



Proper nutrition is vital to injury healing during the rehabilitation process. Your body requires energy and certain nutrients to prioritize healing and repair. Every injury is unique and should be treated as such. However, here are some nutrition mistakes people commonly make across the board during injury rehabilitation.

NOT EATING ENOUGH

When you are recovering from an injury or surgery, your body requires additional energy during this time to accelerate the healing process. This is a big misconception many patients have when undergoing rehab. It is common to have impaired mobilization with injury, so many people believe that if you are moving less, you must eat less. However, your body actually needs more energy with illness or injury to recover optimally!

INSUFFICIENT PROTEIN INTAKE

Protein is essential for tissue integrity and repair. This is especially important when physical therapy is required. Physical therapy will induce muscle protein breakdown. Dietary protein is required as a result of this process to stimulate new muscle growth. Include lean sources of protein in your diet, such as poultry, fish, lean meats, eggs, dairy products, legumes, and plant-based protein sources like tofu and tempeh. Aim to fill up at least a quarter of your plate with a quality protein source at each meal.

INADEQUATE FLUID INTAKE

Drink plenty of water throughout the day to support hydration and promote the transport of nutrients to injured tissues. Water helps to keep tissues pliable and primed for physical therapy. Water flushes toxins out of the body, transports nutrients into the cells and helps regulate body temperature and pH balance. Water also helps with muscle soreness and tension. Aim for at least 8 cups (64 ounces) of water per day, but individual needs may vary.

NEGLECTING THE IMPORTANCE OF MICRONUTRIENTS

Ensure you're getting an adequate intake of essential vitamins and minerals. Calcium, vitamin D, magnesium, and phosphorus are crucial for bone health, while vitamin C, vitamin E, and zinc are important for tissue repair. Omega-3 fatty acids have anti-inflammatory properties and may help reduce inflammation associated with injuries. Consider antioxidant rich foods to combat oxidative stress and support healing. A balanced diet with a variety of whole foods can help meet these nutrient needs. Always consider meeting with your physician or dietitian to discuss whether supplementation is necessary.

CONSUMING AN EXCESS OF INFLAMMATORY FOODS

Some foods may promote inflammation in the body, potentially hindering the healing process. These include highly processed foods, refined sugars, excessive alcohol, and unhealthy fats. Minimize consumption of these foods and focus on whole, unprocessed options instead.

IN SUMMARY

Focusing on nutrition can be a game changer for accelerating injury healing. Remember, every injury and individual are unique, so it's important to consult with a healthcare professional or registered dietitian who can provide personalized advice tailored to your specific injury, medical condition, and dietary needs.