

## Nutrition and Wound Healing

### Good nutrition for wound healing

Good nutrition is important for healing wounds. Wounds can include pressure ulcers (bedsores), wounds after surgery or from trauma, and wounds or ulcers from diabetes. Without good nutrition, wound healing may be impaired or wounds may take longer to heal.

### 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
- Fruit
- Dairy products e.g. 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 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 and/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

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 between meals.

### Energy

The amount of energy your body needs can increase when you have a wound.

You may need extra energy if:

- You are underweight

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

High energy foods include:

- Full cream dairy products eg. Milk, yoghurt, custard, cheese
- Margarine, butter, salad dressings, oil
- Soft drinks, cordials, chocolates, sweets
- Avocado, nuts and nut butters
- Nutrition supplements e.g. Resource Plus, Ensure Plus, Sustagen Hospital (these are also high in protein)

Your doctor or dietitian will advise you if you need to increase your energy or protein 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.
- Mix high energy/high protein foods in to other foods (e.g. Add cream to mashed potato, cheese on vegetables, avocado or cream

cheese to sandwiches).

- 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.

### **Hydration**

Ensuring you consume adequate fluids is important for wound healing. Hydration affects both the healing process and skin turgor. Aim to drink at least 1.5L of fluid per day, unless you have been advised otherwise.

### **Vitamins and Minerals**

Vitamins and minerals play an essential role in wound healing. Adequate vitamins and minerals can be obtained by consuming 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 for wound healing remains unclear.



Ask your doctor or Dietitian before commencing a vitamin and mineral supplement or if you would like further information.

### **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 or sunflower oil in cooking instead of butter or other animal fats
2. Cut any visible fat or skin off your meat/chicken

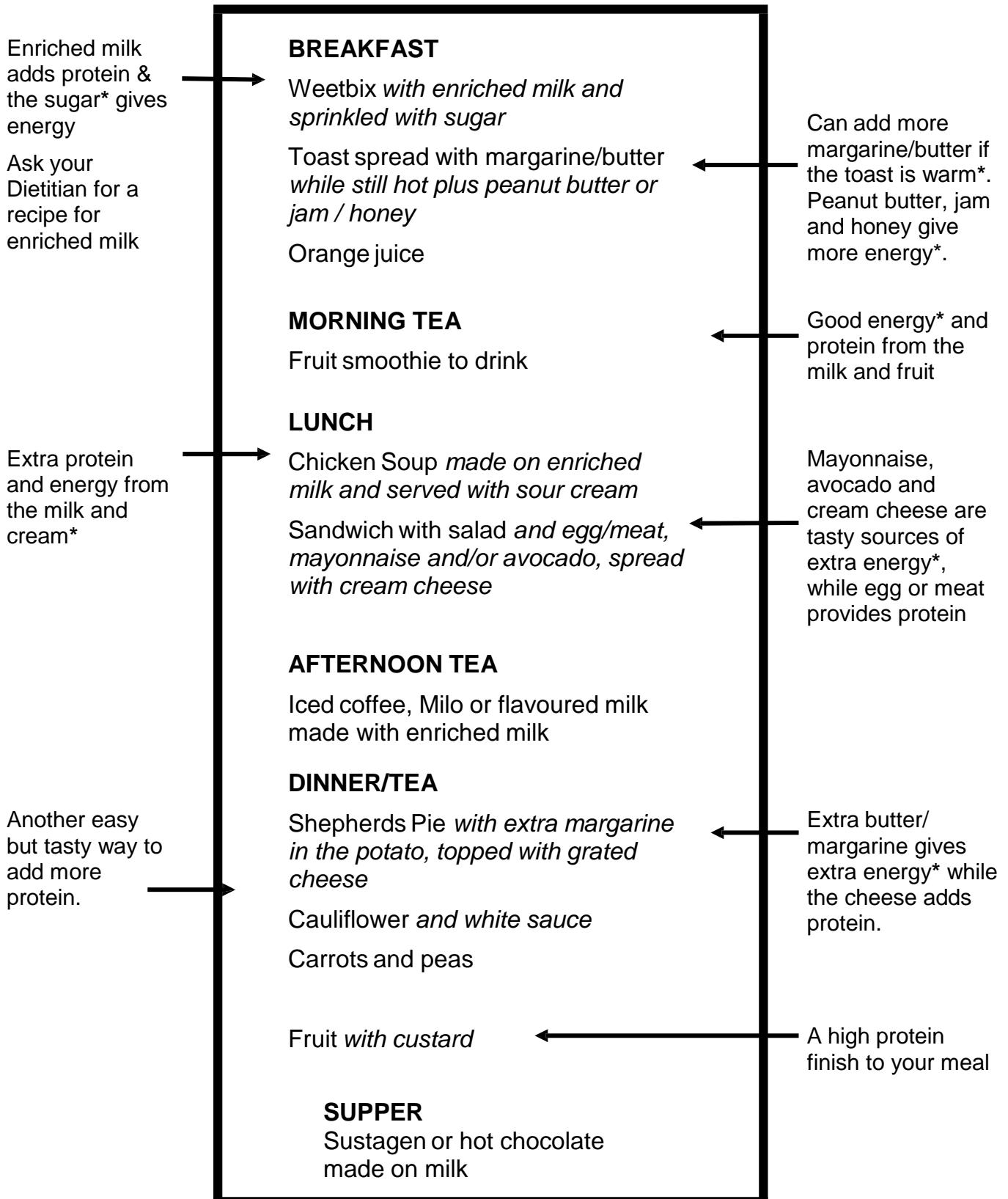
3. Try margarine, peanut butter, avocado, tahini, hommus or lite cream cheese as a spread on bread instead of butter or cream cheese
4. Add avocado to sandwiches or salads
5. Add dried fruit and nuts to cooking, or have them as a snack on their own
6. Enrich milk with skim milk powder rather than using full cream milk

**For further information contact your Dietitian or Nutritionist:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **References:**

National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel, European Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel and Pan Pacific Pressure Injury Alliance. Prevention and Treatment of Pressure Ulcers: Clinical Practice Guideline. Emily Haesler (Ed.). Cambridge Media: Osborne Park, Western Australia; 2014.

## SAMPLE HIGH PROTEIN AND ENERGY MEAL PLAN



**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.**