



# Diet Link

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MALAYSIAN DIETITIANS' ASSOCIATION

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## Message from the MDA Council Members

Dearest MDA Members,

Happy New Year 2015 from the Malaysian Dietitians' Association's 11th Council! We wish you a blessed and prosperous year ahead!

Year 2014 has just ended and it has definitely been a wonderful year for the Association in setting further milestones for Dietetic profession in Malaysia. Moving forward, the Council would like to thank all members and volunteers who have contributed to the Association in any ways.

MDA, under its 5- year Strategic Plan, is expanding in terms of its members' benefit and support. In our effort to be a professional support for dietetic profession, we have revamped the website to accommodate more members' benefits apart from providing more vibrant and fresh look. Look forward to a series of CPDs by MDA in 2015 to assist you enhancing competencies in practise. On top of that, the Council is deciding to subscribe to more international guidelines to ensure our members get hold to latest evidence for best practises.

Check out your members' benefits by logging in to your MDA account. If you do not have one, hurry up and get one today! Be an active member by paying your dues and you are eligible for all the exciting benefits coming your way in 2015!

Last but not least, we are delighted to share that MDA is getting more attention and trust from corporate companies and organisations in matters or events related to diet and nutrition. Thus, for those who are looking for opportunities to volunteer and gain experiences out of your day-to-day job, do watch out for upcoming announcements on our common medium of communications (eDietitian, Facebook & MDA Website).

Hope you have a great new year 2015. Let the celebration begin. Cheers to 2015!

Warmest Regards,  
Mushidah Zakiah bt Mohad Akran  
MDA Honorary Secretary  
Representing the 11th MDA Council Members (2013-2015)



Ms. Mushidah Zakiah

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## Editor's Message



Dear Fellow Dietitians,

It's the month of December! The holiday get-together season! We have approached the final issue of the year and we shall return in June 2015!

In this issue, we are glad to have a lecturer dietitian, Ms Shanthi Krishnasamy, to walk us through her inspiring journey - from Clinical, Food Service, and Community to now Academic & Research. Kindly flip to 'Up Close and Personal' (page 6) to read on her interesting experience. Be inspired! And run for your dreams!

Besides, come and get a quick update from the segment of 'What's New' (page 7) - for both research findings locally as well as internationally.

Are you on Facebook? Instagram? Twitter?

If you not, you're missing out on the power of social media. As the era evolves, information and knowledge are vastly spread across such portals. Think: shots of healthy recipes, new food products, even the bounty of a garden. It's visual storytelling on the go. Social media has opened up more opportunity for dietitians to reach out to our community. If you've not considered it yet, here's a simple guide for you to getting started. Read on 'Empowerment: Use of Social Media in Public Education!' (page 9-10)

Flashback: this year 2014, 20th MDA National Conference was a successful conference with more than 300 attendees. We are so proud of you, our dear members, for giving us endless support and encouragement throughout the whole year. It wouldn't be this successful without you! If you missed out the conference, visit MDA website at [www.dietitian.org](http://www.dietitian.org) for the post-event materials. Meanwhile, we are also in the midst of preparing for next conference. So would you kindly MARK YOUR CALENDAR for 21st MDA National Conference and Annual General Meeting! It will be held on 11-12 June 2015 at the Istana Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. We wish to see you there!

\*grin\*

Lastly, from all of us in the Malaysian Dietitians' Association, best wishes for a Happy Holiday Season and a Prosperous New Year 2015!

With best regards,  
Ng Kar Foo & Wu Meishia



Mr. Ng Kar Foo



Ms. Jennifer Wu Meishia

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## Final Year Dietetic Undergraduate at the Universiti Putra Malaysia

By Shamini A/P Chadrasee Kharan

**1 What do you enjoy the most as a dietetic student?** First of all, my interest in science and nutrition leads me to pursue dietetics. I found myself enjoy the most as dietetic student when handled the food experiment by knowing the chemical reactions of the food. The knowledge about the food and diseases, through food or beverages which allowed me to do unique modification in processing of food without altered the taste and gave nutritious healthy lifestyle. Besides, I enjoyed and felt grateful when patient satisfied with my suggestions in improving their quality of life.

**2 What is the biggest challenge in studying dietetics? How did you overcome it?** In my opinion, the biggest challenge in studying dietetics is that it needs a lot of memorizing. Therefore, small notes should be prepared and brought along always for quick references. Sometimes, dietitian is so called 'food bank' by public. Thus, it is a challenge for dietetics students to discover and try a lot of different food from different races and cultures. Moreover, it is a must for dietetics students to update with current dietetic practices such as keeping on updating myself with all latest researches and conferences. With the evidence based practices, all the information provided by dietitians are trustworthy. Furthermore, the other challenge is dietetic students should equip themselves with current medical and pharmacy knowledge by surfing and searching information in connection with dietetics (with reliable source). Last but not least, dietetic students must be able to communicate with patients with confidence. Role-playing with friends is my way to build self-confident and communication skill.

**3 Share with us one or two things (characters, attitudes, resources, mentorship etc) that you think a dietetic student should possess in order to get through the dietetic programme.** As a dietetic student, he or she should be able to make logic judgments that relevant to dietetic. Moreover, a dietetic student must be good in communication and build rapport with other healthcare professionals and patients. Professionalism should be implemented in the career. A dietetic student must oblige in self-confident and be patient and caring. The most important thing, a dietetic student must be a good listener and good in calculation.

**4 Tell us about how you get benefited from joining MDA.** After joining MDA, I can own MNT guidelines for free. Apart from that, there are many good articles and research papers available in MDA websites. From joining MDA, I am aware of any events, talks and conferences about dietetic and nutrition. Lastly, I always get to know more about dietitian from joining MDA.

