

Eating Well for Wound Healing

Information for Patient and Carers

Introduction

Good nutrition is essential for optimal wound healing. Your diet can affect how fast your body heals, how strong your tissue becomes and your resistance to infection during the healing process. A poor nutritional intake can impair healing and result in chronic wounds which take much longer to repair and are more likely to become infected.

To heal a wound the body needs more protein than usual and may also need more energy (calories) than usual too. Having a poor nutrient and fluid intake can increase the risk of pressure ulcers and prolong the wound healing process.

If you have diabetes, it is important to know that poorly controlled diabetes can delay wound healing.

Fluids

Dehydrated skin is less elastic, more fragile and more susceptible to breakdown. Dehydration will also reduce efficiency of blood circulation, which will impair the supply of oxygen and nutrients to the wound.

Some wounds may produce exudate (fluid secreted by body tissue) leading to an increased requirement of fluid to replace the losses.

In order to maintain good hydration aim to:

- Drink at least 6-8 cups or glasses of fluid each day (includes hot drinks such as tea, coffee and hot chocolate, squash, fruit juices, milk, soups, jelly and other liquids)
- Reduce caffeinated drinks if you consume more than 3 cups per day (more than this may start to have a dehydrating affect)
- Stay within recommended limits for alcohol consumption (no more than 14 units per week)

An indicator of good hydration is urine which is pale in colour. Dark or strong smelling urine is likely to indicate dehydration

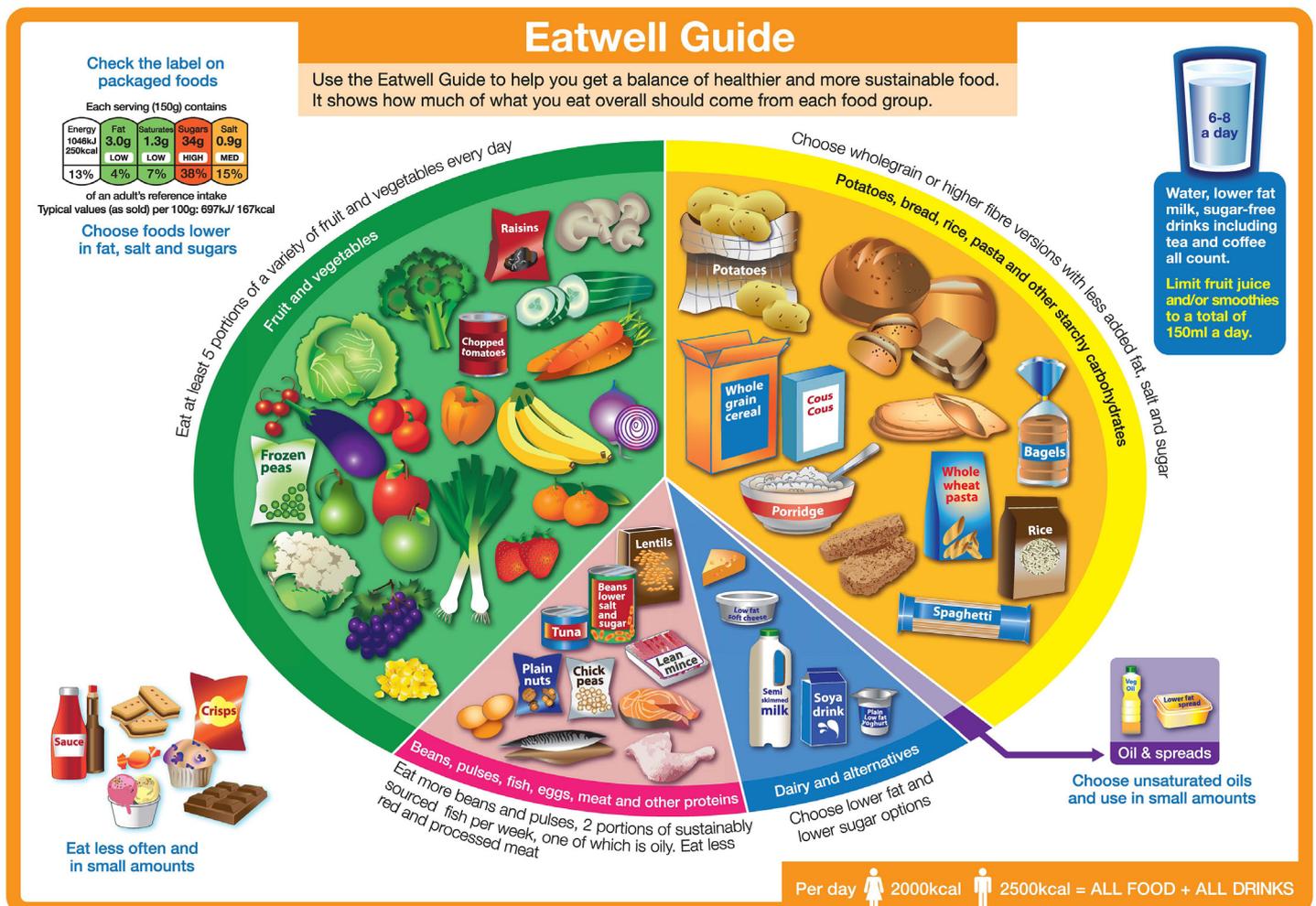
Fluid needs are increased when you have a highly exuding wound.

