

Nutrition and Wound Healing



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What are nutrients?

Nutrients come from the foods that we eat. They are carbohydrates, fats, protein, water, vitamins, and minerals. They give our bodies the building blocks for maintaining good health.

How do nutrients help in wound healing?

Nutrients are used to repair damaged tissues and build new tissues.

The following table helps explain how each nutrient contributes to wound healing:

Nutrient ¹	Role in Wound Healing	Food Sources
Protein	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used to build new tissues • helps keep the skin strong to prevent easy tearing • helps fight infections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meats, chicken, turkey, eggs, fish, shellfish • Dairy products (e.g. milk, yogurt, cheese) • Nuts and nut butters • Vegetable sources (e.g. tofu, soy protein products, lentils, and legumes such as chickpeas, kidney beans, etc.)

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Carbo- hydrates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primary source of energy for the body and for collagen production • prevents protein from being used as an energy source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grain products (e.g. breads, bagels, dinner rolls, pitas, buns, cereals, rice, pasta) • Fruits • Starchy vegetables (e.g. potatoes, yams, corn, peas)
Fats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concentrated source of energy for the body • helps in the wound healing process • helps absorb some vitamins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oils (e.g. canola, olive, corn) • Margarine, butter • Nuts and nut butters
Fluid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prevents dehydration by replacing fluid that is lost in wound drainage • maintains adequate circulation of blood and nutrients to the wound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water, juice, soup • Tea & coffee (in moderation if caffeinated) • Milk • Liquid supplements (e.g. Ensure, Boost)
Vitamins²	Role in Wound Healing	Food Sources
Vitamin C and Vitamin A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promotes strength of tissues • helps fight infections important in all stages of wound healing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vitamin C (e.g. oranges, other citrus fruits, berries, melons, bell-peppers, tomatoes, broccoli, green-leafy vegetables) • Vitamin A (e.g. liver, carrots, sweet potatoes, spinach, green-leafy vegetables, tomatoes, cantaloupe)

Mineral ²	Role in Wound Healing	Food Sources
Zinc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promotes building and binding of tissues to give it strength • helps fight infections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many animal protein foods are excellent sources of zinc (e.g. beef, pork, chicken, fish, seafood, and dairy products) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other sources include whole grain or fortified cereals, nuts, and beans

¹ Speak with your doctor and dietitian if you have any other health conditions, including kidney disease, heart disease and diabetes.

² Speak with your doctor and dietitian before supplementation. Excessive supplementation can be harmful to your health

What else do I do to make sure I get enough nutrients?

- Eat the recommended amount and type of foods each day using Canada’s Food Guide http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/alt_formats/hpfb-dgpsa/pdf/food-guide-aliment/view_eatwell_vue_bienmang_e.pdf
- Aim for three meals a day with snacks in between.
- Eat meals at regular times. Avoid skipping meals
- Enjoy a variety of foods.
- Consume adequate fluids each day (about 8 cups / 2000mls). If you have heart problems, consult with your doctor regarding fluid restrictions.

What else can I do to promote wound healing?

- Make sure that you get enough sleep and rest to allow time for the body to repair and regenerate.
- Stop smoking. Cigarette smoking produces carbon monoxide that decreases oxygen supply to the wound area. Speak to your health care professional for advice.

