



# NUTRITION FOR WOUND HEALING

Good nutrition is an important part of wound-healing. During the healing process, your body needs increased amounts of calories, protein and vitamins.

Wounds must be well-fed to heal. Your body must add new tissue, replace fluids lost in wound drainage, manufacture enzymes to stimulate tissue growth and produce proteins to fight infection – all while maintaining itself as usual. No wonder it needs a little extra nutrition during this stressful time!

**You may be at risk for nutrition-related problems if you have experienced or are experiencing any of the following:**

- You have unintentionally gained or lost 5% or more of your body weight in the past month or 10% in the last 6 months.
- A simple calculation: To approximate 10% of any weight, look at the first 2 numbers. For a 150lb person, that number would be 15 lbs. Divide that in half for 5%, approximately 7 ½ lbs.
- You have a chronic disease such as heart or kidney disease.
- You have a stomach or intestinal tract disorder that interferes with absorption of nutrients.
- You have tooth or mouth disorders that interfere with eating or chewing.
- You eat alone much of the time or have trouble getting out for groceries.
- You take more than 3 medicines, including over-the-counter drugs.
- You are diabetic and not able to control your blood sugar.
- You are suffering from depression.

It is very important that you communicate with your provider to make them aware of any of these warning signs, so **together** you can come up with solutions to address your challenges.

## Suggestions for Getting Needed Nutrients During Your Treatment

- Take a good quality multivitamin which contains at least the RDA (recommended daily amount) of zinc, iron, and copper. Add foods from the lists below containing vitamin C, vitamin A, and the trace minerals.
- If you are having difficulty getting in the recommended amount of protein, try a protein supplement such as Juven<sup>®</sup>, Boost<sup>®</sup>, Ensure<sup>®</sup>, or Carnation<sup>®</sup> Instant Breakfast. Consider adding a tablespoon of peanut butter or almond butter to your protein supplement to enhance the flavor. You can also find recipes for protein shakes on the internet or in health magazines.
- Eat fat! Yes, there is such a thing as “good fat.” Many patients avoid fat and this is one of the worst things you can do. Fat helps to decrease inflammation and helps keep your blood sugar stable. Drizzle a little extra olive oil on your food and sprinkle a little salt and pepper on an avocado for a healthy snack.
- Drink plenty of fluids, especially those that are caffeine and sugar-free (water is the best and least expensive). Multiply your weight by .5 to determine needed fluid intake.
- If you do not feel you can eat 3 large meals per day, try eating 5 or 6 small meals and snacks.

## Nutrients Needed for Enhanced Wound Healing

- **Calories.** You need about 15 calories per pound of body weight each day. For a 150-pound person, this adds up to 2,250 calories a day during wound healing. (150 x 15 = 2250. Multiply your weight by 15 to get a close calculation of your daily needs)
- **Protein.** Very important through all phases of healing, protein is required to promote new tissue growth. It is vital that you get adequate protein for wound healing to occur. The average sedentary man requires about 56 grams a day and a women approximately 46 grams. (Quick reference: a 3 ounce chicken breast contains about 21 grams and one cup of dried beans contains about 16 grams). Check your labels and add up the protein!
- **Fluids.** You need to drink extra fluids to help your kidneys process the extra protein and replace fluids lost from your wounds. If you have heavily-draining wounds, you will need to drink even more. You need about .5 fluid ounces per pound per day. A 150-person would need 75 ounces a day during wound healing. Choose your fluids wisely and avoid sodas and sweetened drinks. Sugar has been shown to decrease the activity of your “infection fighting” cells, which will put you at higher risk for infection.
- **Vitamin C.** You need 1,000 - 2,000 mg per day during the healing stage. It is best to obtain vitamin C from natural sources such as fruits and vegetables. Avoid drinking too much juice because you will be missing out on the fiber, while possibly adding too much sugar. Eat the apple, if possible, versus drinking the apple juice.
- **Vitamin A.** A dose of 20,000-25,000 IU per day is typically recommended for 10 days. This vitamin should only be taken only as recommended by your provider. Vitamin A may decrease the negative effects of any steroid treatment you are receiving for wound healing.
- **Vitamin B-complex.** Vitamin B complex helps to metabolize carbohydrates and proteins to produce energy, which is essential for cell growth. It also aids in the prevention of anemia (thereby increasing the oxygen supply to your wound).
- **Trace minerals.** You need a trace of zinc, iron and copper for healing difficult wounds.
- **Arginine.** This amino acid has been shown to enhance healing in certain people.

For more information, call:

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