

NUTRITION

FOODS FIRST – PRESSURE ULCERS AND SKIN HEALTH

The foods that we eat provide our bodies with energy (calories) and many nutrients, such as protein, vitamins and minerals.

Some of these nutrients are especially important to help heal pressure ulcers and to keep skin healthy.

It is very important that you try to increase your intake of foods that provide you with **PROTEIN**. High quality sources of protein include meat, fish, poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt, pudding and ice cream made with milk. Protein is also found in lower amounts in nuts, legumes (such as brown beans, navy beans, kidney beans, soy beans, chick peas, split peas and lentils) and foods made with whole grains. *Refer to the Good Source of Protein document.*

VITAMINS and MINERALS such as vitamin C, vitamin A, iron and zinc are other nutrients found in foods that help our bodies to heal wounds. Below you will find lists of foods that are key sources of these important nutrients -

VITAMIN C - citrus fruits and juices, strawberries, tomatoes, sweet peppers (especially red), broccoli, potatoes, cauliflower, cantaloupe and Brussels sprouts.

VITAMIN A - milk, eggs, liver, cheese and fish. Beta-carotene, which is found in dark green leafy vegetables and orange fruits and vegetables, is changed into vitamin A in the body. Choose fruits and vegetables such as carrots, sweet red peppers, pink grapefruit, broccoli, mangoes, peaches and leafy greens.

IRON - beef, pork, chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, liver, kidney, peas, beans, nuts, dried fruit, leafy green vegetables, pasta, bread and cereals that have added iron. Cooking in iron pots adds iron to foods too! The iron found in animal products (such as meats) gets into your body more easily than iron found in plants (such as vegetables). If you eat an iron-containing food at the same time as another food or juice that has vitamin C in it (see vitamin C list, above), it is easier for your body to take in the iron from the foods you eat.

ZINC - meats (beef, chicken, turkey, pork), fish and seafood (especially oysters), liver, eggs, milk, beans, whole-wheat products and wheat germ.

The foods listed above are the main sources of these vitamins and minerals, but there are many foods that contain these nutrients. When you eat a wide variety of foods every day, you are giving your body the **VITAMINS, MINERALS, PROTEIN AND ENERGY** it needs to heal your skin and keep it healthy. **IF YOU CHOOSE 3 OF THE 4 FOOD GROUPS AT EACH MEAL, AND 1 OR 2 OF THE FOOD GROUPS AS SNACKS, YOU ARE HELPING YOUR BODY GET THE NUTRIENTS IT NEEDS FOR WOUND HEALING AND BETTER HEALTH!**

Many people may not consider **WATER** to be a nutrient, but it is! Water is very important for wound healing, and contributes to health and well being in many ways. Our bodies may not always tell us that we are thirsty, especially as we get older. Therefore, it is necessary to plan water and other drinks such as milk, fruit and vegetable juices into meals and snacks.

Caffeine-containing drinks such as coffee, tea and cola are okay to take in moderation, but should not be used as your body's main source of water. Caffeine may increase the amount of water your body loses through urine. Try to take no more than 4 cups per day of drinks that contain caffeine.



*This document was developed by Chris Fraser, registered dietician,
from the Parkwood Institute, St. Joseph Health Care, London,
Ontario.*

