

Post-Op Nutrition for Healing and Recovery

Support your recovery with the right foods, fluids, and habits.



PRIORITIZE PROTEIN FOR TISSUE REPAIR

Protein is essential for healing after orthopedic surgery. It helps rebuild muscle, bone, and connective tissue.

Daily Target:

Aim for a minimum of 20–30 grams of protein per meal (more if advised by your provider).

Examples of Protein-Rich Foods:

- 3 oz chicken, turkey, or fish = 20–25g
- 2 eggs = 12g
- 6 oz Greek yogurt = 15–18g
- 1 cup cottage cheese = 25g
- 1 scoop protein powder = 20–30g
- 1 cup cooked lentils or beans = 15–18g

Tip: Include a protein source with every meal and snack.

INCLUDE PROTEIN SHAKES AND FLUIDS

Protein shakes can help meet your needs, especially if your appetite is low.

Recommended Supplement Options:

- Ensure High Protein (Abbott): 16g protein per 8 oz
- Ensure Max Protein: 30g protein per 11 oz, low in sugar
- Juven (Abbott): Supports wound healing with arginine, glutamine, and collagen; can be taken with or between meals

Hydration Tips:

- Drink at least 8 cups (64 oz) of fluids daily unless otherwise instructed
- Include broth, tea, shakes, or flavored water to stay hydrated

COMBAT LOW APPETITE AFTER SURGERY

Appetite may decrease after surgery due to pain medications, inactivity, or stress. Eating enough is essential for healing.

Tips for Eating When You're Not Hungry:

- Eat small, frequent meals and snacks every 2–3 hours
- Choose soft, easy-to-digest foods like yogurt, smoothies, scrambled eggs, or soups
- Focus on nutrient-dense liquids like protein shakes or smoothies
- Set reminders to eat, even if only a few bites at a time
- Prioritize protein and calories in the morning when energy is higher
- Keep snacks and shakes within reach to sip throughout the day

MAINTAIN HEALTHY DIGESTION AFTER SURGERY

Pain medications and reduced movement can lead to constipation. Nutrition and hydration play a key role.

Strategies to Stay Regular:

- Stay hydrated with water and warm fluids
- Eat high-fiber foods: fruits, vegetables, oats, beans, whole grains
- Walk or move gently as directed by your care team
- Consider prune juice or magnesium supplements (consult your provider)

EAT NUTRIENT-DENSE FOODS THAT SUPPORT HEALING

Choose whole foods rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.

Examples of Healing Foods:

- Berries—Antioxidants to reduce inflammation
- Leafy greens—High in vitamins A, C, and K
- Sweet potatoes—Provide fiber and vitamin A
- Salmon or tuna—Omega-3 fats for tissue repair
- Nuts and seeds—Protein, zinc, and healthy fats

SAMPLE MEAL IDEAS FOR RECOVERY

Breakfast Greek yogurt with berries, chia seeds, and a glass of milk

Lunch Chicken or tuna wrap with spinach on a whole-grain tortilla

Dinner Baked salmon, roasted sweet potato, sautéed greens

Snack Protein shake or cottage cheese with fruit

Additional Tips:

- Prep meals ahead of time to reduce effort
- Eat something at regular intervals, even if you don't feel hungry
- Talk to your provider or dietitian about supplements or special needs

Want Personalized Nutrition Guidance?

Contact our dietitians to schedule a consultation!

www.TOA.com/nutrition-services

NutritionTeam@TOA.com

