Eat right, live right

At 15, Celeste Phua was obese. At 1.68m tall, she weighed 82kg.

Determined to get back in shape after a teacher commented on her weight, Celeste took to a gamut of fad diets to try to slim down.

“Tried the protein diet, eating only fried chicken, but this made my skin break out, so I moved on to the chilli diet where I would add large amounts of chilli and pepper to all the food I ate because spices are supposed to increase one’s metabolism.

“This ended up making me feel bloated and was very bad for my stomach.”

Inspired by a celebrity diet she saw on television, Celeste then gave the water diet a shot, where she soaked everything she ate in water to remove gravy, salt and excess fat.

These diets worked temporarily, but she began to suffer the side effects of eating unhealthily.

“My hair started falling out, I felt weak and had constant mood swings.”

Concerned that these diets were taking a toll on her health, Celeste turned to the healthier alternative of exercising and choosing the right types of food to lose the extra weight.

And the decision has paid dividends.

Now, the 21-year-old SMU undergrad radiates self-confidence and is passionate about spreading the message of what healthy eating can do for weight-loss.

In a span of close to three years, she has slimmed down to a trim and fit 65kg.

Clad in a figure-hugging cardigan and floral skirt for the interview, Celeste clearly no longer has issues with her weight, attributing her success to an exercise regimen that includes aerobics, kickboxing and lifting weights.

“Once I learnt more about what I was putting on my plate, I consciously made healthier choices to eat right.

“It was an important change in mindset.

“Now I tell my mum to cook more vegetables and have steamed instead of fried fish.

“We have also cut down on the amount of rice we eat.”

Celeste is now also the chairperson of the Health Promotion Board’s Youth Advolution for Health programme, where she reaches out to teenagers with the message to eat right in order to live right.