

Pre and Post Surgery Nutrition and Lifestyle Strategies to Optimize your Recovery



If you are planning to undergo surgery, or are recovering from a medical procedure, there are strategies you can use to invest in a healthy, steady recovery.

Think of surgery like playing a sport. To prepare for tournaments, you would train and follow tips from your coach, so you are ready to play your best game. If you're not well trained, you're not going to perform well. Surgery is much the same.

If you or a loved one requires surgery, consider increasing your nutrition and incorporating a few of our tip to help improve your post-surgery recovery time.

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First things first, dial-up your nutrition.

To support recovery, try eating more high-quality proteins and energy sources before and after surgery (visit Health Canada's website: food-guide.canada.ca/en).



What consists of good nutrition before surgery? A lot depends on your age, procedure, and general health. If you're concerned you might not be able to eat well before treatment or surgery, talk to your doctor or dietitian. They can help you determine your body's energy needs, and tell you which foods to eat before your surgery and which to avoid.

Meeting your nutrition needs before and after surgery to help you get back on your feet! Getting enough protein and calories will help you: ^{1,4}

- Heal and recover faster
- Leave the hospital sooner
- Reduce your risk of complications
- Keep up your strength and energy



Nutrition Drink

Doctors may suggest nutrition drinks or oral nutrition supplements that can provide extra calories and nutrients to help meet your nutrition needs. These high-energy, high-protein drinks and supplements will help to prepare and protect your muscles and body tissues before and after surgery. ^{5,7}

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Secondly, get moving!

Staying active will help maintain your muscles and strength before and after surgery. ^{1,6,7} Your doctor or certified exercise specialist, like a physiotherapist or kinesiologist, can recommend a program that suits you.



your physician. These exercises or merely moving about can help preserve lean muscle, stay strong and make a faster transition back into your routine. Many hospitals now encourage post-operative patients to get up and move about as soon as possible after surgery, to help with recovery.

In older adults, three days of bed rest can cause significant muscle loss. It is important to get up and move, but follow the post-surgery exercises provided by

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Thirdly, it is very normal to feel stressed or anxious before surgery.

However, stress from surgery can trigger inflammation, which may lead to certain complications. Try to prevent anxiety or stress by getting information early on about your surgery. Relaxation techniques such as breathing exercises, meditation, muscle relaxation or listening to music can be also helpful. Many hospitals even offer special support, and remember, family and friends can help too! ⁹

Last, but not least – HYDRATE.

It should come as no surprise that water is essential for keeping us functioning well and feeling our best. Water helps your blood flow, carries nutrients and oxygen to your cells.

The impact of nutrition before and after surgery is a significant investment to make. If you or a loved one requires surgery, speak to your doctor about pre and post-surgery nutrition and lifestyle strategies to optimize your recovery and get back to living your best life!

References:

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NOTE: These general guidelines are not meant to replace healthcare professional advice. Talk to your doctor or dietitian for more information.