership between three professional bodies, namely, Nutrition Society of Malaysia (NSM), Malaysian Dietitians' Association (MDA), Malaysian Society of Body Composition (MSBC). Corporate company support and partnership from 2008 enabled more educational materials and activities and greater outreach to the community.

Family Carnivals

- Organised 11 major fun-filled carnivals



School & Kindergarten Roadshows

- Visited 160 primary schools and provided healthy eating and active living messages
- Visited 175 kindergartens and conducted interactive nutrition activities



Educational Materials for School Children & Preschoolers

- Published comic book and activity book for primary school children
- Published DVD and worksheets for preschoolers



Educational Press Articles

- Published over 102 articles in English, Bahasa Malaysia & Chinese newspapers



Publications for Public

- Published 11 practical nutrition guidebooks, 5 recipe books and 1 mini-booklet



Mass Media Promotions

- Disseminated messages through radio, television & website



Visit our website to obtain more information on educational materials from the Nutrition Month Malaysia programme. We also welcome feedback/queries. To reach us, please contact:

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