

Nutrition for Rehabilitation and Recovery from Injury

No one wants to get injured, but injuries do happen. You might not think food is important during rehabilitation and recovery, but nutrients help your body to heal and get strong again.

Important Nutrients for the Healing Process

- Vitamin C: Helps your body form collagen. (Collagen is a protein needed for strength and flexibility; it repairs tendons and ligaments and strengthens bones.) The concentration of vitamin C in your body decreases when your body is under stress. Stress increases urine losses of vitamin C.
- Vitamin A: To heal, your body needs vitamin A for cell growth and development, bone development, and to help immune function.
- Zinc is involved in wound healing.
- See the boxes in this handout for food sources of these nutrients. Supplements may be necessary.

Food Sources of Vitamin C

- Oranges and orange juice
- Broccoli
- Red bell peppers
- Strawberries
- Grapefruit and grapefruit juice
- Baked potatoes
- Cabbage
- Tomatoes
- Papaya
- Cantaloupe

Note: The Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for vitamin C is 90 milligrams per day for men and 75 milligrams per day for women. Do not take more than 2,000 milligrams per day.

Food Sources of Vitamin A

- Liver
- Sweet potatoes
- Carrots
- Mango
- Turnip greens
- Spinach
- Papaya
- Red bell peppers

Note: The RDA for vitamin A is 900 retinol activity equivalents (RAE) per day for men and 700 RAE per day for women. Do not take more than 3,000 RAE (10,000 I U) per day.

Food Sources of Zinc

- Meat
- Sunflower seeds
- Seafood
- Almonds

Note: The RDA for zinc is 11 milligrams per day for men and 8 milligrams per day for women. Do not take more than 40 milligrams per day.

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