

Nutrition and Dietetics

Consumer Health Information Sheet

Good Nutrition Before and After Surgery

This resource provides information about the types of foods that will maximise your nutrition and recovery. If you have specific dietary needs, please follow the advice of your Dietitian and Doctor.

Good nutrition will help get your body ready for surgery, heal better after surgery, maintain strength and fight infection. Eating enough calories, protein, vitamins, and minerals will all help speed your recovery.

Eat at least three times a day. Don't skip meals

Eat a variety of different foods

Eat a wide variety of foods from the 5 major food groups to get the best range of nutrients for your body. The 5 food groups are:

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, legumes or beans
- Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain or high fibre cereal varieties
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese or alternatives, mostly reduced fat

Include protein-rich foods with each meal

Eating protein-rich foods will help maintain your strength and assist with wound healing. Protein-rich foods include:

- Red meat, kangaroo, chicken, pork and turkey
- Fish and seafood
- Dairy products such as milk, yoghurt, cheese and custard
- Eggs, legumes, pulses and nuts
- Soy milk, tofu and tempeh



Stay hydrated

It is important to prevent dehydration, staying hydrated can help wound healing. Drink at least 6 to 8 cups of fluid each day.

If your Doctor has advised you to follow a fluid restriction, please follow their direction.

Go grocery shopping the week before surgery

If you are unable to go grocery shopping yourself, send someone with a list to shop for you or consider shopping online. Having plenty of meals prepared will help maintain a healthy eating plan after your surgery during the recovery period.



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What if I am underweight, losing weight unintentionally or unable to eat enough food?

Poor nutrition or malnutrition before surgery may increase your risk of complications and infections after surgery. This might mean you have to stay in hospital longer. Tips to improve your nutrition before surgery include:

Step 1: Include protein-rich foods with each meal as listed on page 1

Step 2: Add extra energy (kilojoules/calories) to meals, snacks and drinks

- Add full cream milk, cream, butter, mayonnaise, peanut butter, honey, maple syrup, crushed nuts, ice cream or sugar.
- Add healthier fats and oils such as olive, canola, sunflower and safflower oils and margarines.

Step 3: Eat by the clock

Aim to eat 3 small meals and 2-3 snacks / nourishing drinks every day.

Step 4: Drink nourishing fluids, such as:

- Plain full cream milk
- Lactose free milk
- Soy milk
- Flavoured milk
- Milkshakes and smoothies
- Hot milk drinks (e.g. Milo™)
- UP & GO™
- Nutrition supplements, such as Sustagen™, Fortisip™, Resource™, Ensure™



Step 5: Consider including a general multivitamin and mineral supplement

For more information

If you would like more information, please speak to your GP or make an appointment with an Accredited Practising Dietitian on the Dietitians Australia website:

<https://dietitiansaustralia.org.au/>



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An interpreter can be arranged for patients where English is not their first language. Please ask ward or clinical staff for more information.

Information in this document does not constitute medical advice and is for general information only. Readers should always seek independent professional advice where appropriate



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