

AVISENA SPECIALIST HOSPITAL EXPANDS

Avisena Healthcare recently announced its additional medical facility at Avisena Specialist Hospital in Shah Alam. The expansion building, set to be completed and operational by 2027, will feature 275 beds, 35 sub-specialties, over 80 specialist suites, 10 operation theatres, including one hybrid operation theatre and comprehensive oncology services. The hospital is set to elevate its Centres of Excellence, encompassing fields such as cardiology, diabetes, endocrinology and metabolism, orthopaedics (trauma and spine) and ear, nose and throat. Moreover, it will become the largest comprehensive oncology hub in the Shah Alam and Klang districts by 2027. By that time, Avisena Healthcare will be able to provide 405 patient beds, 13 operation theatres and 150 medical specialists across its Shah Alam hospitals.

NEW DENGUE VACCINE AVAILABLE IN M'SIA

Takeda Malaysia recently launched Qdenga for the prevention of dengue disease among individuals aged four years and above. The vaccine is approved for use in individuals regardless of whether they have had dengue before, and without the need for pre-vaccination testing. Qdenga was approved by The Drug Control Authority Malaysia and is now available in most private hospitals and clinics across the country. Qdenga showed 80.2% overall protection against dengue after 12 months of follow-up, and 90.4% protection against hospitalised dengue after 18-months follow-up.

TREATING POSTPARTUM BLEEDING

Organon Malaysia has introduced the Jada System, designed to provide rapid control and treatment of abnormal postpartum uterine bleeding or haemorrhage to avoid severe complications from postpartum haemorrhage. This device utilises regulated low-level vacuum to induce contraction of the atonic uterus, effectively stopping bleeding within minutes.

Top five nutrition tips for women to aid healthy ageing

➤ Key nutrients and ingredients such as calcium, vitamin D, HMB and YBG can help females as they grow older

AGEING is a natural process that every woman goes through. Although the passing decades are accompanied by bodily wear and tear, good nutrition and an active lifestyle can help women mitigate declines in muscle and joint health, bone density and skin integrity.

What is healthy ageing?

The World Health Organisation defines healthy ageing as “the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables well-being in older age. In simple terms, the goal of healthy ageing is not only to live longer but also to enjoy life as much as possible in your later years.

How does ageing affect a woman's body?

At the onset of menopause, around 45 to 55 years old, muscle mass, bone mass and collagen in a woman's body start to decline rapidly — a decade or so earlier than they do for men. Women may experience any of the following bodily changes per decade:

- Joint health: Up to 20% loss of cartilage
- Bone mineral density: Up to 10% decline
- Skin health: Up to 30% loss of structural proteins
- Muscle health: Up to 8% loss of muscle mass

Research indicates that nutritional deficiency can exacerbate these declines, but eating nutritious foods and maintaining an active lifestyle can help reduce them.

Nutrition for older adults

Focus on getting adequate amounts of the following nutrients to help keep your body going strong well into your golden years:

1. HMB

HMB is produced naturally by the body from the metabolism of the amino acid, leucine obtained from foods such as dairy products, soybeans, beef and chicken. HMB works to slow muscle breakdown. One study found that HMB supplementation was an effective strategy to help preserve muscle mass in older populations. While HMB is found in some foods in trace amounts, it is hard to secure the beneficial effects of HMB through food alone. An oral nutritional supplement that includes HMB and protein can be a good way to support muscle health.

2. Protein

Protein is necessary to maintain muscle mass and reduce age-related muscle loss. As per the Recommended Nutrient Intakes for Malaysia, it is advised that a healthy adult consume 1g of protein for every kilogram of their body weight daily. It is notable, however, that some studies on lean muscle mass and strength in older adults suggest improved outcomes among those who consume more protein than the recommended daily amount. For example, one study found that people with higher protein intake were more likely to maintain physical function over the span of two decades than those with lower protein intake. This positive association was especially evident



Ageing well is possible and can foster a better quality of life and more independent living.

in women. Many older adults do not consume enough protein on a daily basis due to a lack of appetite, dental issues, altered taste buds and trouble swallowing. In addition, metvitamiabolic rates decline as you age, meaning you need fewer calories. These combined factors can reduce the quality of nutrition for older adults. You can help support your muscle health as you age by getting plenty of lean protein from poultry, fish, dairy, soy foods, beans and legumes.

