

Eat to Heal. Food is Medicine

Why

Eating well helps your body heal faster. Eating well also helps your body fight off infection. While your body is healing, you need more calories, protein, fluids, vitamins and minerals.

The best source of these nutrients is food. If you are not eating enough healthy foods, you may need to take a vitamin supplement.



Extra calories

Calories are the energy you get from food. Your body works very hard to get your wounds to heal so it is important to take in extra calories. The larger the wound, the more calories you need. It is important to eat enough so you don't lose weight. If you do not have an appetite, try eating smaller meals more often. You can also drink protein drinks throughout the day.

Protein

You need more protein for wound healing. Protein helps you heal tissue, build muscle, and keeps your immune system healthy. A deficiency in protein causes problems with collagen production, leads to a less strong wound, and increases your risk of infection.

Foods high in protein include:

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|-----------|----------|--------------------|
| - Meat | - Milk | - Eggs |
| - Poultry | - Cheese | - Beans |
| - Fish | - Yogurt | - Nuts, nut butter |



Fluid



Your body loses water through the wound. Dehydrated skin is less elastic, more fragile and more susceptible to breakdown. Dehydration will also reduce your blood circulation which means less oxygen and nutrients will get to the wound.

Water is the best source of fluids. Other examples are milk, coffee, tea, or juice. Most adults need 9-12 cups of fluids each day.

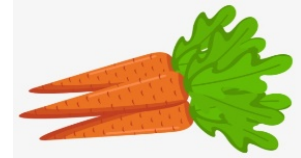
Vitamins and Minerals

Vitamin A

Vitamin A helps your body to repair damaged tissue, increase collagen production, and fight off infection.

Foods high in vitamin A include:

- Carrots
- Eggs
- Cheese
- Milk
- Leafy greens
- Mango



- Sweet potato

Vitamin C

Vitamin C is needed to make more collagen and new blood vessels. Collagen is what keeps your skin healthy. Good levels of Vit C will help to strengthen the healing wound and helps repair and prevent dry skin. Vit C also has antioxidant properties which helps the immune system. Vit C is also known to reduce the signs of aging, reduces the appearance of wrinkles and improves the effectiveness of sunscreens.

Many vegetables and fruits are high in Vit C. Eat more orange, red and greens vegetables and fruits. The recommended dose is 1,000 mg per day.

- Broccoli
- Brussel sprouts
- Spinach
- Oranges and orange juice
- Strawberries
- Cantaloupe
- Kiwi
- Papaya



- Sweet bell peppers
- Tomatoes

Zinc

Zinc is needed for tissue growth and healing. Zinc is also needed for protein and collagen production. A deficiency in zinc is linked to delayed wound healing and reduced wound strength.

Foods high in zinc include:

- Eggs
- Meat (fish, poultry, seafood, liver)
- Legumes (beans, lentils)
- Meat
- Milk
- Nuts and seeds
- Whole grain foods (brown rice, cereals, oatmeal, barley)



Iron



Iron provides oxygen to the wound to help with healing. Iron deficiency results in a decrease in collagen production.

- Spinach
- Liver
- Duck
- Lentilsoybeans
- Cashews
- Almonds