

Tissue Viability Team

Can I Help My Wounds To Heal?

Introduction

Wounds heal more quickly if the right conditions are in place. Unhealthy diet and infection are causes of poor wound healing. This leaflet explains how you can help your wound heal more quickly.

Diet

Eating well can make a huge difference to your wounds and will encourage them heal.

Try to eat a varied diet and regular meals, unless you are on a restricted or special diet. Foods containing protein, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals will be particularly useful.

- **Protein** can be found in dairy products such as milk, cheese, eggs and also meat, fish, soya, nuts, beans and pulses.
- **Carbohydrates** can be found in potatoes, cereals, bread, pasta and rice. Other sources of carbohydrate are biscuits, sweets, cakes and chocolate. These can be included if your appetite is poor.
- **Vitamin C** can be found in fruit, vegetables, salad and fruit juices, all of these will help towards your five portions per day.
- **Iron** can be found in red meat, chicken and turkey. Eggs, beans, pulses, fortified breakfast cereals, nuts and green vegetables are also good sources. Iron is absorbed better when a good source of vitamin C is taken at the same time.
- **Zinc** can be found in cereals, fish, and meat.
- **Fluids** are essential to stop the skin from becoming dry and inelastic and therefore more likely to be damaged. You should aim to drink 8- 10 cups of fluid per day. Any non alcoholic will provide fluids. Milky drinks will also provide extra calories and protein. Alcoholic drinks will cause further dehydration and are not counted in your daily intake. There is support available to help you if your alcohol intake is above the recommended guidelines.

Take advice from the nursing, medical staff or Dietician if you are seeing one if you are unsure as to what you can eat.

If you have a small appetite and you are struggling with meals, you may be advised to eat small meals and snacks between meals. Supplement drinks might be prescribed if necessary, by the doctor or dietitian. Try and drink all of the supplements you are given, they will really help your wound to heal.



Patient Information

Mobility

Keep as mobile as possible in bed and when sitting in a chair. The more mobile you are the less likely you are to get complications such as blood clots, pressure ulcers (bedsores) or chest infections. These can all lead to an increase in the length of your stay in hospital and will further increase your nutritional needs.

Pain Relief

Take regular pain relief tablets if you need them. If you are in pain you will not want to move or eat and your rehabilitation could be delayed.

Infection

Don't touch your wound as this can make a wound infection much more likely.

If there are dressings on your wound do not remove them, the ward staff will check them and remove them when necessary.

Let the nursing or medical staff know if:

- Your wound is oozing and if the dressing becomes wet at any time.
- If you experience an increased amount of **pain** from the wound, an unusual **smell** and an increase in **redness** around the wound.

Stopping Smoking

Stopping smoking will improve your chances of wound healing. University Hospital has a dedicated NHS Stop Smoking Service that can provide medication and advice on how to give you the best chance of quitting smoking for good. For more information ask a member of staff or contact the 'No Butts' Stop Smoking Service on 024 7696 4760 or e-mail: stopsmoking.services@uhcw.nhs.uk

Further Information

Finally if you have any concerns regarding your wound or any other aspect of your care do not hesitate to speak to the nursing or medical staff looking after you.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 76966154 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Document History

Author	Amy Verdon
Department	Tissue Viability
Contact Tel No	26154
Published	December 2008
Reviewed	March 2019
Review	March 2021
Version	5.1
Reference No	HIC/LFT/525/07