



Five Nutrition Tips to Promote Wound Healing

We've all had a wound: a cut, scratch or scrape that breaks the skin. Most wounds on healthy people heal quickly when kept clean and free of infection, while other types of wounds are more serious and often require medical intervention. These can include decubitus ulcers, also known as pressure sores or bed sores, which develop where bones are close to the skin — such as ankles, back, elbows, heels and hips — in people who are bedridden, use a wheelchair or are unable to change their position. People with diabetes also have a higher risk of developing foot ulcers that can take weeks or months to heal.

Food choices and nutritional status influence wound healing since serious wounds increase the energy, vitamin, mineral and protein requirements necessary to promote healing. Also, nutrients are lost in the fluid that weeps from wounds.

The Nutrition Tips

1. The first priority is to eat sufficient calories from a balanced diet of nutritious foods. Plan healthy, balanced meals and snacks that include plenty of foods from all the MyPlate food groups — protein, fruits, vegetables, dairy and grains.
2. Include optimum amounts of protein. Aim for 20 to 30 grams of protein at each meal and 10 to 15 grams of protein with each snack. A piece of cooked chicken, lean meat or fish the size of a deck of cards (about 3 ounces) contains 20 to 25 grams of protein. One egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter and 1 ounce of cheese each contain 6 to 7 grams of protein. One cup of low-fat milk or yogurt contains 8 grams of protein.
3. Stay well-hydrated with water and other unsweetened beverages such as tea, coffee, 100-percent fruit juice and milk, which also contains protein.
4. Some wounds may require a higher intake of certain vitamins and minerals. Talk with a registered dietitian nutritionist for an individualized eating plan with optimum amounts of calories, protein, fluids, vitamins and minerals for your specific needs.
5. For people with diabetes, controlling blood sugar levels is one of the best ways to prevent and treat a wound. Work with your physician and registered dietitian nutritionist to develop a personalized blood sugar management plan.

Source: Academy for Nutrition and Dietetics; <http://www.eatright.org/resource/health/wellness/preventing-illness/6-nutrition-tips-to-promote-wound-healing>

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