Eating well for wound healing

Introduction
A well balanced diet including a variety of different foods is more likely to contain the nutrients and energy necessary to heal wounds and pressure ulcers and help to prevent infection. This leaflet is intended to provide useful advice and tips to help you promote wound healing.

Hydration
If you are dehydrated, your skin can become dry, inelastic and fragile making you more likely to develop a pressure ulcer. **Aim to drink 6 to 8 glasses (1.5 litres) of water / fluids a day to keep your body and skin hydrated.**

Please note: If you are on a fluid restriction please keep to your advised amount. If the wound is leaking excessive amounts of fluid, then you may need extra protein in your diet.

Protein
Alongside an adequate energy intake, protein will help reduce inflammation and encourage skin repair and healing. You will also need extra protein if there are loses from your wound.

Many high protein foods are also high in Vitamin A and Zinc. Vitamin A also helps maintain healthy skin and Zinc is needed for protein synthesis and metabolism.

**Foods containing 5 - 10g of protein per portion:**
- 1 thin slice of cooked ham
- 1 large or 2 thin sausages
- 2 fish fingers
- 1 egg
- 125g pot of fromage frais / greek/ natural yogurt
- 1 tablespoon (2oz) soft cheese
- ½ pint of milk
- 1 custard tart

**Foods containing 10 - 15g of protein per portion:**
- 2oz / 50g slice of beef
- 1 small chicken drumstick
- 1 mackerel fillet
- Tuna / salmon in a sandwich
- 3 Quorn sausages
- 1 small tub (4oz) of cottage cheese
- 50g (2oz) hard cheese

**Foods containing 20g or more of protein per portion:**
- 4oz / 100g minced meat
- 1 small pork chop
- 4 oz / 100g chicken breast
- 1 fillet of cod / salmon / haddock
- Cheese sandwich (50g hard cheese and two slices of bread)

Top tips to promote wound healing
- **✓** Aim for at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day.
- **✓** Aim to have a source of protein at each meal (see protein list for ideas).
- **✓** Aim for 6 to 8 glasses of fluid a day (limiting the number of sugary drinks)
- **✓** Aim to have iron rich foods regularly (e.g. meat, green leafy vegetables, eggs, pulses, nuts, dried fruit) and wait at least 30 minutes after eating before having a cup of tea.
- **✓** Base your meals on starchy carbohydrates (e.g. potatoes, pasta rice).
- **✓** Include low fat dairy products such as milk, yoghurts and cheese to provide protein and calcium.

Nutrition & Dietetics Patient information
What if I am overweight?

Further weight gain could result in excessive pressure to the wound, which may slow down the healing process. Aim to limit high fat and high sugar foods such as sugary drinks, processed foods and pastries to avoid weight gain.

What if I have diabetes?

Poorly controlled diabetes can delay wound healing. Therefore it is important to ensure good blood glucose control.

You should avoid adding sugar, honey, jams and syrup to foods and continue to take low sugar alternatives. Ask your nurse for advice if you have further questions.

What if I am underweight?

If you are underweight you may have less protective padding between your skin and bones. This can increase the chance of you developing pressure ulcers.

If you have been identified as underweight by your healthcare professional or you have recently lost weight, an increase in energy (calories), carbohydrates, fats and protein would help promote a healthy weight and promote wound healing.

Tips for a poor appetite

Try to have three regular meals per day, plus mid-morning, afternoon, and supper time snacks, or eat small amounts every two to three hours.

Have small portions and if you are still hungry, you can always have more.

Fats and sugars are high in energy, and can be added to foods to increase calories and promote weight gain.

For example, you could try:

✓ Using full cream milk or double cream and add this to soups, sauces, mashed potato or milky puddings
✓ Add cheese or butter to soups, mashed potato, pasta bakes, vegetables or scrambled eggs
✓ Add jam, sugar, honey or marmalade to breakfast cereals, porridge, toast, scones or milky puddings* (*avoid adding these if diabetic)

Try to use full fat versions of foods where possible such as full cream milk, thick and creamy yogurts and creamy soups.

Meal Ideas

Breakfast

• Breakfast cereal or porridge with added fruit or nuts
• Wholemeal toast, butter or margarine with jam*
• Kippers / egg / beans on toast

Snacks

MILK DRINK WITH:
• Fruit scone with butter and jam*
• Sponge cake with jam and cream*
• Cheese on crackers
• A sandwich filled with cheese, ham, egg or fish
• Thick and creamy yoghurt
• One portion of fruit

Lunch and Main Meal

• Shepherds pie with grated cheese and vegetables
• Roast chicken with creamy mash and vegetables
• Creamy soup with bread and butter*
• Poached fish with white sauce, buttered potatoes and vegetables
• Spagetti bolognaise (lean mince or Quorn mince).
• Scrambled egg on toast
• Tofu with stir fried vegetables

Pudding and Desserts

• Milky pudding for example rice pudding or semolina
• Yoghurts / mousse / trifle
• Sponge and custard
• Fruit and cream / low fat natural yoghurt

* These foods are high in energy and need to be limited for those people that are overweight and / or have diabetes.

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