

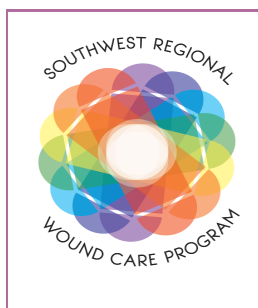
are unable to chew and/or swallow well enough, or if your body is unable to absorb nutrients right, you may need tube feeds or parenteral feeds (nutrition through an intravenous line, or IV). This would be decided by you, your doctor and your dietician together.

What Else Should I Consider to Improve My Nutrition?

- Make sure your teeth are in good shape, and that any dental problems are taken care of;
- If you have dentures, make sure they are fitting well and in good repair;
- Talk to your doctor about any food or fluid restrictions you have, and whether they can be changed or stopped;
- If you are having problems swallowing (this includes coughing when you eat), let your doctor know. You may need a swallowing assessment;
- Add snacks to your diet that are high in protein;
- If you find drinking nutritional supplements to be too filling or if the taste or consistency bothers you try:
 - Different flavors and/or brands;
 - Drinking small amounts multiple times a day, like a shot glass amount, so that you don't fill up, and/or;
 - Drinking the supplements cold, with ice, or in a milkshake.
- Try food and fluids in a variety of textures and consistencies;
- Allow yourself enough time to eat;
- Try grazing—eating multiple small meals per day;
- Incorporate food/fluids into your recreation or therapy sessions;
- If you are constipated, get your bowels under control by exercising, drinking plenty

of fluids, and by adding prunes, prune juice, and/or flax to your diet. If this is not enough, let your doctor know as there may be medications that can help you;

- Boost your protein intake by:
 - Adding protein powder, milk powder, or soy powder to cream soups, mashed potatoes, casseroles, puddings, and milk based desserts;
 - Adding cheese to vegetables, salads, potatoes, rice, noodles, and casseroles;
 - Adding nuts, seeds, or wheat germ to casseroles, breads, muffins, pancakes, and cookies;
 - Adding dry beans to soups or casseroles, and/or;
 - Sprinkling nuts, seeds, or wheat germ on yogurt, fruit, cereal, and ice cream.



For more information on wound care, nutrition, wound healing, and for community resources, go to:
swrwoundcareprogram.ca



The Importance of Nutrition in Wound Healing

Tips to maximize your or your loved ones nutrition in the presence of a wound

Nutrition in Wound Healing

Why is Good Nutrition Important in Wound Healing?

Nutrition is one of the cornerstones of wound healing, however it is often ignored. Poor nutrition before and/or during wound healing may slow the rate of wound healing and result in a weak wound. Carbohydrates, protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, zinc, iron, and water are important nutritional factors in wound healing, and are described in this pamphlet.

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates, like grains, cereals, peas and beans, pasta, bread, natural sugars found in fruits, vegetables, and milk and added sugars, are your body's most readily available source of energy. Carbohydrates are important as they let your body spare protein for tissue growth.

Protein

Protein, found in meat, eggs, milk products, peas and beans, seeds, and fortified grains, is important for wound healing as it helps:

- Hormones and enzymes develop;
- Cells multiply;
- Skin and tissues grow;
- Fight and prevent infection;
- Control fluid and minerals in your body, and;
- Move fats, minerals, and oxygen around your body and to your wound.

Vitamin A

Vitamin A, found in liver, milk and milk products,

egg yolks, and fish oils, is needed for wound healing as it helps:

- Fight wound infection;
- Develop collagen in your wound (which forms strong tissue in your wound), and it;
- Keep your healed wound from opening again.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C helps with wound healing as it:

- Fights and prevents wound infection;
- Helps grow strong tissue in your wound, and;
- Keeps your wound closed once it heals over.

You can find vitamin C in citrus juice and fruits, strawberries, tomatoes, sweet peppers (especially red ones), potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussel's sprouts, and cantaloupe.

Zinc

Zinc is important for wound healing as it helps:

- New cells grow and divide;
- Make protein and enzymes;
- Make your wound tissue strong, and;
- Fight and prevent infection.

Zinc is found in meat, oysters, liver, eggs, milk, peas and beans, wheat germ and whole wheat products.

Iron

Iron, found in meat, liver, eggs, peas and beans, nuts, dried fruit, leafy green vegetables (the darker the better), and fortified grains, is important in wound healing as it helps:

- New cells grow and divide;
- Make your wound tissue strong;
- Get oxygen to your wound, and;
- Prevent infection.

Your body can use iron from animal sources, like meat and eggs, better than iron from plant

sources. Iron is also better absorbed in your body if it is eaten alongside a food that is rich in vitamin C.

Water

Water is a nutrient and is important in wound healing as it helps:

- Hydrate the wound site;
- Carry vitamins, minerals, oxygen, sugars, and other small molecules to the wound;
- Remove waste from your wound site, and;
- Control the temperature of your wound.

Unless your doctor has told you otherwise, you should drink at least 1.5 Liters of fluid per day. You can increase the amount of water and other non-caffeinated fluids you drink by adding:

- Popsicles;
- Jell-O;
- Soup;
- Sorbet and ice cream;
- Milkshakes;
- Ice chips;
- Canned fruit with its juice, and;
- Coffee creamers or milk.

How Do I Know If I Am Getting Enough Vitamins/Nutrients in My Diet?

If you are following the Canadian Food Guide you are likely getting enough nutrients to allow your wound to heal. However, if you are unsure, try keeping a food diary for a week to see if you are missing out on any important items. If you are, try adding food sources of those missing nutrients first. If you are unable to meet your nutritional needs by changes in your diet, you may need to see a dietician. Dieticians assess you and your diet and suggest interventions to improve your nutrition. Suggestions may include the use of nutritional and/or dietary supplements. If you