

Nutrition and Wound Healing

Good nutrition for wound healing...

Good nutrition is important for healing wounds, particularly pressure ulcers (bedsores), wounds after surgery or from trauma, and wounds or ulcers from diabetes.

Healthy eating for wound healing means choosing a wide variety of foods from each of the five food groups:

- Breads, cereals, rice, pasta and noodles (including wholegrain or wholemeal varieties where possible)
- Vegetables, legumes
- Fruit
- Dairy products eg. milk, cheese, yoghurt
- Lean meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts, legumes, tofu and other meat alternatives

Eating a range of foods from each of the food groups will ensure you are getting all the nutrients that your body needs.



If you have a wound or ulcer and you have a chronic disease, such as diabetes or kidney disease, it is important to speak with your Doctor and Dietitian regarding the best food choices for you.

Extra nutrition for wound healing...

As well as choosing a wide variety of foods, you may need extra protein or energy in your diet to help wounds heal.

Protein

Protein is needed to grow new healthy tissue. High protein foods include:

- Meat, fish and chicken
- Eggs
- Dairy products eg. milk, cheese, yoghurt
- Beans, legumes, nuts and seeds
- Meat alternatives eg. tofu, vegetarian sausages
- Protein supplements eg. *Sustagen*, *Beneprotein*, *Promod*

Eating protein foods at each meal is a helpful way to increase protein intake. Protein foods may also need to be included as a snack in between meals.

Energy

You may also need extra energy if:

- You are underweight
- You are losing weight without trying
- You are unable to eat enough due poor appetite or nausea, or
- You are recovering from trauma or surgery.

High energy foods include:

- Full cream dairy products
- Margarine, butter, salad dressings, oil
- Soft drinks, cordials, chocolates, sweets
- Carbohydrate supplements eg. *Polyjoule*, *Polycose*
- Nutrition supplements eg. Resource Plus, Ensure Plus (these are also high in protein)

Your health professional will advise you if you need to increase your energy intake.

Tips for high protein and energy eating for wound healing

- Eat more often if you can't eat a lot. Aim for 6 smaller meals rather than 3 big meals a day, which may be too filling.
- Keep your favourite foods in the cupboard or fridge.
- Keep ready-to-eat meals and snacks handy for times when you don't feel like preparing food (e.g. tinned soups, frozen meals, yoghurt, nuts, cheese, biscuits and dips).
- Drink fluids that provide energy such as milk, juice, cordial or soft drink, instead of tea, coffee or water.



SAMPLE HIGH PROTEIN AND ENERGY MEAL PLAN

Enriched milk adds protein & the sugar* gives energy
Ask your Dietitian for a recipe for enriched milk

BREAKFAST

Weetbix with enriched milk and sprinkled with sugar
Toast spread with margarine/butter while still hot plus peanut butter or jam / honey
Orange juice

Can add more margarine/butter if the toast is warm*. Peanut butter, jam and honey give more energy*.

MORNING TEA

Fruit smoothie to drink

Good energy* and protein from the milk and fruit

Extra protein and energy from the milk and cream*

LUNCH

Chicken Soup made on enriched milk and served with sour cream
Sandwich with salad and egg/meat, mayonnaise and/or avocado, spread with cream cheese

Mayonnaise, avocado and cream cheese are tasty sources of extra energy*, while egg or meat provides protein

AFTERNOON TEA

Iced coffee, Milo or flavoured milk made with enriched milk

Another easy but tasty way to add more protein.

DINNER/TEA

Shepherds Pie with extra margarine in the potato, topped with grated cheese
Cauliflower and white sauce
Carrots and peas

Extra butter/ margarine gives extra energy* while the cheese adds protein.

Fruit with custard

A high protein finish to your meal

SUPPER

Sustagen or hot chocolate made on milk

Your Dietitian will advise you if you need extra energy, as not all people need extra energy for wound healing. *Indicates food that is higher in energy.

Vitamins and Minerals

Vitamins and minerals play an essential role in wound healing, so it is important that you have an adequate intake of a variety of foods as part of a healthy diet.

Multivitamin and mineral supplements may be useful if your food intake is inadequate or not balanced. However, the benefit of large doses of extra vitamins and minerals remains unclear.

Ask your Dietitian if you would like further information on multivitamins and mineral supplements.

What about heart health?

You may have heard some fats in your diet are better than others. If you need extra energy to help your wound heal but would like to make sure you look after your heart too, there are better options to choose.

1. Use canola, olive, safflower, sunflower oil in cooking instead of butter or other animal fats
2. Cut any visible fat or skin off your meat/chicken
3. Try margarine, peanut butter, avocado, tahini, hommus or lite cream cheese as a spread on bread instead of butter or cream cheese
4. Add avocado to sandwiches or salads
5. Add dried fruit and nuts to cooking, or have them as a snack on their own

Enrich milk with skim milk powder rather than using full cream milk

For further information contact your Dietitian or Nutritionist:

References:

European Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel and National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel. Treatment of pressure ulcers: Quick Reference Guide. Washington DC: National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel; 2009.

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