

Orthopedic Surgery Nutrition Guidelines

Your body needs to be well-nourished to heal bones, muscles and skin that are affected by surgery. The nutrients from food provide us with the strength, energy and ability to heal. People who are well-nourished overall are less likely to develop infection and heal faster. Work on incorporating the following important nutrients into your diet before and after surgery.

PROTEIN	Protein contains all the essential amino acids to aid in wound healing and keeps your immune system strong. Protein is not just for muscle building. It is a key nutrient in bone building. Protein-rich food: Egg, red and white meat, turkey, chicken, fish, cheese, low/nonfat milk, beans, nuts/seeds, soy protein
IRON	Iron is an important mineral for your body to make hemoglobin. Hemoglobin is a part of the blood that carries oxygen. It is important to increase your iron intake before and after surgery. Eating foods high in Vitamin C with iron-rich food can help your body absorb iron. Iron-rich food: Red meat, egg yolks, dark green leafy vegetables, iron-rich cereals, beans, lentils, dried fruit, liver, watermelon, baked potato, dark meat turkey
CALCIUM & VITAMIN D	Calcium and Vitamin D are nutrients associated with healthy bones. All milk is fortified with Vitamin D to help absorb calcium. Yogurt is also a good source of calcium, but is not always fortified with vitamin D, so check the nutrition label. Calcium & Vitamin D rich food: Low-fat dairy, like milk and yogurt
FIBER	Make sure to consume fiber-rich foods prior to and after surgery to avoid constipation (unless directed differently by your physician). It is important to increase your fiber intake slowly to avoid gas and bloating. Adequate fluid intake is also very important if you are increasing your fiber intake to avoid adverse effects. Prunes or prune juice (along with drinking plenty of water) have a natural laxative effect that can alleviate constipation while on pain medications Fiber-rich food: Whole grains, bran, fruits, vegetables, beans, lentils
WATER	Drink at least 8 glasses of water or other calorie-free beverages per day to help with the prevention of constipation. Adequate hydration will also help to promote healing.
VITAMIN C	Vitamin C is needed to make a protein called collagen and is needed for repairing tendons, ligaments and healing surgical wounds. Vitamin C-rich food: Citrus fruits, strawberries, kiwi, baked potatoes, broccoli, bell peppers
ZINC	Zinc is also important for wound healing. Zinc is a mineral found mostly in animal foods. It is better to get zinc from foods than supplements. Zinc-rich food: Meat, fish, poultry, dairy, whole-grain foods, breads, cereals, nuts

Aim for 2-3 servings from each of these food groups daily.

MEAT AND ALTERNATIVES

1 serving equals:

- 2-3 oz meat, poultry or fish
- ½ cup beans
- ½ cup tofu
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter

MILK AND ALTERNATIVES

1 serving equals:

- 1 cup milk or soy beverage
- 1 cup yogurt



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