

# Good nutrition for wound healing

Eating well and keeping hydrated can help in the recovery of wounds such as bed sores, pressure ulcers, and wounds after surgery.

Eating well is also very important after an infection, operation or illness as our body needs extra energy and nutrients to recover.

Here are some tips to help with a speedy recovery.

## Foods important for wound healing

### Eating regularly

Eating enough food is important to help repair wounds because your body will need extra energy for them to heal.

- Try to eat three main meals plus snacks every day.
- Feeling full quickly? Try having six smaller meals each day instead.
- Eat a variety of foods from the five food groups:
  - Grains and cereals
  - Fruit
  - Vegetables, beans and legumes
  - Meat and meat alternatives
  - Dairy and dairy alternatives.

### Protein

Protein is important for wound healing as it helps to repair and speed up the wound healing process.

- Try to eat protein foods with each meal.
- Look at the 'high energy high protein foods' handouts for ideas.
- Try to make the most of your fluid intake by having high energy drinks. Look at the 'high energy high protein fluids' handout for more information.

## Minerals

Minerals such as zinc and iron are especially important when you have wounds as they help fight and prevent infection and make your wound tissue stronger.

Foods high in zinc	Foods high in iron
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Red meat</li><li>• Fish and shellfish</li><li>• Egg and chicken</li><li>• Lentils and nuts</li><li>• Milk, cheese and yoghurt</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Red meat and offal</li><li>• Fish</li><li>• Dark green leafy vegetables *</li><li>• Beans, nuts and seeds *</li><li>• Wholegrain breads and cereals *</li></ul>

\* Your body will be able to absorb iron from these foods better when you eat them with foods high in vitamin C. Look at the 'high iron foods' fact sheet for more information.

## Vitamins

Vitamin C, A and E are important in wound healing as they help fight and prevent infection, keep your wound closed once it heals over and helps the skin heal more quickly.

Foods high in vitamin C	Foods high in vitamin A	Foods high in vitamin E
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oranges and grapefruit</li><li>• Berries</li><li>• Kiwi fruit</li><li>• Tomato</li><li>• Broccoli and spinach</li><li>• Capsicum</li><li>• Cabbage</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Milk and cheese</li><li>• Eggs</li><li>• Fish</li><li>• Dark green vegetables</li><li>• Carrot</li><li>• Mango</li><li>• Pumpkin</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vegetable oils</li><li>• Nuts and seeds</li><li>• Fish</li><li>• Egg</li><li>• Spinach</li><li>• Kiwifruit</li><li>• Avocado</li></ul>

## Drink plenty of fluids every day

Not drinking enough fluids can cause dehydration which can delay wound healing. Aim to drink around eight glasses of fluids every day. Get the most from your tea and coffee by making it with hot milk instead of water.

Drinks that help to keep you hydrated include:

- Water
- Milk

- Tea
- Coffee
- Juice
- Cordial.

Some foods can help to keep you hydrated. These include:

- Soup
- Yoghurt
- Custard
- Jelly.