



**This is a guide only and does not
replace clinical judgment**

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Nutrition and Wound Healing

Information for health professionals





Nutrition and Wound Healing

Good nutrition and hydration is essential for wound healing

- Older adults are more likely to be malnourished
- A wound increases energy and nutrient needs
- Dehydrated skin is less elastic, more fragile and more likely to breakdown

Assessment

- Use a validated nutritional screen for all clients with, or at risk for, a wound
- Risk factors for poor nutrition include:
 - poor dentition or difficulty swallowing
 - poor mobility
 - reduced appetite and taste changes
 - confusion, pain and/or anxiety
 - environment not conducive to eating



Signs of poor nutritional and/or hydration status:

- Unintentional weight loss
- Poor appetite
- Nausea or vomiting for three days or more
- Dry, fragile skin
- Loss of skin integrity or a new wound
- Deterioration of an existing wound

Management

- Address any nutritional deficits
- Provide nutritional interventions to assist healing of pressure injuries, which include:
 - adequate caloric intake
 - a high protein supplement, including arginine
 - multivitamin supplements in those with deficits

Prevention

- