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## Help Your Injury with Nutrition

When a person is wounded or injured (including recovery from surgical procedures), the body requires extra nutrition to heal properly and rapidly. You can help your doctor do a better job by following these simple guidelines.

1. Drink extra water. Add a large glass as soon as you wake up in the morning, before lunch and before dinner. Two of water's important functions are joint lubrication and muscle recovery. Even mild muscle cell dehydration can slow the body's repair process.
2. Get plenty of protein – When you are injured slight deficiencies can lengthen recovery time. Have two to three servings a day of foods such as fish, chicken, turkey and low or nonfat dairy. Beef and pork are also good sources of protein but tend to be high in fat so use them in moderation. You can also acquire extra protein in your diet by using protein powder to make shakes and smoothies. This is especially recommended if you are a vegetarian. Use 25-40 grams of protein per drink.
3. Take a multivitamin, multi-mineral formula that provides you with at least 100% of RDA for all vitamins and minerals. Read labels carefully. If you use one-pill-a-day formula, you will probably need to take an additional mineral only formula. Because minerals are large, it is impossible to fit 100 percent of them into one pill. Formulas that do have 100 percent of all the minerals generally require that you take four to six pills, tablets or capsules per day.
4. Take extra vitamin C. It activates enzymes needed to repair wounds and connective tissue. During your recovery, multiply your body weight by 10 and then round to the nearest 100 to find out how many milligrams of vitamin C you need per day. For example, 152 pounds x 10 = 1520, rounded to the nearest hundred = 1500 mg per day.
5. Do your best to stay away from junk food. Eating less junk food is always good to do but is especially important when you are recovering. Foods like soda, chips, candy, cake, pies, doughnuts, and cookies are low quality sources of calories. If you have a sweet tooth, try snacking on fresh fruits or sports bars such as Clif, Power, Balance, or Met-Rx. Ice cream lovers are advised to eat low or nonfat yogurt instead.

6. If you are on a weight-loss diet, put it on hold until you feel better. Increase the number of calories you eat to a level where you maintain your current weight. Trying to lose weight and recover at the same time will slow down the healing process. This, in turn, will inhibit your weight loss goals by extending the time you are unable to exercise at times and intensities required to burn body fat.

7. When you are better:

- Continue to drink plenty of water
- Reduce your protein back to two servings a day unless you are involved in heavy athletics
- Try to maintain healthy snacking habits
- If you are on a weight loss program, resume it
- Reduce your vitamin C intake to 500 mg per day
- Continue to take your multivitamin at least 5 days per week