## Foodservice Dietitian at Pantai Klang Specialist Medical Centre

By Farah Farhanah Hashim  
Bachelor of Dietetics (Hons.), IIUM

**1 Share with us briefly your journey to dietetics.** Whenever I am asked why I chose dietetic course in my first year, the first thing that always crosses my mind is - to serve the community. In Islam, we call it as *Fardhu Kifayah*. Then the second is- I want to learn how to cook, especially as a female. Lastly, my experience in joining some of the volunteering programmes and societies has further reinforced my passion to be a dietitian. I was elected as one of the council members of the IIUM Dietetics Students' Society during my first year and as the General Secretary of Allied Health Science Students' Society during my final year in IIUM.

**2 Tell us a little bit about your current job (routines, job responsibilities etc.)** Currently, I am working as a foodservice dietitian at Pantai Klang Specialist Medical Centre. My daily routine is to assist outlet manager (OM) in charge of overall management of outlet operation. At the meantime, as the head of department of Patient Service Department, I am responsible to lead the department and manage my staffs with assistance of the supervisor. My responsibilities included menu planning, food and beverage cost budgeting, diet therapy management, food quality, as well as patient services. Also, as a foodservice dietitian, I work very closely with the clinical dietitian to ensure our patients and staffs receive the best dietary services from us. From time to time, we also conduct food testing with the assessors from and beyond the department to strive for quality improvement.

Let's Talk



**3 What are the one or two things (characters, attitudes, resources, skills, etc) that you think you should have acquired during college years in order to equip you to fit into current position?** First and foremost, leadership is very important because I am working with people from different level of education, age and background. Besides, I urge myself to be creative and innovative especially when planning a new menu - by taking food costing, preparation time, food and culture preferences, equipment and ingredients availability into consideration. Team work is equally important for me as it involves my whole team to ensure the operation a success. Being proactive and multi-tasking are inevitable - this is where I practice all my skills acquired during my university life.

**4 Tell us how you get benefited from joining MDA.** Through MDA, I am able to access to latest news and journals related to nutrition and dietetics, as well as the Evidence Analysis Library. In addition, I get to know on firsthand about the job vacancy! Also, as a member of MDA, not only am I entitled for special rate to participate in national conferences and other professional events, but I also got to volunteer in so many programmes planned out throughout the year. Lastly, I get to broaden my network by getting to know other dietitians and healthcare professionals ever since I have joined MDA.

## Lecturer and Dietitian at the International Medical University

By Yang Wai Yew  
PhD Candidate (University of Newcastle, Australia), MMedSc (Human Nutrition)  
(University of Sheffield, UK), BSc (Dietetics) (UKM)

**1 Tell us a little bit about your work experience and career path.** Shortly after graduating from UKM, I started as a clinical dietitian at Sunway Medical Centre, which I took a year off to pursue my Master's degree in UK and then promoted as the Head of Department. I joined International Medical University (IMU) as a junior lecturer in year 2010 then started my PhD part-time with University of Newcastle (UoN), Australia. Besides lecturing, I hold the Programme Coordinator position for three years. The call for evidence-based practice in healthcare has highly influenced my evolvement from a clinician to an academician undertaking postgraduate research.

**2 Share with us about one of your achievement that you are most proud of and why.** There are many achievements to be proud of, and the most recent is the Nestle Nutrition Institute Young Researcher Award 2014. It has been a challenging journey so the award is indeed a true blessing and recognition of my PhD work together with my team of supervisors from UoN and IMU.

**3 What is the biggest challenge of being a dietitian in your field? How did you overcome it?** I find there is an overall lack of recognition of dietitian's role in patient care besides various gaps on research literature available on local setting. While I was working at the hospital, we continuously promote multi-disciplinary approach in disease management and engaged actively in nutrition education/promotion activities. At present, the PhD processes allow me to learn essential skills in producing high quality research and hopefully in future, be able to contribute to the wealth of evidence-based information and make them readily available.

**4 What advice would you give to dietitians who are interested to venture into your field?** "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step" - Lao Tzu. If you have great passion in nutrition and dietetics and would like to contribute to its evolution, you need to stay focus and persevere once you embark on your journey. With the right attitude, it is worthy to "bloom where you're planted" (Mary Engelbreit).

**5 Tell us how you get benefited from joining MDA.** As MDA member, I benefited from attending the numerous CPDs organised by MDA since my student days. I also served as Treasurer in the MDA Council from 2007-2011, hence had a lot of exposure and gained valuable experience working within and outside of MDA.



# THE UNTOLD TRUTH: UP TO 60% CALCIUM INTAKE MAY NOT BE ABSORBED

Not all calcium consumed is absorbed once it enters our gut. Research has shown that up to 60% of our calcium intake may not be absorbed<sup>1-4</sup>. A person's ability to absorb calcium is dependent on a variety of factors. Calcium leaves our body mainly in urine and faeces, but also in other body tissues and fluids such as sweat (Please refer Figure 1 for illustration).

