

WHAT SHOULD I EAT TO HELP MY PRESSURE SORE OR WOUND HEAL?

For Patients in Community Hospitals or their own homes

If you have a pressure sore or a large wound it is important that you think about what you are eating.

There are many nutrients found in food that are involved in the healing process, and if you are not eating the foods that provide them then your wound or pressure sore may take longer to heal.

The Eatwell Guide shown in the picture below shows the types and proportions of food we should be eating each day to provide a balanced diet.

EATING THE RIGHT TYPE OF FOOD



(Reproduced by kind permission of Public Health England)

It is very important that you have a balanced food intake, to provide all the nutrients necessary for healing.

1. Foods from the 'beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins' section are a good source of **protein**, which is needed for repair. Ensure you have foods from this group every day and at least 2 meals. (*Foods in this group include meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds, beans, pulses*).
2. Foods from the 'potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates' section provide **energy**. Your body will need extra energy to fuel the healing process. You should include food from this section with each meal. (*Foods in this group include breakfast cereal, pasta, bread, rice, noodles, oats, yam, plantain*).
3. Try to include (at least) 5 portions from the 'fruit and vegetables' section each day. Many of **the vitamins and minerals** in these foods are important to the healing process and we need to have these daily as our body does not store the vitamins. (*Examples of a portion include; an apple, a banana, and 2-3 heaped tablespoons of vegetables, and a glass of fruit juice*).
4. Food from the 'dairy and alternatives' section should also be included each day. These foods can be useful **nutritious snacks** when your appetite is poor. (*Foods in this group include milk, cheese, yogurt and fromage frais and non-dairy sources like soya dairy alternatives, and oat and almond milks*).
5. Food from the 'oil and spreads' section are normally only required in small amounts. These foods contain a lot of calories - if your appetite is poor it is useful to add a little more of these to your diet.
6. The 'eat less often and in small amounts' section contains foods high in calories with lower nutritional value. However, if your appetite is poor these foods can provide a good source of energy. They should be included along with foods from each of the food groups as above, to help meet your needs. Once your wound has healed and/or your appetite returns to normal, reduce your intake of these foods in line with the healthy eating advice above. (Foods in this group include chocolate, cakes, biscuits, crisps and soft drinks)

It is important to ensure you are having enough to drink. Try to have at least 8 cups of fluid a day. If there is a lot of fluid loss from your wound you will need more than this. Drinks such as full fat milk, hot chocolate, malted milk drinks, and sweet or savoury 'nutritious drinks' such as *Complan, Meritene Energis* can help provide additional nutrients as well as fluid.

EATING ENOUGH TO MEET YOUR NEEDS

It is important that you provide your body with all the building blocks it needs to repair and recover. This can be difficult when you have a poor appetite, the points below may help:

1. Make sure you eat something at each mealtime; breakfast, lunch and evening meal, even if it is only something small - do not miss meals.
2. You may also need snacks between meals. Examples could include thick and creamy yogurts, cheese and crackers, crème caramels, cakes and pastries.
3. If your appetite is not as good as usual, try to eat "little and often".
4. If you are experiencing a poor appetite, everyday foods (such as full fat milk, butter, full fat margarine and cheese) can be added to increase the calories and protein in your meals. Further advice to help provide the nutritious intake you need is available from your Dietitian or www.lnds.nhs.uk.
5. Do not fill up on low calorie, low fat or diet foods whilst your appetite is poor. Choose full fat or nutrient dense foods during this time.
6. If your appetite is not as good as usual, try to include nutritious drinks. Try a glass of full fat milk, milky coffee or a milkshake.
7. If you are not managing to eat normal amounts of food, you may be advised to take a multivitamin and mineral supplement. This will help to ensure you are getting important nutrients such as Vitamin C and Zinc that are important for wound healing. We should all take a 10 µg/day vitamin D supplement between October and April and also if you spend the majority of your time indoors over the summer months.

IF YOU HAVE DIABETES

If you have diabetes then good blood sugar control is important for healing. Make sure you are eating at regular intervals, and monitor your blood sugar levels. Your diabetes medication may need adjusting by your GP or diabetes team.

IF YOU ARE AN INPATIENT IN A COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

1. Snacks are available during your stay on the wards (mid-morning, mid-afternoon and at supper-time). Ask the ward staff to explain the system to you.
2. Nutritious drinks are available from the ward staff. Try a glass of full fat milk, or you may be offered Complan to drink.
3. Friends or family may be able to bring in food you like from home. It is important to discuss this with ward staff first, to make sure the foods are suitable, stored correctly, and ward guidelines are followed.

IF YOU....

- Require further information on the foods you should eat.
- Need help applying this information to your diet
- Feel that you are struggling to achieve the advice given here.
- Have several different dietary requirements to consider.
- Are in hospital and need advice on your diet before you go home.

... you should speak to your Dietitian or ask your Health Care Professional to refer you to a Dietitian

Contact details.....