Eating for a speedy recovery

Healthy eating is very important after an infection, operation, illness or burns. Your body needs extra energy and nutrients to help with the recovery process. Here are some tips to help you to a speedy recovery.

Eat protein foods every day

- Try to have some protein foods with each meal.
- Foods high in protein include meat, fish, chicken, eggs, nuts, peanut butter, legumes (baked beans, lentils, chickpeas), milk, cheese, yoghurt and custard.
- High protein snacks include foods like cheese and biscuits, milk drinks (Milo® or milk coffees, milkshakes, smoothies), yoghurt, custard, baked beans on toast, nuts, or peanut butter on toast.
- Add grated cheese to cooked foods or skim milk powder to soups, stews or milk drinks.

Eat regularly

- Have three main meals plus regular snacks and drinks between meals. Don’t skip meals.
- Eat a wide variety of foods from the five food groups – grain (cereal) foods, fruit, vegetables, meat and meat alternatives and dairy foods.
- Make every mouthful count. Don’t fill up on foods with little nutrition. Look at the ‘high energy high protein foods’ handout for ideas.
Eat fruits and vegetables every day
Vitamin C is important for healing. Eat foods rich in vitamin C each day.
- Fruits that are high in vitamin C include oranges, berries, rockmelon, kiwi fruit and pineapple.
- Vegetables high in vitamin C include tomato, capsicum, broccoli, spinach, and cabbage.

Drink plenty of fluids every day
- Try to make the most of your fluid intake by having high energy drinks.
- Good choices to boost your nutrition are milk drinks, fruit juices, soups, jelly or custard.
- This will help your body to get the extra nutrition for healing, as well as the fluid it needs.
- Don’t fill up too much on watery drinks such as cups of coffee or tea. If you are drinking coffee, make it with hot milk instead of water.
- Aim for around eight glasses of fluids every day.

This general advice was accurate at the time of publication (April 2015). For more information about healthy eating for a speedy recovery and your individual needs, see your GP, or an accredited practising dietitian.