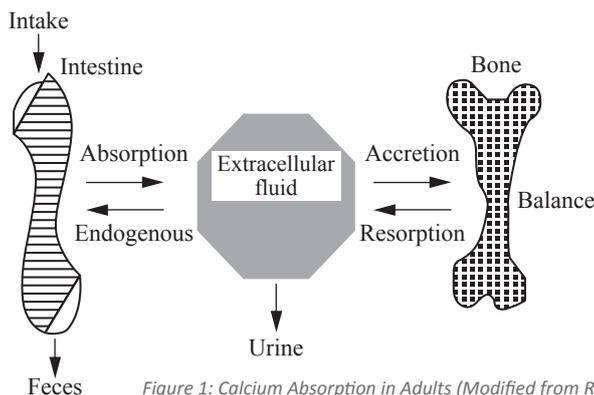


Figure 1: Calcium Absorption in Adults (Modified from Ref. no.5)

## WHAT ARE THE FACTORS AFFECTING CALCIUM ABSORPTION?

Calcium absorption can be affected by the following-

### a) Factors that hinder or reduce calcium absorption

#### ● Physiological changes (aging)

Calcium absorption efficiency varies through the lifespan. It is highest (about 60%) in infancy but has been reported to decline with aging and after menopause<sup>6</sup>. Research has shown that absorptive efficiency of calcium decreased with age over 40 years old at a rate of 0.21% per year<sup>7</sup>. In addition, it is reported that aging could reduce the capacity to synthesis pre-vitamin D by twofold<sup>8</sup>. As a result, less vitamin D can be produced and hence reduces the absorption of calcium by our body.

#### ● Presence of dietary inhibitors

Dietary inhibitors such as phytate (can be found in cereal husks, seeds and dried beans) and oxalate (can be found in rhubarb or spinach) could hinder the absorption of calcium<sup>9</sup>. These compounds can bind to calcium that is present in the food they are in (e.g. spinach), and prevent it from being absorbed. However, they do not interfere with calcium absorption from other calcium containing food that is taken at the same time.

#### ● Excessive intake of caffeinated drinks or alcohol

Coffee and tea contains caffeine that may reduce calcium absorption. In addition, excessive alcohol intake may affect calcium absorption by inhibiting enzymes in the liver that helps to convert vitamin D to its active form<sup>10</sup>. This could mean that there would be a lack of vitamin D to help with calcium absorption, hence may affect bone health. Hence, as a rule of thumb, we should limit our caffeinated drink to not more than two cups a day and not more than two units of alcoholic drink daily.

(Note: One unit of alcohol is equivalent to 250ml beer/ 180ml wine/ 25ml spirit)

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### b) Factors that enhance calcium absorption

#### ● Presence of vitamin D

Vitamin D is an essential nutrient that helps with calcium absorption. It could be found naturally in a limited food sources such as oily fish (tuna, salmon, herring, cat fish, mackerel etc), egg yolk and liver. Hence, consuming food sources that are being fortified with vitamin D such as milk is important to meet our daily vitamin D needs.

#### ● Presence of a unique prebiotic dietary fiber: FOS-Inulin

FOS-Inulin is clinically tested to help increase calcium absorption and bone mineral density when taken with calcium rich food.

Find out more information about the benefits of this unique prebiotic dietary fiber, please continue to the next section!

## UNLOCKING THE SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGH ON THE PROVEN BENEFITS OF A UNIQUE PREBIOTIC DIETARY FIBER FOR BONE HEALTH

To maintain good bone health, it is universally accepted that taking a diet rich in calcium such as from milk is an important aspect of our daily life. Apart from increasing daily calcium intake, new emerging science and technology has focussed on optimizing the absorption and utilization of calcium by our body, to help maintain strong bones.

In this context, FOS-Inulin, which is a unique prebiotic dietary fiber (with a unique combination of short chain and long chain inulin fractions), is now known as a functional ingredient that has been clinically tested to help increase the absorption of calcium from the diet, and to increase bone mineral density. Both animal studies and human clinical studies<sup>11-14</sup> (in various age group including adolescent & postmenopausal women) have reported an increase in calcium absorption with the consumption of FOS-Inulin.

In some studies, they also assessed the effects of FOS-Inulin consumption on bone health parameters such as bone biomarkers (such as bone breakdown markers or bone building markers) and bone mineral density.



With this scientific breakthrough, milk is now fortified with this unique functional ingredient which will help to maintain bone health. So, now you can get more bone-friendly benefits with milk, i.e. you can increase your daily calcium intake and increase your calcium absorption for strong bones.

The efficacy of this fortified milk has been studied in a recent clinical trial (randomized controlled trial) that involved Malaysian premenopausal & postmenopausal women. Based on preliminary first three months' results, it was found that milk fortified with calcium, vitamin D, magnesium, zinc and FOS-Inulin is measurably more effective in reducing bone breakdown in premenopausal & postmenopausal women, compared to regular milk<sup>15</sup>.

Find out more about the only high calcium milk fortified with FOS-Inulin from [www.anlene.com.my](http://www.anlene.com.my) and 'like' **Anlene Malaysia** FB Fanpage for useful daily movement tips to help maintain strong bones!

Should you be interested to know more about the efficacy of milk fortified with FOS-Inulin, please look out for the next issue!

This article is contributed by **Fonterra Brands Sdn. Bhd.**

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\*FOS-Inulin is clinically tested to help increase calcium absorption and bone mineral density (when taken with calcium rich food), hence, it helps to increase bone strength.



## SAILING THROUGH THE BOUNDARIES-FROM CLINICAL, FOODSERVICE, COMMUNITY TO, NOW, ACADEMIC & RESEARCH

I did my first degree in Biomedical Sciences at *Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)*, which exposed me to my first research experience. My fellow course mates subsequently sought employment or stayed on to pursue their Masters'; I choose a position as a Research Assistant in UPM, in order to broaden my work experience while I was doing my Master's degree. Despite having obtained a postgraduate scholarship locally, I was unable to carry out my planned research as my supervisor at that time was unable to secure a grant for the project. Viewing this as 'every cloud has a silver lining', this situation led me to pursuing a Postgraduate Degree in Dietetics at Flinders University, South Australia

After 2 years, I returned home with a Dietetics degree, eager to practise. However, there were only limited, entry-level dietetic positions available at that time with priority given to local graduates. Undeterred, I accepted a job offer as a Nursing College lecturer and joined the Malaysian Dietitians Association (MDA) as a Member in 2005. This was a platform for me to network with fellow dietitians. Additionally, I attended seminars and volunteered in community projects/road shows organised by the MDA to maintain my practical skills. Shortly afterwards, I was offered a position as a Clinical and Food Service Dietitian at *Hospital Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (HUKM)* in 2005.

