

Good Nutrition for Wound Healing and Leg Ulcers

It is important for all of us to eat a regular and balanced diet with plenty of variety; this helps keep our bodies in tip-top condition. When you have a particular problem such as a leg ulcer or chronic wound there are some nutrients that can help promote the healing process. These include energy, protein, Vitamin C, Vitamin A, zinc and iron. Making sure that you eat enough foods that contain these nutrients will help.

What the nutrients do and where to find them in the diet

Energy

If you don't have enough energy in your diet your body will use your own muscle and tissue to provide energy. Preserving your own tissue and muscle is essential for wound healing.

Energy-rich foods – Bread, potatoes, breakfast cereal, pasta, rice, margarine, butter, oil, fatty and sugary foods

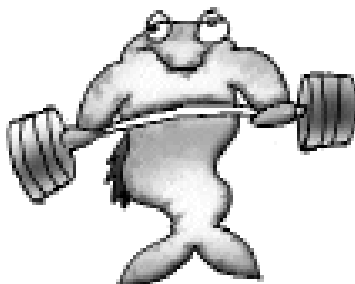
How much should I have? – Aim for three portions a day.



Protein

This is required as the building block for making new tissue. A lack of protein in the diet will slow down wound healing, and mean that any new tissue made is not very strong and easily damaged.

Protein-rich foods – Meat, fish, eggs, cheese, milk, pulses and nuts

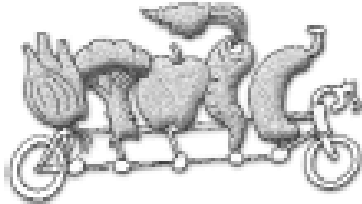


How much should I have? – Aim for two to three portions a day.

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Vitamin C

Vitamin C is important for making connective tissue. It also boosts the strength of the immune system and so helps prevent infections developing in the wound site.



Vitamin C-rich foods – Fruit including fruit juice and vegetables

How much should I have? – Aim for five portions a day of fruit and vegetables

Vitamin A

Promotes skin cell growth and reduces infection.

Vitamin A-rich foods – Liver, kidney, fish liver oils, milk, dairy products, eggs, margarine, fruit and vegetables

How much should I have? – Try to include one of these foods at least once a day.

Zinc

Zinc plays an essential role in promoting cell regrowth, especially skin cells.

Zinc-rich foods – Red meat, fish, shellfish, chicken, eggs, milk and milk products, bread, cereal, green vegetables and pulses

How much should I have? – Aim for one portion of a zinc-rich food per day.

Iron

Promotes cell growth and ensures a good supply of nutrient-rich blood to the wound site.

Iron-rich foods – Red meat, liver, kidney, breakfast cereal, bread, green vegetables, pulses, dried fruit and nuts

How much should I have? – Aim for one portion of an iron-rich food per day.

