



# Healing From the Inside Out: Nutrition Basics

## FACT

The skin is the largest organ in the body. It's about 10% of your body weight! Proper nutrition helps keep your skin healthy and allows it to complete the job of rebuilding tissue caused by a wound or other injury.

## FUELING YOUR BODY

Your body needs the right amount of calories and protein every day in order to heal a wound.

Think of calories as fuel for your body, just like gasoline is fuel for your car. Without enough fuel, your body—and your car—can't run properly.



## EAT TO HEAL

If you are not eating well or have a poor appetite, try eating five or six small meals each day, instead of three big meals. Smaller meals and snacks help you get the nutrition you need to heal.



## THE HEALING POWER OF PROTEIN

### PROTEIN SOURCES

- Eggs
- Chicken
- Beef
- Fish
- Dairy

### What if I don't eat meat?

- Other sources of protein:
- Legumes
  - Soy foods
  - Nuts, seeds, and nut butters

### TO HEAL, AIM FOR 20 TO 30 GRAMS OF PROTEIN AT EACH MEAL

#### 20 to 25 grams of protein:

- A piece of cooked chicken, lean meat, or fish the size of a deck of cards (about 3 ounces)



#### 8 grams of protein:

- 1 cup of low-fat milk
- 1 cup of yogurt

#### 6 to 7 grams of protein:

- One egg
- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter
- 1 ounce of cheese

## VITAMINS: GOOD INSURANCE

### Take a complete daily multivitamin

#### Include vitamin C, an important antioxidant:

- Increases the strength of the wound as it heals
- Helps with the creation of collagen in the skin
- Is important in the creation of new blood vessels
- Helps with iron absorption
- Citrus fruits and leafy green vegetables are great sources of vitamin C



### Try a Ready-to-Drink Nutrition Shake

- Can help if you are not eating enough food
- Are available at grocery stores, drug stores, and discount chains
- Come in many flavors, so choose your favorites

## STAY HYDRATED

Anything that is liquid at room temperature helps keep you hydrated, including:

- Soup
- Ice cream
- Fruit ices
- Gelatin

Take a few sips of liquid at every commercial break while watching television or every few pages while reading.

### Based on information from:

Baranowski S, Ayello EA. *Wound Care Essentials: Practice Principles*. 3rd ed. Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2012.

Dietetics in Health Care Communities Dietetic Practice Group. In: Niedert KC, ed in chief, Carlson MP, ed. *Nutrition Care of the Older Adult: A Handbook for Nutrition Throughout the Continuum of Care*. 3rd ed. Chicago, IL: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; 2016.