



# Fight Covid-19 – Practise Healthy Eating

We must do all that is necessary to keep away the virus from entering our body. Follow all the medical and social advice given by the Government.

In addition, we should build up our body defence to fight any virus that managed to enter our body. Many people may get the virus; but some only develop mild symptoms and will recover. Others, especially the elderly, develop severe symptoms when infected. The difference is the immune status of the individual.

Practise healthy eating to boost up our immune system. This is the key to fighting any virus that has entered our body; and prevent us from infecting others around us. Healthy eating guidelines that nutritionists provide over the years are particularly valid at these times. Old fashioned they may be, they are the most effective ways to beef up our immunity.

Yes, you have heard of these before. But have you been practicing it? Be disciplined, be consistent and practise healthy eating for now, and for all times.

## Consume more vegetables and fruits

- They contain phytonutrients, vitamins and minerals that can act as antioxidants to boost up your immune system, so as to be able to fight the virus. Consume a variety of them, with different colours to ensure getting different of these nutrients.
  - You may not find the vegetables that you like under the current circumstances; just don't fuss and get other alternatives
  - Make juices of veggies and fruits to consume more of them, unsweetened
  - Do not over stock veggies and fruits as they spoil easily; there is enough supply of food.



## Eat balanced meals in appropriate amounts

- Balanced meals contain the key food groups in the right amounts, ie veggies and fruits; whole grain cereals; meat, fish, egg; legumes and products; dairy products.
- Eating a variety of these foods and you will have a better chance of receiving all the nutrients needed for overall wellbeing of the body; no one single food is able to fight the virus!
- Following these practices is the only way of not overly consuming certain nutrients such as fats and sugars. Overloading with these nutrients will jeopardise your immune system.

## Guard your gut

- It makes a lot of sense to take care of your gastro-intestinal system as more than three-quarters of the immune system of your body lies in the gut.
- There has to be a healthy balance of the gut microbiota (trillions of microorganisms), with more beneficial or good bacteria over the pathogenic or disease-causing ones
- Dietary factors play key roles in promoting balanced gut microbiota, and keep your bowel movement regular during this difficult time including
  - ~ Take sufficient dietary fibre (good sources include whole grains, legumes and beans, veggies)
  - ~ Drink sufficient water, regularly throughout the day
  - ~ Consume probiotic-containing foods and beverages (good sources include cultured milk drink, yoghurt)



## Adopt healthy cooking practices

- You are now restricted from dining out. Yes, may be you can still call for foods to be delivered, but choices are going to be restricted and you may be concerned with safety of the meals.
- Use this opportunity to whip up healthy meals for your family! This is the best time to develop a habit of cooking healthy meals at home and make this part of your lifestyle from now on.
- Choose healthier recipes, healthier ingredients and adopt healthy and tasty cooking methods
- Since everyone is at now confined to the house, get your family members involved!



## Keep physically active even with MCO!

- *Duduk di rumah* is not to be taken literally. There are many activities that can help you remain physically active in the house. These are extremely important to improve your immunity
- There are many workout ideas you can do at home; clean the house that you have not done so for a year; clear the garden which is now overgrown with Lalang; run around and play with your children within your home compound to keep moving; use the stairs; do resistance training. There are many other examples from our website.
  - Keep a positive mindset; we will beat Covid-19.



Healthy eating boosts immunity to help fight Covid-19. Practise healthy eating to strengthen your immune system to fight diseases at all times!

For more details of the suggested activities, visit our websites:

Nutrition Society of Malaysia  
(<http://nutriweb.org.my/index.php>)

Nutrition Month Malaysia  
(<https://www.nutritionmonthmalaysia.org.my>)

Probiotics Education Programme  
(<http://nutriweb.org.my/probiotics/>).

Gentle reminder from,

**Dr Tee E Siang**  
President, Nutrition Society of Malaysia