

Personalisation, practicality driving this year's wellness trends

THE nutrition landscape of 2026 is defined by personalisation, practicality and a desire for long-term well-being.

Whether someone wants to improve digestion, manage stress, make more intentional food choices or enhance training and recovery, small everyday habits remain the most effective path to meaningful progress.

Herbalife's recent Asia Pacific Health and Economic Empowerment Survey found that Malaysians expect their health and overall well-being to improve, with 55 per cent planning to increase exercise time and 48 per cent intending to give up unhealthy habits.

"This year will be guided by choices that support digestion, stress relief, strength, clarity and a better understanding of what the body needs," says Herbalife director of sports performance, nutrition and education Dr Krissy Ladner.

GUT HEALTH COMES FIRST

Gut health is becoming the starting point for daily nutrition.

More people are adding fibre-rich foods like oats, beans, vegetables, berries and simple fibre blends to support digestion, fullness and steady energy throughout the day.

This return to foundational nutrition reflects a broader interest in foods that improve regularity, help manage appetite and support overall digestive balance.

The Malaysian Dietary Guidelines 2020 emphasise that consuming more dietary fibre and wholegrains is a crucial strategy to combat non-communicable diseases.

MIND AND STRESS SUPPORT

Consumers are also looking to their diets to manage stress, improve focus



More people are adding fibre-rich foods like oats, beans, vegetables, berries and simple fibre blends to support digestion, fullness and steady energy throughout the day. PICTURES CREDIT: HERBALIFE.

and stay grounded throughout the day.

Foods rich in omega-3s, magnesium, B vitamins, choline and antioxidants are gaining attention, and many people are also reducing alcohol to support clearer mornings and more consistent energy.

Alongside nutrition, stress-relief activities like yoga, walking, meditation and gentle exercise are becoming everyday tools.

"In 2026, supporting mental clarity through diet and routine will shift fully into mainstream practice."

Consumers are moving away from rigid food rules and towards wanting clarity about what is in their products.

Instead of chasing obscure label claims, people are looking for straightforward ingredient lists, purposeful formulations and brands they can trust.

There is also a growing interest, especially among younger consumers, in foods that feel less heavily processed, use recognisable ingredients and support a more whole-food, plant-forward approach.

This applies not only to packaged products but also to meals eaten out, as people are increasingly paying

attention to what goes into takeout, restaurant dishes and meal delivery options.

It is less about perfection and more about understanding how products are made and feeling confident in their quality, says Ladner.

THE RISE OF PERSONALISED NUTRITION

Nutrition is becoming more tailored. People are customising their diets to support hormone balance, bone strength, metabolic health and recovery — adjusting their routines as their bodies and life stages change.

Ladner says this shift reflects a move towards nutrition that works with the body, not against it.

"Personalisation is no longer a niche idea. It is a practical way for people to feel better day-to-day."

TECH-DRIVEN HABITS

Technology is also transforming how people understand and optimise their health. Consumers are turning to nutrition apps, sleep trackers and smart recovery tools to personalise their eating habits, training plans and daily routines. These tools give clearer insight into how the body responds to food, stress and movement, making it easier to build habits that work.

Artificial intelligence-powered assessments, home biomarker tests and personalised supplement tools are expanding access to information that once lived only in clinical settings. As a result, people can adjust their protein, hydration, micronutrients and recovery strategies based on real-time feedback instead of guesswork.

"In 2026, tech-enabled personalisation will continue to reshape everyday wellness, helping consumers make more informed decisions and create routines that fit their unique needs, preferences and performance goals."

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Tackle childhood obesity early

SOME Malaysian children carry more than just extra weight, as they show signs of serious health problems that often go unnoticed.

The National Health and Morbidity Survey 2022: Adolescent Health Survey indicates that one in three adolescents in the country is overweight or obese.

Oriental Melaka Straits Medical Centre consultant paediatrician Dr Ng Hui Ying says childhood obesity, appearing even in preschool and primary schoolchildren, often affects sleep, attention and learning.

"Malaysia's children are facing early-onset obesity, even before primary school. Weight is still a sensitive topic for families, and avoiding the discussion can delay screening and intervention."

Infants or young children who gain weight rapidly may need an evaluation.

Signs such as the appearance of darkened skin patches in skin folds, excessive thirst, passing urine too often, snoring at night with daytime somnolence and difficulty paying attention need to be investigated.

