

Nutrition and Wound Healing

Eating a variety of healthy foods and drinking adequate fluid is important in maintaining healthy skin and healing wounds of all types including pressure injuries (bedsores), post surgery wounds or those caused by diabetes. In fact, healing our skin takes more energy and protein than we would need if we didn't have a wound.

General tips to help boost healing

- Eat protein rich foods at every meal and snack. Foods high in protein include meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy, beans, nuts and soy foods. Protein is a nutrient in all foods. Our bodies need protein to build and repair muscle and other tissues in the body. It helps us to fight off infections and heal wounds.
- Eat more calories (energy) to help your body support healing by choosing 4-6 meals/snacks daily.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Aim for 6-8 glasses of water daily unless you have been directed to limit/restrict your fluid intake.
- Get enough vitamins by eating plenty of fruits and vegetables. The vitamins A and C and the mineral zinc in the foods we eat help with the healing process. Do not take additional supplements of these vitamins unless directed by your doctor as getting too much can cause harm.
- You may be asked to take a daily multivitamin tablet to meet your needs if you are not eating well.
- If you have diabetes, it is important to have your blood sugars well controlled as high sugar levels will slow wound healing and can lead to infection.
- If you have kidney disease, it is important to speak with a dietitian to learn what your target protein intake should be.



Good Nutrition and Hydration Support Healing

Use this table to guide food choices to ensure you are getting all the nutrients you need to optimize your healing

Nutrient	Common Food Sources
Protein	<p>Aim for 2-3 servings at each meal 1 ounce is a serving of meat, ½ cup is a serving for legumes and yogurt and ¼ cup is a serving cottage and ricotta cheese</p> <p>Meats: Beef, chicken, eggs, fish, pork, turkey, veal</p> <p>Legumes: Dried peas, beans, soybeans, tofu, hummus</p> <p>Dairy products: Cottage, ricotta or hard cheese, Greek yogurt</p> <p>Nuts and seeds: Nuts, nut butters, seeds</p>
Vitamin A	<p>Aim for 1 serving daily ½ cup is the serving size for fruit, juice, and raw or cooked vegetables, 1 cup is the serving size leafy vegetables.</p> <p>Fruits: Apricots, cantaloupe, mango, papaya, peaches, pink grapefruit, red plums</p> <p>Vegetables: Carrots, winter squash, pumpkin, sweet potatoes</p> <p>Dark leafy greens: Broccoli, collard greens, kale, spinach</p> <p>Other sources: Cheese (hard cheese), milk, liver, fish</p>
Vitamin C	<p>Aim for at least 1 serving daily. ½ cup is the serving size for fruit, juice, and raw or cooked vegetables</p> <p>Fruits: Citrus fruits/juices such as orange and grapefruit, cantaloupe, guava, mango, papaya, strawberries</p> <p>Vegetables: Broccoli, collard greens, peas, red/green peppers, tomatoes</p>

Zinc	<p style="text-align: center;">Include these foods daily</p> <p>Protein: Beans, chicken, eggs, fish, liver, some seafood (crab, lobster), tofu</p> <p>Grains: Whole grain products (bread, cereals, muffins, crackers), fortified grains, wheat germ</p>
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What do I do if I am not eating well?

- Try to eat more when your appetite is best
- Include at least one high protein food at each meal and snack
- Choose high calorie fluids – milk and milk alternatives, nutritional supplements, cream soups and juices. Limit tea, coffee, broth soups
- Avoid foods labelled “light” or “calorie reduced” or “low calorie”
- Do not skip meals
- Try frequent small meals and snacks. Have a small meal or snack every 2-3 hours instead of 3 large meals
- Keep convenient snacks on hand and take a snack with you when you are on the go. Try cheese and crackers, protein or energy bars, hummus and crackers, greek yogurt, nutritional supplements
- Make meals in batches and freeze leftovers
- Consider meal service programs or have frozen prepared meals available
- If you are missing meals because you are not hungry, try eating according to a schedule rather than waiting until you are hungry

Nutritional supplements

- Can be found in the drug store or the pharmacy section of many grocery and retail stores and most are ready to use and portable
- Come in many flavours
- Can be served cold, on ice, at room temperature or heated up.
- Are a quick, convenient way to increase calories and protein in your diet.

Sample Menu Plan for Wound Healing 

Breakfast	Small glass ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) of orange juice 1-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of whole grain cereal with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk 1-2 slices of whole wheat toast with margarine 1-2 eggs
Morning snack	Large glass of yogurt/fruit smoothie (including strawberries, yogurt and milk)
Lunch	1 cup/bowl of cream soup (made with milk) 1 sandwich (2 slices whole wheat bread, 2 oz. tuna/mayo) 3-4 red/green pepper rings $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cantaloupe, cubed
Afternoon snack	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup hummus 1 whole wheat pita bread cut into triangles
Supper	3 oz. chicken breast 1 medium sweet potato $\frac{1}{2}$ cup broccoli $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sliced peaches
Evening snack	1 slice of whole wheat toast 2 Tbsp peanut butter 100g container or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of Greek yogurt

Registered Dietitian: _____

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