While I was working in HUKM, I gained valuable experience through consultations with both inpatient and outpatients. I collaborated with other departments to plan and conduct nutritional programs within the hospital, and also audited the Food Service department. During this time I acquired a professional mentor, who continues to guide me unto this day; she has helped to steer me through some difficult decisions I've had to make, and always encouraged me to progress my career.

Despite my job satisfaction, due to financial commitments I decided to seek employment abroad; I departed for Saudi Arabia in 2007. Leaving my comfort zone was never easy, but within 6 months I began to focus more on my goals and enjoyed life to the full. I found the overall working experience to be most fulfilling, working with a team of dedicated and highly professional dietitians. Despite my initial homesickness and introduction to life in a restricted environment, support and mentoring from my friends and colleagues was a great source of strength to me. We often went out to socialise after work for a catch-up, which helped us to motivate each other after a rough day. Despite coming from differing backgrounds and cultures, we got along well and gelled effectively as a team. During weekends, we would usually go Hashing (Hash House Harriers), either running or taking a long walk in remote desert locations.

By my 4th year in Saudi, I was one of the Senior Dietitians at a military hospital covering ICU, surgical wards, business and royal suites. I was also the internship co-ordinator managing student placement. Despite having a heavy workload, I always remained motivated. My colleagues and I often discussed complicated cases, and we organised journal club every week to ensure that we kept our practice up to date. Besides this, I had opportunities to attend conferences locally and abroad.

Amongst the challenging factors of my work was the language barrier with patients, and understanding their cultures as most of them were Bedouins of nomadic desert background. However, I overcame these obstacles with the help of interpreters, and learning basic conversational Arabic. This proved extremely useful, especially in an outpatient setting.

However, despite the enjoyable, comfortable expat lifestyle, Saudi is where I started focussing more on my personal development. I had time to consider options for the future, as I was aware that I needed something more fulfilling career-wise despite enjoyment of my current position.

At the end of my 4th year, I decided upon a change of environment. I had a strong desire to focus on Community Dietetics and left for Auckland, New

Taken at my boss's farewell, in Saudi and that was my 4th year working at the Clinical Dietetic Department, National Guard Health Affairs Jeddah.



Photograph was taken in Auckland, New Zealand, another leaving do for my boss. We are a group of Community Dietitians, attached to Home Health Care, Counties Manakau District Health Board.



Photograph was taken in Rangitoto, in Auckland, when I went bird watching.

Zealand. Here I worked for a Home Health Care Department, providing nutrition support for malnourished elderly patients and those requiring home enteral nutrition. It was quite a demanding job, necessitating strong organisational skills in order for me to meet my workload; there was little managerial support as practitioners were based in different locations. Being a team player was essential to best address patient care; I often liaised with our multi-disciplinary team to manage my clients. I was fortunate enough to meet some wonderful patients, who often helped to make home visits pleasurable. I once had a Malaysian client who insisted on serving coffee during home visits; on my last visit prior to her being discharged from care, she even baked muffins for me!

My map reading skills certainly improved a lot during this time, as my patients were scattered all over south Auckland - some resided at least 40 km away from the base. I confess that I did get lost a few times, but things improved eventually thanks to GPS.

I also made some really good friends over there, travelling around the country as much as I could and visiting some amazingly scenic places in both North and South Island.

Although I have always been passionate about being a dietitian, the need for self-improvement has been the main driver for seeking all my previous jobs. Therefore, after 7 years' experience in Clinical, Food Service and Community environments I decided to pursue a career in academics. I returned to Malaysia and gained employment at *Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)* as a temporary lecturer in 2013.

For 12 months I taught students Dietetics and Nutrition, before being awarded a Ministry of Education scholarship to continue my PhD abroad. Currently I am a PhD candidate at University of Nottingham, UK, under the supervision of a renowned Gastroenterologist. Equally, my co-supervisor is a leading Dietitian and Academician in Functional Bowel Disease and IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome). My current research project involves analysing FODMAPs (Fermentable Oligo-, Di-, Mono-saccharides and Polyols) in the UK diet and assessment of their effect on gastrointestinal function.

I am the only dietitian amongst the Gastroenterologist team in my department. However, this has not been a negative experience as my supervisor and co-researchers are very supportive and empathetic. They consult me when dietetic expertise is needed, especially when designing our dietetic studies. I have to be strictly disciplined with my time, setting targets to achieve what I have planned for each week. Research requires considerable effort, including working at weekends; however, the results are highly rewarding. I have been running two studies, both of which are randomised controlled trials. One of the trials was recently completed - we were very successful in recruiting the optimum number of subjects needed.

Dietetics is a growing discipline, with so much interest in the areas of food and nutrition. As a profession, there is much we could do to improve our status in Malaysia. If you are keen to become involved in research, there should be a good number of opportunities available out there for you.

Contributed by **Shanthi Krishnasamy**,  
Lecturer & Dietitian,  
Dietetic Department,  
School of Healthcare Sciences,  
Faculty of Health Sciences,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.



