



## Pre- and Post-Operative Nutrition Tips

Nutrition is vital to overall health and wellness – the one true medicine that fuels your body and helps it heal. For this reason, following a balanced diet before, during, and after major surgeries is important to your recovery.

### Good nutrition can help you:

- Build strength to prepare your body for surgery or treatment
- Heal wounds, bones, and infections
- Manage post-operative complications and discomfort, such as constipation
- Have enough strength and energy for physical therapy and rehabilitation

### Poor dietary habits and nutrient deficiencies are shown to:

- Increase risk of infection and surgical complications
- Impair wound healing
- Increase length of hospital stay

### Follow these easy tips to ensure adequate nutrition before and after surgery:

- **Eat protein at each meal or snack** – especially at breakfast and after physical therapy appointments. Good sources of protein include lean meats, fish, eggs, cottage cheese, yogurt, milk, beans, lentils, tofu, nuts & seeds (and nut/seed butters).
- **Add plenty of fruits and vegetables** to each meal or snack. These foods contain many vitamins and minerals important for wound healing and immunity. They are also rich in fiber, which helps manage post-operative constipation, a common side effect from anesthesia and pain medications.
- **Avoid refined sugars and sweets** – these can raise your risk for infection. Opt for quality carbohydrates such as whole grains and starches (oatmeal, whole wheat, brown rice, sweet potatoes, etc).
- **Drink plenty of water.** Water helps manage constipation. If necessary, try prune juice or herbal teas such as *Smooth Move*. If you have post-operative nausea, try ginger tea.
- **Eat foods high in vitamins B & C and zinc**, such as green vegetables, berries, oranges, pumpkin seeds, nuts, beans, and lentils. These nutrients are necessary for wound healing. For specific nutrient requirements and recommendations, consult your doctor and dietitian.

### Weight Management:

- Stop any dieting or weight loss efforts 1 to 2 weeks before surgery and for several weeks after. Dieting increases your risk for malnutrition after surgery.
- If you are underweight or having trouble keeping weight on, visit with your doctor or dietitian for a consultation on how to gain and maintain weight in a healthy manner.