What do you need to eat?

Our bodies need us to eat a range of different foods every day to ensure we are eating a balanced diet.

A balanced diet

The “Eatwell Guide” shows the different types of food groups we need for a balanced diet. It shows how much you should eat from each food group. Eating a balanced diet with enough energy (calories) and protein is essential for wound healing.



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland.

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Protein Sources

Meat, fish, eggs, cheese, beans and pulses, soya products like tofu, mycoprotein like Quorn, seitan (wheat protein) and nuts. These also are often a rich source of vitamins and minerals.

Try to have at least one of these foods at each meal.

Carbohydrate sources

Rice, pasta, potatoes, naan, chapati, bread and cereals especially wholegrain varieties.

Try to have at least one of these foods at each meal.

Dairy foods (or alternatives)

Milk, cheese, yoghurt or fortified dairy-free alternatives.

Aim to have one pint of milk per day or a variety of milk-based foods such as cheese and yoghurts. If you use dairy-free alternatives – one based on soya will contain a similar amount of protein to cow's milk. Other dairy-free alternatives contain far less nutrients.

Fruit and vegetables

Fresh, frozen and tinned – these are rich in important vitamins, minerals and fibre.

Aim for five portions of a variety of types and colours every day.

Key Nutrients	Reason	Examples
Protein	Key nutrient needed to promote wound healing. Helps to maintain and repair body tissues.	Meat, poultry, fish dairy foods such as milk, yoghurt, cheese and eggs, vegetarian alternatives such as Soya, Quorn® or Tofu, nuts and seeds, pulse vegetables e.g. Beans, chickpeas and lentils.
Iron	Iron is important for the healing process by helping to maintain adequate blood haemoglobin levels.	Meat, fish and eggs. Iron is also found in other food such as beans, pulses, green vegetables and dried fruit, but these are less easily absorbed. If you drink tea, do so between meals rather than with your meals as tea contains tannins, which reduce the absorption of iron.
Vitamin C	Vitamin C helps with the absorption of iron from your food and also directly with the healing process. It is not stored in the body so a daily supply is needed.	Vitamin C is found in a wide variety of fruit and vegetables. Vitamin C is destroyed during the cooking process, so it is important not to over-cook your vegetables, or if possible, steam them. Drinking a small glass of fruit juice (150ml) with your meal is a good way to improve your intake. If your vitamin C intake remains low you may need to take a supplement.
Zinc	Zinc is important for the formation of new skin tissue and to help wounds to heal.	Red meat, shellfish, milk, cheese, bread, lentils, beans, pumpkin seeds and cereal products such as wheat germ.

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

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If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

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ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

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برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے می ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

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