Malaysia



Study shows that the amount of carbohydrate recommended by Malaysian dietitians was higher than that in established guidelines

Source: A.S. Farhanah, M.D. Fatin Nasirah, M.Y. Barakatun Nisak, M.I. Nor Azlin and M.S. Zalilah. *Current Dietetic Practices in the Management of Gestational Diabetes Mellitus: A Survey of Malaysian Dietitians. Asian Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 2014;6(3): 67-74.



Prevalence of overweight / obesity among Malaysian adolescent is Alarming - it attacks 1 in every 4 adolescents

Source: Hazreen M, Su T, Jalaludin M, Dahlui M, Chinna K, Ismail M, Murray L, Cantwell M, Sadat N; MyHeART Study Group. *An exploratory study on risk factors for chronic non-communicable diseases among adolescents in Malaysia: overview of the Malaysian Health and Adolescents Longitudinal Research Team study (The MyHeART study). BMC Public Health. 2014;14 Suppl 3:S6.*

Energy misreporting is common amongst Malay children in which under-reporters are more than over-reporters

Source: Yang WY, Burrows T, Collins CE, MacDonald-Wicks L, Williams LT, Chee WS. *Prevalence of energy intake misreporting in malay children varies based on application of different cut points. J Trop Pediatr. 2014;60(6):472-5.*



International



A set of Nutrition and Metabolic Support Recommendations was drafted by a group of dietitians and a medical specialist to address the unique needs of the bariatric population

Source: Isom KA, Andromalos L, Ariagno M, Hartman K, Mogensen KM, Stephanides K, Shikora S. *Nutrition and Metabolic Support Recommendations for the Bariatric Patient. Nutr Clin Pract. 2014;29(6):718-739*



Electronic Nutrition Care Process and Terminology (eNCPT) - Featuring international language translations, updated terminologies and a more user-friendly interface with accessibility through smart-phones or tablet

Source: eNCPT. Retrieved December 21, 2014, from <http://ncpt.webauthor.com/>



Dose-response analyses indicate that 1 serving/day increment of fruit intake and 0.2 serving/day increment of green leafy vegetable intake reduced 6% and 13% risk of type 2 diabetes respectively

Source: Li M, Fan Y, Zhang X, Hou W, Tang Z. *Fruit and vegetable and risk of type 2 diabetes mellitus: meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies. BMJ Open. 2014;4(11):e005497*

The AND and ASPEN have recommended a basic set of indicators that can be used to diagnose and document undernutrition in the pediatric population (ages 1 month to 18 years)



Source: Becker P, Carney LN, Corkins MR, Monczka J, Smith E, Smith SE, Spear BA, White JV; Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition. *Consensus Statement of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics/American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition: Indicators Recommended for the Identification and Documentation of Pediatric Malnutrition (Undernutrition). J Acad Nutr Diet. 2014;114(12):1988-2000*



Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition® (PEN®) - An International Collaboration between the Dietitians of Canada, British Dietetic Association and Dietitians Association of Australia contributing to this evidence-based, peer-reviewed resource for dietitians to better translate research into practice

Source: PEN - Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition. Retrieved December 21, 2014, from <http://www.pennutrition.com/>

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# Use of Social Media in Public Education

*Hey, that's a funny post you shared on Facebook!"*

*"Oh wow! Joanne is getting married! Photos of her proposal are all over Instagram!"*

**W**ith the fast blooming technology and the usage of smartphones, tablets and etc. that has gone viral, the Internet has taken a social life of its own. Dietitians nowadays can no longer ignore the huge platform that the social media has to offer for educating the public.

Social media is best known as websites and applications that permit users to create and share information or to participate in social networking. This platform takes on a variety of forms which include internet forums, photographs or picture sharing, blogging, wikis, social network, v-logs and many more.

As the era evolves, information and knowledge are vastly spread across such portals. It is instant, free and available all day long. We couldn't deny the fact that people nowadays feed more on graphical information and animation. With the strategically plotted storyline, the public seems to be more open and receptive to healthy eating advices shared via social media spaces.

The key to achieve this is: **K.I.S.S (Keep It Short and Simple)**

These wide coverage portals cater opportunities to dietitians to catalyze the change in dietary and lifestyle behavior of the public. The informative piece is best kept brief, comprehensive, catchy and fun so that it glues to their mind.

Now, let us take a better look at how social media can marry into our conventional method of providing public health education:

**Communication:** Enriching the gaps in conventional idea sharing and exchange of knowledge which is often time-bounded and regionally restricted; the all-time available portal provides the convenience to outreach people from all walks of life to be engaged with the essentials of healthy

eating. Information could be uploaded on social network websites or apps in the form of pictures, quotes or videos to share nutrition tips, recent findings and event information regarding latest health campaign and all sorts. Focus group discussion can be created as well.

**Public Relations:** Due to the lack of awareness, part of the community is still very much contemplated to seek direct dietary advices from dietitians. Hence, the use of Facebook, Twitter or blogs helps to redirect positive and evidence based information to the public. While highlighting the accomplishments and benefits of successful dietary and lifestyle transformation, the public do get more involved and stand a higher chance to change their misperception of seeing a dietitian. It also serves as a friendly reminder that is not as pesky via conventional phone calls for people to take charge of their own health. (Use of social media portals to encourage follow up among clients)

**Branding:** Helps to create an image and setting a trend that healthy eating is the way of life. People go for cafe hopping and share their joy on social media, hash tagging their activities and events to make social presence. Through the power of branding, dietitians can also help nurture a more positive and supportive community that are pro-nutrition. Allowing people to change conception that healthy eating is the IN thing, something worth celebrating and looking forward to. As well as establishing virtual presence to market the presence of the dietetic profession. We don't function as food police. Well, you don't get summons if you eat the wrong choice of food but rather the reliable source when you need someone to talk to about healthy food options.

