

NUTRITION GUIDELINES TO IMPROVE WOUND HEALING

Good nutrition is necessary for healing. During the healing process, the body needs increased amounts of calories, protein, and fluids. The following guidelines will help you choose “power” foods to promote healing.

GOALS FOR HEALTHY EATING

Eat a variety of foods to get all the calories, proteins, vitamins, and minerals you need. MyPlate (right) displays the different food groups. To personalize your plan, go to choosemyplate.gov. Click on Super Tracker at the top of the page. Next, click on Create Your Own Plan to obtain a specific nutritional plan to meet your needs based on age, gender, and activity level.

If you have a prescribed diet, follow it as much as possible, as it will help promote wound healing and may prevent infection and some complications. Keeping your blood sugar under control is very important to wound healing.



SUGGESTED MINIMUM AMOUNT OF FOOD PER DAY

Food group	Number of servings	What counts as 1 serving
Grains, using whole grain sources as much as possible	5	1 slice bread; 1/2 cup cooked cereal; 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal; 1/2 cup cooked rice or pasta
Vegetables	2	1 cup raw or cooked vegetable or 100% vegetable juice; 2 cups raw leafy green vegetables
Fruits	3	1/2 cup canned fruit or 1/4 cup dried fruit; 1 piece of fresh fruit or 1 cup melons or berries or grapes
Milk	3	1 cup milk or yogurt; 1 1/2 ounces natural cheese; 2 ounces processed cheese (dairy or soy)
Meats and beans	5	1 ounce meat, fish, or poultry; 1/4 cup cooked beans; 1 egg; 1 tablespoon peanut butter; 1/2 ounce nuts or seeds; 1.5-2 ounces firm tofu
Oils, fats, and sugar	Good source of calories, but these may be limited by prescribed diets	Vegetable oils (canola, olive oil), sauces, salad dressings, sugar, syrup, butter, margarine, jelly, jam, candy

IF YOU ARE NOT EATING WELL....

1. **Eat 5 or 6 small meals a day.** Instead of trying to eat three big meals a day, try eating smaller meals and snacks between meals to get enough nutrition.

Make snacks nutritious. Examples of snacks: cheese and crackers, glass of milk, cottage cheese and fruit, ½ small sandwich, milkshake, peanut butter on crackers or celery, fruit or fruit juices.

2. **Some foods that taste good during recovery are not very nutritious.** Try replacing them with foods that contain good sources of protein, vitamins, calories, and minerals. For example:

Instead of	Try this
broth	beef vegetable soup or cream soup
plain jello	fruity jello or pudding
carbonated beverages	milk, milkshakes, fruit smoothie
Italian ice/popsicles	ice cream, frozen fruit bar, frozen yogurt

3. **If there are taste changes, try a variety of foods** to find out what works for you. You may find that cold foods and foods with little odor work best. For example, cottage cheese, cereals, cheesy entrees such as cheese ravioli and macaroni and cheese, or chicken or tuna salad may be tastier than beef.
4. **Try oral nutritional supplements** if you still have trouble eating enough. There are many varieties available that can provide extra calories, protein, vitamins and minerals in good-tasting flavors. Try several to find your favorites. Also, you can blend in fruit, ice cream, yogurt or milk to increase variety.
5. **Take a daily multivitamin with minerals** if you are unable to eat the standard "Suggested Minimum Amount of Food Per Day" listed on the first page.
6. **Make an appointment with a registered dietitian** if your appetite remains poor, your wound is not healing well, and/or you are losing weight.

References

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This information is not intended to replace the medical advice of your doctor or health care provider. Please consult your health care provider for advice about a specific medical condition.



Center for Human Nutrition, M17/
Digestive Disease Institute
9500 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44195
Appointments: 216.444.3046 (Main Campus)
1.800.223.2273, ext. 43046
www.clevelandclinic.org/health/