If left untreated, obesity can lead to heart disease, diabetes, liver problems and emotional challenges.

Research also shows that children who are overweight or obese are more likely to be bullied at school and face higher risks of depression and

anxiety, highlighting the importance of early intervention.

Dr Ng says most cases are driven by lifestyle factors shaped by the child's environment, but genetic, hormonal or metabolic causes must also be considered, particularly in children under 5.

She also points to everyday habits driving obesity, including diet, screen time and lack of physical activity.

"Family habits matter. Children are more likely to reach a healthy weight when parents respond to hunger and fullness cues, model good habits and maintain routines."

Encouraging balanced meals and regular physical activity helps them self-regulate eating, stay active, and offset the risks of sedentary behaviour and high-calorie intake.

At the same time, routine paediatric check-ups provide the opportunity to assess weight, identify underlying causes and plan interventions.

Dr Ng says obesity is a chronic condition that needs ongoing care.

Families must be involved from the first consultation to make lifestyle changes sustainable for both the child and the household.

Early detection and family-based lifestyle changes can prevent lifelong health problems, so parents should not delay conversations about weight, sleep and nutrition with their child's doctor.

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Children are more likely to reach a healthy weight when parents respond to hunger and fullness cues, model good habits and maintain routines. PICTURE CREDIT: JCOMP—FREEPIK



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Supported by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission

MPB serah 10 unit katil pengusung kepada HKL

Sumbangan peralatan perubahan bantu lancar operasi harian

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Kuala Lumpur: Media Prima Berhad (MPB) memperkukuh komitmennya terhadap sektor kesihatan awam dengan menyerahkan sumbangan 10 unit katil

pengusung bernilai RM55,580 kepada Hospital Kuala Lumpur (HKL), semalam.

Pengerusi Kumpulan MPB, Datuk Seri Dr Syed Hussian Aljunid, berkata sumbangan peralatan perubahan itu bertujuan membantu melancarkan operasi harian hospital, khususnya dalam memudahkan proses pemindahan pesakit di wad dan unit kecemasan.

“Penggunaan katil pengusung berkenaan juga dapat meningkatkan tahap keselesaan pesakit yang sedang menerima rawatan di hospital berkenaan.

“Inisiatif ini adalah sebahagian usaha berterusan MPB untuk menyokong institusi kesihatan



Dr Harikrishna menyampaikan cenderahati kepada Syed Hussian pada Majlis Penyerahan Sumbangan Media Prima kepada HKL di Hospital Kuala Lumpur, semalam.
(Foto Eizairi Shamsudin/BH)

negara, khususnya HKL yang juga hospital rujukan utama dan sentiasa menerima jumlah pesakit yang tinggi,” katanya selepas majlis penyerahan itu semalam.

Yang turut hadir, Ketua Jabatan Kecemasan HKL, Datuk Dr Alzamani Mohammad Idrose; Ketua Pegawai Kewangan Kumpulan MPB, Rosli Sabarudin dan Ketua Tanggungjawab Sosial Korporat MPB, Mohamad Farris Effendy.

Syed Hussian berkata, sumbangan itu juga mencerminkan komitmen berterusan syarikat di bawah payung Tanggunga-

wab Sosial Korporat (CSR) bagi membantu memperkukuh sistem kesihatan awam negara.

Laksana pelbagai inisiatif

“MPB sentiasa teguh dengan komitmen untuk melaksanakan pelbagai inisiatif kemasyarakatan.

“MPB turut memberi tumpuan kepada usaha membantu golongan kurang berkemampuan supaya mereka berpeluang mendapatkan rawatan perubahan sewajarnya,” katanya.

Katanya, usaha yang dilaksanakan termasuk bantuan

pembiayaan bagi pembedahan kritikal yang boleh menyelamatkan nyawa.

Sementara itu, Pengarah HKL, Datuk Dr Harikrishna K R Nair, berkata pihaknya merakamkan penghargaan atas sumbangan berkenaan yang disifatkan amat diperlukan bagi kegunaan pesakit di hospital itu.

Beliau berkata, katil pengusung terbabit akan ditempatkan di Jabatan Kecemasan bagi memudahkan pergerakan pesakit serta meningkatkan keselesaan mereka ketika menerima rawatan.