Some dietitians do say that making statements online is a risky business and are reluctant to ride the cyber wave. However, it has becoming increasingly apparent that good communication and with ethics exercised into the social media madness actually grants success in educating the public.

Here's how to carry an identity online built on integrity so that you can share, tweet or blog about nutrition messages and have a sound influence in the dietetics social media space.

## 9 Tips for Effective Social Media Communication

1. **Uphold integrity.** Post statements online as if you're making them face to face.
2. **Be authentic.** Always state your identity and who you represent when posting online.
3. **Remain civil.** If you disagree with a post, be open and respectfully disagree while acknowledging different opinions. Learn to appreciate diverse viewpoints.
4. **Privacy & Confidentiality Matters.** People enjoy reading something more personal so that they can relate better. However, do bear in mind that it's not appropriate to divulge sensitive patient information or discuss clients in a way that violates their privacy.
5. **Take Precautions.** Always safeguard personal information, and remember that once information is posted online it stays online.
6. **Show Professionalism.** Don't mix personal and professional online presence. Always remain ethical, be cognizant that behaviour online affects the reputation of individuals, employers, and organizations as well as the profession as a whole. If you made a mistake by posting a false remark, honestly acknowledge it to maintain your professional credibility.
7. **Value Originality.** Avoid posting trademarked or copyrighted content or intellectual property. Disclose your material connection by citing the source of your information and ideas.
8. **Scrutinize Your Online Presence.** Monitor your virtual identity on regular basis to ensure your information is accurate and credible and reaches your intended audience consistently. Be patient, sometimes it takes a bit longer to make yourself heard.
9. **Develop your own style.** Choose a social media portal (or two) that fits your online style (Guide is provided in the next page) and the context of your messages. Allow your personality to shine through your context.

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# CHOOSING YOUR BEST FIT | A GUIDE TO PICK YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM

Platform	Description	Uses & Benefits	Tips
 Facebook	An account where you can share links, events, thoughts and updates with your circle of friends or followers. An auto updated newsfeed that allows you to keep track of the friends and pages you've "liked". • 1317 million active users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows genuine interaction with individuals by engaging and participating in online discussion via private messages or comments.</li> <li>Able to connect you and your community, local &amp; online.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a business page separate from personal page, to protect privacy as well as to brand yourself in ethical manner.</li> <li>Actively interact with your audience by following-up regularly on comments posted.</li> </ul>
 Instagram	An image and video sharing application and website. • 200 million active users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay connected with your followers on a visual level. (Good for sharing healthy recipes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in interaction by commenting on photos.</li> <li>Consider to disclose "behind-the-scenes" images of your work to connect on a personal level.</li> <li>Integrate sync with Facebook and Twitter accounts to ease image sharing.</li> </ul>
 Twitter	Micro-blogging platform that permits users to post and read text-based messages of up to 140 characters, known as "tweets". • 271 million active users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connecting you to more of your community, local &amp; online.</li> <li>Gather industry information.</li> <li>Good to provide simple tips, links and updates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-tweet interesting context.</li> <li>Build followers through following.</li> <li>Be intentional and consistent with the content you post to enhance your brand and establish credibility.</li> </ul>
 Blogs	A personal web log. You can choose from Blogger, Tumblr or WordPress or a blog integrated into your site in another manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A plus point from usual website, blogs are updated and added on new context which attracts attention of viewers via search engines</li> <li>Establish yourself as an expert, create followers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be precise on your niche market and targeted audience.</li> <li>Liability issues to consider when providing health advices.</li> <li>Practice on writing before you start a blog. Check if you can provide contents periodically.</li> </ul>

— Adapted from the Utah Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (2014)

**In conclusion, the shift of medium for information sharing opens up more opportunity for dietitians to reach out to the community. Be bold and creative in creating a sound virtual identity in communicating nutrition messages but not forgetting to remain ethical and careful to uphold our profession.**

Contributed by **Ng Zhii Yee**  
 Dietitian from National Heart Institute (IIN) Malaysia

## Dietitian In Action

### "Malnutrition in the Fat and Skinny" #Nutritionweek2014 at the Sunway Medical Center

Dietetics and Nutrition Services (DNS) of Sunway Medical Center (SunMed) celebrated #Nutritionweek2014 with a series of activities from June 9th to 13th, a culture started in year 2012. This year, "Malnutrition in the Fat and Skinny" was the carefully chosen theme as DNS continues to emphasize the importance of healthy eating and lifestyle.



The organizing committee of Nutrition Week 2014 planned the whole week program for all walks of lives and all age groups. For growing up children, a series of fun and educational activities including food art workshop and LEAN club cooking demo and physical exercise for overweight children brought up the awareness towards malnutrition among younger member of the community.

The nutrition intervention among the critically ill patients was highlighted on the other days of this value-adding nutrition week. The team of dietitians prepared high protein, high energy recipes suitable for patients recovering from a surgery, cancer treatment or disabling stroke. Visitors who tasted the recipe were pleasantly surprised how a therapeutic food can be so tasty while nourishing.

SunMed dietetics also invited their peer from the government and private sectors for an educational program. The host invited speakers Mr Tikfu Gee, head of General Surgery Unit of UPM as well as SunMed very own general surgeon, Dr Ramesh and senior dietitian, Ms Saw Bee Suan for a well planned afternoon sharing. The event attracted over 80 participants from various health care institutions. The program served as a launching pad for collaboration among health care professionals to have more intellectual sharing for improvement in patient care and nutrition.

Nutrition Week 2014 continued to achieve its objectives in creating awareness of the importance of nutrition and dietetics services to the patients, doctors and communities it serves.