3. Vitamin D

Vitamin D is a crucial nutrient for bone health, which is especially important as women age. It is one of the key nutrients for building bone, as it promotes calcium absorption. One meta-analysis found that daily vitamin D and calcium supplementation reduced the risk of hip fracture in older adults by 16%. The recommended dietary allowance (RDA) for vitamin D is 15 micrograms for women ages 51 to 65 years old and 20 micrograms for women older than 65 years old. Older adults are more likely to be deficient because ageing skin has a more difficult time making vitamin D from sunlight. They may also spend less time outdoors than younger adults and use sunscreen as recommended by healthcare professionals, which means they have less natural exposure to the vitamin. Vitamin D can be challenging to obtain through food alone. Your body makes it through sunlight, but it is also found in fortified milk and juice, egg yolks and fatty fish such as salmon and sardines.

4. Calcium

Estrogen is an essential hormone for bone remodeling — the process of new bone tissue replacing old bone tissue — and decreased estrogen levels during menopause can lead to rapid bone mineral density loss. As such, women are at

higher risk of developing osteoporosis due to these hormonal shifts. Calcium is required for muscles to function well, and it is one of the mineral building blocks that gives bones their structure and strength. The RDA for calcium for women ages 50 and older is 1,200 milligrams. Adequate calcium, along with vitamin D, is critical for long-term protection against post-menopausal bone mineral loss. Research found that higher dietary calcium intake in women 60 years and above was positively associated with increased lumbar bone mineral density compared to those with lower calcium intake. Dairy products are a good choice for calcium, but not all dairy has equal amounts of the mineral. Dairy milk, for example, usually has far more calcium than yogurt. Including foods such as dried anchovies, almonds and other nuts to your healthy eating plan may help to mitigate bone density loss associated with lowered estrogen levels.

5. YBG

YBG, or Yeast Beta-Glucan, is a type of fibre found in yeast. YBG is clinically-proven to help strengthen the immune system, and is associated with improved markers of immunity, such as higher levels of circulating immune cells, increased antibody production that strengthens mucosal immunity to help protect against pathogen entry. Research has shown that YBG can reduce the risk of upper respiratory tract infections.

Ageing well is not a myth. By staying active and making informed choices about the foods you eat, you can help support a healthy ageing process and live better longer.

This article is contributed by Dr Nina Mazera Mohd Said, Abbott's nutrition medical director in Malaysia.

Enhancing cancer patient support

COLUMBIA Asia Hospital - Bukit Rimau (CAH-BR) has partnered with the Breast Cancer Welfare Association (BCWA) through a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to provide emotional and moral support to cancer patients at the CAH-BR cancer centre for three years.

The volunteers, who are themselves cancer survivors, will connect with patients to offer one-on-one support sessions. These sessions, which can range from informal chats to structured counselling, are designed to help patients thrive beyond their diagnosis.

Additionally, volunteers from KanWork Cancer Society will be actively participating in this initiative too. The association's representatives Dr Zahrina Azian Zohadie and Norhainah Naian, who are themselves cancer survivors, will be sharing their personal experiences and providing guidance to CAH-BR cancer patients. Their sessions, known



(From left) Columbia Asia, CAH-BR regional CEO Lee Hui Chuen, Columbia Asia group CEO & managing director Dr Chan Boon Kheng and BCWA president Lim Kim Foong at the MoU signing ceremony.

as “Sembang Survivor”, will be held monthly at the hospital and is designed to offer emotional and spiritual support to patients, ensuring they receive comprehensive care throughout their treatment journey.