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Soft diet, including ice-cream, for Dr M

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KUALA LUMPUR: Doctors have started to ease off support medications for Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad as his condition improved after a coronary bypass surgery at the National Heart Institute (IJN) on Tuesday.

The anaesthetic team led by Datuk Dr Mohd Hassan Mohd Ariff started the former prime minister on a soft diet yesterday.

Dr Mahathir, who has been on a liquid diet since Thursday, is also undergoing intensive chest physiotherapy and exercises involving his arms and legs.

He is being attended by a panel of doctors headed by IJN medical director Datuk Seri Dr Robaayah

Zambahari.

He will continue to be in the ICU with visits limited to immediate family members.

His daughter Datuk Marina Mahathir said at the IJN lobby that her father had ice-cream in the morning and porridge for lunch.

"He is doing fine. The family is fine with the time he wants to spend at IJN as all we want is for him to come out 100 per cent recovered," she said, adding that Dr Mahathir felt tired after physiotherapy.

She said he was sleeping well and could talk.

"Anyway, he is a patient and it is not like we want to have a deep and meaningful conversation with him.

"It is more like 'Are you okay?' and he answers 'Yes'."

As for her mother Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Marina said she was

doing well and would be at the hospital until Dr Mahathir was discharged.

The former prime minister was operated by a six-member team of surgeons led by Tan Sri Dr Yahya Awang.

The other team members comprised of Mayo Clinic cardio-thoracic surgery chief Prof Dr Hartzell Schaff, Datuk Dr Rozali Wathooth, Datuk Dr Azhari Yakub, Datuk Dr Venugopal Balchand and Dr Mohamed Ezani Mohd Taib.

He underwent his first bypass surgery at the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital at 63 years of age on Jan 24, 1989.

The family of Dr Mahathir held a reading of the *Yassin*, *doa selamat* and *solat hajat* (special prayer for a wish) yesterday at the Federal Territory mosque in Jalan Duta.