By **Ng Yee Voon**

Senior Dietitian, Dietetics and Nutrition Services of Sunway Medical Center

### Activities To Tackle Malnutrition Among Doctors & Practicing Dietitians



▶ The chairperson of Nutrition Week 2014 and CME 2014, Ms Ng Yee Voon, Senior Dietitian, in her speech encouraged more sharing of practices among dietitians in the private and government sectors to be conducted frequently, initiated by individual institutions to collaborate dietitians' effort to help our patients in Malaysia.

◀ The continuous medical education (CME) program for doctors and dietitians entitled "Nutrition Intervention for critically ill patients, the importance and the practicality" was launched by the CEO of Sunway Medical Center Mdm Tan Suet Guan.



▲ Senior Dietitian of Sunway Medical Center shared the enteral nutrition practice guidelines used in critically ill patients with the audience.



▲ Invited speaker, Mr Tikfu Gee, shared his view on the effectiveness and importance of nutrition intervention for patients.

▶ Opportunities for interactions among dietitians of various hospitals from the private sectors and government sectors arise in various occasions during nutrition week 2014.

▼ **Activities To Tackle Malnutrition Among The Public**  
 Dietitians coordinating nutrition and physical activities with the rehabilitation team and food service staff to encourage active lifestyle and healthy eating among the children.



## 6th Asian Congress of Dietetics Taipei Taiwan, August 21 – 24, 2014

With the theme 'Advancing health through innovating dietetic practice across Asia', the 6th Asian Congress of Dietetics which was held in Taipei, Taiwan from 21st August to 24th August 2014 was what delegates would call as a fulfilling congress. It was organized by the Asian Federation of Dietetic Associations (AFDA). There were about 1000 participants from more than 20 countries, including 14 from Asia.

The keynote speech on the innovation of dietetic practice in Asia kick-started the congress. Many interesting topics were lined up for the delegates for the plenary lectures, workshops and symposium which covered ranges of topics from food service area, nutrition support in critical care, emergency nutrition, nutrition care process and evolution of

dietitian education and accreditation in Asia. Not only that, students from different universities of different countries shared their experiences and insights on their international mobility attachment.

Delegates were also able to participate and mingle during a few social events organized by the organizer. One of them was the Asian Taipei Night (Gala dinner) where it became a great platform for delegates from different countries to bond. The highlight of the dinner was the performances by the delegates from a few countries including Australia, Philippines and Taiwan. Each country showcased their cultural performances.

At the closing ceremony, the Taipei Declaration was signed by council members and AFDA flag was passed over to the next host of 7th ACD which is Hong Kong.



All in all, the most excited and significant moment was that Malaysian Dietitians' Association (MDA) got elected as the Secretary of AFDA 2014 - 2018. MDA has now taken one step further to lead the profession beyond national level!

By **Jamilah Abdul Jamil**

*Dietitian & Lecturer, International Medical University*

## GETTING INVOLVED IN THE DATA DIMENSION'S WELLNESS DAY

On the 18th September 2014, four dietitians i.e. Georgen Thye, Tania Lee, Melissa Lee and Ng Kar Foo represented Malaysian Dietitians Association (MDA) to participate in a corporate wellness program organized by the Data Dimension (M) Sdn. Bhd. The company is an international corporate that provides ICT services and solutions. The aim of the wellness program is to promote health and wellness through positive lifestyle.

We demonstrated cooking healthy recipes like Mediterranean Hummus, Vegetarian Stir-fry Thai Noodles and Banana Split Parfait. Recipes with nutrition content and health benefits were distributed to the employees of DD Wellness. This was able to provide some ideas to prepare wholesome meals at home in a short period of time especially for employees who are being tied with hectic schedules at work.

Posters with information like sugar contents in common beverages in the mamak stalls and prevention steps of hypertension. This was to enlighten the employees on the prevention steps to non-communicable diseases like diabetes, hypertension and dyslipidemia.

Apart from cooking demonstration, Ng Kar Foo, a dietitian in the International Medical University presented a nutrition talk on how to keep heart healthy through lifestyle modification. By intertwining with Q&A, audiences were actively involved and stayed interactive throughout the talk.

In a nut shell, the role of dietitians to educate the society on dietary knowledge and practices can be contributed in many ways; be it in healthcare, education, community and others. With so, together as dietitians, we can make a difference.

By **Melissa Lee Ern Yee**

*Dietitian in education segment, Sodexo Malaysia Sdn. Bhd.*



## Nutrition Talk at the Western Digital

On behalf of Malaysians Dietitians' Association (MDA), Aaron Ang and Georgen Thye organised a talk regarding healthy grocery shopping, to the employees in the Western Digital Sdn. Bhd., Petaling Jaya on 15th October 2014. The theme of the talk was named "Healthy eating starts with healthy grocery shopping". It was part of Western Digital's continuous personal development program for their employees. There were about 100 enthusiastic participants and it took place over a luncheon.

One of the MDA's initiatives is to reach out to the community. The opportunity to share with the public regarding healthy grocery shopping is to create awareness about the importance of healthy living. Why healthy grocery shopping was chosen among all the health topics? We understand that food availability has a very crucial role to play in influencing one's eating and dietary habits. We wish to create a positive connection between healthy grocery shopping and healthy eating.

The discussion was mainly focused on the urban supermarkets and hypermarkets. Few important points were included in the session about:

- The psychology behind the layout of the supermarket,
- The goods arrangement on the shelves in stimulating buying behavior,
- Tips to prevent unnecessary spending in the supermarket,
- How to plan our shopping in advanced, and
- Label reading.

