



Hackensack
Meridian *Health*

Healthy Eating for Healing



The food you eat has a major role in your health and wellness. It keeps your energy levels up, keeps your body in the best working order, and helps you heal. The following recommendations are helpful after surgery.

Protein

Protein rich foods are needed to maintain muscles and helps in the healing process after surgery. It is best to include protein sources throughout the day.

Sources:

- Meat and poultry
- Dairy
- Beans
- Nuts
- Seafood
- Eggs
- Soy

Tips:

- Use eggs in omelets, with vegetables, or to make French toast. Hard-boiled eggs can be used in salads or eaten alone.
- Use meat, poultry, and seafood, in stews, sandwiches, soups, chili, and stir-fry.
- Add yogurt to smoothies, dips, cereal, and fruit parfaits.
- Use milk when making soup, hot or cold cereal, and pudding.
- Use cheese in sandwiches, grated into casseroles and soups, and melted on baked potato and pasta dishes.
- Eat plant protein sources like vegetarian chili, pasta with beans and vegetables, bean burritos, and bean dips like hummus or white bean dip.
- Include nuts by eating a handful of almonds or having a peanut butter sandwich daily.
- Include soy by adding tofu into a vegetable stir-fry or eat a veggie burger.

Carbohydrates

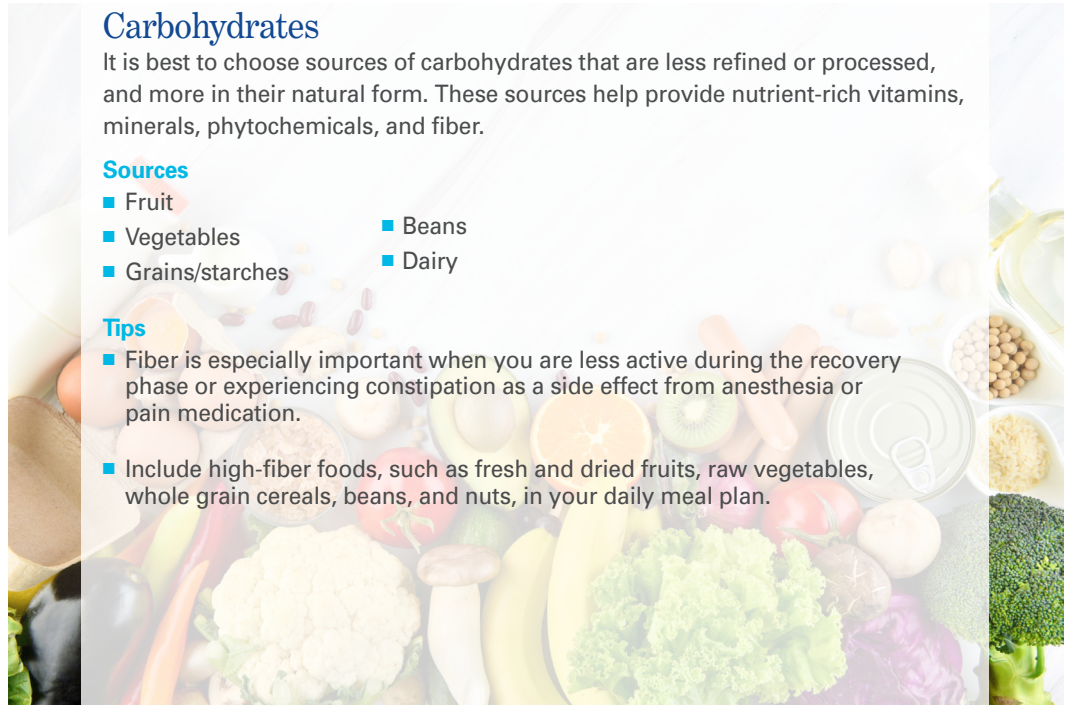
It is best to choose sources of carbohydrates that are less refined or processed, and more in their natural form. These sources help provide nutrient-rich vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals, and fiber.

Sources

- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Beans
- Grains/starches
- Dairy

Tips

- Fiber is especially important when you are less active during the recovery phase or experiencing constipation as a side effect from anesthesia or pain medication.
- Include high-fiber foods, such as fresh and dried fruits, raw vegetables, whole grain cereals, beans, and nuts, in your daily meal plan.





Fat

Fat provides energy and is needed by your body to process certain vitamins. Choose unsaturated or “healthful” fats.

Sources:

- Oils
- Avocado
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, tuna)

Tips:

- Saturated fat should be limited. This includes fatty meat, whole milk dairy products, and coconut and palm oils.
- Work healthful fats into your meals by using oil or cooking spray in place of butter when cooking, using oil and vinegar as a salad dressing, adding nuts to homemade trail mix, and eating fish twice weekly.
- An easy way to get good fat and protein after surgery is by including tuna in a sandwich or salad.

Liquids

Fluids are important because they help our body to use food and medications properly. Fluids also regulate our body temperature and bowel function.

Sources:

- Water (is best)
- 100% juice
- Soup
- Jell-O™, or sugar-free Jell-O™ (if you have diabetes)
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Herbal or decaffeinated tea

Tips:

- Limit beverages such as coffee, regular tea, colas, and alcoholic drinks, which may have a dehydrating effect.

Vitamins and Minerals

Eat fruits and vegetables of various colors and choose whole grains to get a variety of vitamins and minerals in your diet.

Important

Certain vitamins, minerals and herbal supplements must be stopped two (2) weeks prior to surgery because they can thin your blood. This includes vitamin C, vitamin E, garlic, omega-3 and ginkgo biloba. Check with your doctor.

MENU Suggestions

Keep these helpful tips in mind to get the nutrients you need during your recovery:

1. Eating a variety of food is the best way to meet your needs
2. Start your day with breakfast!
3. Eat every three to four hours
4. Stay hydrated
5. Think variety! Use MyPlate to create balanced, nutritious meals



Breakfast Ideas

- Omelet cups
- Oatmeal with fruit and nuts
- Greek yogurt parfaits with fruit, whole grain cereal, and nuts
- Breakfast burritos
- High-fiber cereals with milk

Lunch and Dinner Ideas

- Homemade soup or stew
- Stir-fry
- Chili

Mini Meals and Snacks

- Pudding
- Nuts
- Soup
- Fruits
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Stuffed baked potato with cheese
- Roasted turkey or roast beef slices
- Hummus/bean dips with veggies or whole grain crackers
- Reduced-fat string cheese
- Homemade milkshakes or smoothies
- Yogurt

Commercial Supplements

- Boost®
- Carnation Instant Breakfast®
- Ensure®
- Protein powder added to foods and drinks

Take-Out Recommendations

- Steamed, grilled, stir-fried, or roasted items
- Avoid battered, crispy and fried foods
- Choose entrees with marinara or broth-based sauces
- Ask for sauces and dressings on the side so you can control how much is added to your meal



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