

Balanced diet needed during MCO, says UMS nutritionist

The Star 6.4.2020

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Monday, 06 Apr 2020

12:11 PM MYT

KOTA KINABALU: A balanced diet is needed, as there are no specific foods that can boost the immune system, says Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) nutritionist Dr Yasmin Ooi.

“Consume a balanced meal that has a variety of all the food groups in moderate amounts, ” said the UMS Faculty of Food Science and Nutrition senior lecturer when contacted on Monday (April 6).

She said many Malaysians tend to forget to include vegetables and fruits when grocery shopping, especially during the movement control order (MCO) period.

“If you are buying one or two weeks’ worth of groceries, try to consume the leafy vegetables first, and then move on to vegetables like tomatoes and brinjals before going on to the hardier vegetables which keep better, like ladies fingers, long beans and so on, ” said Ooi.

She added that people should not eat as much as they are used to – especially rice and noodles – as they are expending less energy during the MCO period.

Ooi said it would be better to eat more vegetables and practise cooking methods that use less oil, such as steaming or boiling soups.

“Drink lots of plain water, ” she added, saying that those who live in confined areas such as flats, apartments or single-story houses can do step exercises using a heavy and sturdy low stool or a stack of tied up newspapers.

Ooi then said that those in landed properties or areas with a private compound should try to move more by doing things such as climbing up staircases if they are living in a house with one.

She reminded the public that prevention is always better than cure.

“A good nutritional status gives us better immunity, which means better protection against all diseases. During this MCO period, we should all follow the government’s guidelines on staying at home, and keeping good personal hygiene like washing our hands with soap, ” she said.