The talk ended with a hands-on activity. The participants were given two similar food products and were asked to make comparisons by reading their nutrition labels. Most of them were able to precisely comment on the nutrition value of the food items, after reading the labels. The participants really enjoyed and appreciated the session. It was a fruitful effort to broaden their knowledge on healthy living.

By **Georgen Thye**

*Clinical Dietitian, Institut Jantung Negara (IJN)*



## An Evening Talk by Prof Anthony R. Leeds "Formula Diets for Weight Loss, Maintenance and Health Improvement"

On the 23rd of October this year, MDA had the privilege of having Professor Anthony R. Leeds from UK to present a scientific update concerning on formula diets for weight loss, maintenance and health improvement. 71 participants including practising dietitians, nutritionists and dietetic students have attended the talk. The talk was held in Medical Academies of Malaysia, Jalan Tun Razak, Kuala Lumpur. This successful event was sponsored by Cambridge Weight Plan.

Obesity prevalence is on the rise and it is our responsibility as dietitians and nutritionists to ensure we play a part in the reduction process of the prevalence of obesity and obesity related diseases. Through this talk, Prof Leeds shared with the participants on a number of clinical trials showing how effective a very low calorie diet (VLCD about 400kcal) and low calorie diet (LCD about 800kcal) through liquid formula diet are in promoting and maintaining weight loss as well as improving certain medical conditions such as sleep apnea and osteoarthritis.

Although it lasted about an hour, the participants truly gained a lot from Prof Leeds' talk. Prof Leeds had demonstrated that using liquid formula diet in weight and disease management is no longer a fiction. Instead it could be an effective approach for certain groups of individuals. For those who missed this talk, the presentation material of the talk will be posted at the MDA official website soon. Stay tuned!

By **Joan Isabel**

*Dietitian from PPUM dietitian as well as MDA CPD sub-committee member*

## Upcoming Events

26 - 29 January 2015 (Monday - Thursday)  
**9th Asia Pacific Conference on  
Clinical Nutrition 2015**  
@ Shangri-La Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

27 - 29 March 2015 (Friday - Sunday)  
**7th Diabetes Complications Conference &  
Grand Rounds 2015**  
@ Istana Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

10 June 2015 (Wednesday)  
**Pre-Congress Workshop on  
Nutrition Care Process Terminologies**  
@ Medical Academies of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

11 - 12 June 2015 (Thursday - Friday)  
**21st Malaysian Dietitians' Association  
National Conference & Annual General Meeting**  
@ Istana Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Stay tuned at the MDA website and Facebook  
closed group page for all updates in events!



## Announcement

### 1. MDA Membership is Getting BETTER - New Subscription to eNCPT and PEN®

We are glad to inform you that MDA is in the mid of processing the subscription to eNCPT (electronic Nutrition Care Process and Terminology) and PEN® (Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition). These reliable and up-to-date resources have already been vastly used by overseas dietitians. Now MDA is going to introduce them to you as a toolkit for your dietetic practice and personal development. You can get to know more about these resources at the section of 'What's New' (page 7) in this newsletter. In order to get access to these resources, make sure that your membership status is always active. Stay tuned at the MDA website and Facebook closed group page for updates!

### 2. Soft-launch of the New MDA's Official Website ([www.dietitians.org.my](http://www.dietitians.org.my))

To further optimise user-friendliness and system processing capacity of the website, we would like to introduce to you the website with a brand new look. The IT, Web and Resource Committee is working hard together with the MDA's Council Members and website programmers to provide a better platform for you as a MDA member for communication and resources for dietetic practice and personal development. If you have not visited the MDA website, do it now! Should you have any suggestion or feedback, do not hesitate to drop an email to the working committee at [technical@dietitians.org.my](mailto:technical@dietitians.org.my)

### 3. Block your calendar for the upcoming MDA National Conference, AGM and Pre-Congress Workshop

The 21st MDA National Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2015 are going to be held on 11-12 June 2015 in the Istana Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. Not to forget- there is also a Pre-Congress Workshop on Nutrition Care Process Terminologies (NCPT). It will be organized and held on the day before the national conference i.e. 10th June 2015, in the Medical Academies of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur. These two events are planned to address several contemporary topics in food, nutrition and dietetics. Many prestigious speakers from Malaysia and Overseas will be invited to shed light on some of the topics. Aren't they interesting? Mark your diary now and get yourself stay up-to-date with current science and practice. Visit the MDA website for details.

### 4. Reminder on Membership Renewal and Upgrade

We would like to remind all MDA members to remit payment for your 2014/2015 membership dues. If you have newly graduated, you are advised to upgrade your membership from student to ordinary membership. Please do the necessary to maintain your membership in order to ensure that you continue to receive all of the benefits of membership with the Malaysian Dietitians' Association, including special rate for our annual national conference and seminars.

Those transactions are easy. You can simply log in to the MDA website and click on 'Membership-Renewal' or 'Membership-Upgrade' to pay your dues online. A confirmation email will be sent to you once your payment is processed. If you have any enquiry pertaining to membership, please do not hesitate to contact MDA Honorary Secretary at [secretary@dietitians.org.my](mailto:secretary@dietitians.org.my)

### 5. Get Involved with MDA

MDA is now recruiting a pool of passionate and talented members to help move MDA forward. No matter what field you are working in, you are welcomed to join the team. If you are an active MDA member, passionate in dietetics, enthusiastic to learn, eager to make a positive change in our profession, and have special interest & experience in any of these areas: journalism, editorial work, digital design, IT, photography, film/video production, marketing, and public relation, do drop an email to Mr. Ng Kar Foo at [technical@dietitians.org.my](mailto:technical@dietitians.org.my) to explore any potential volunteering opportunities.

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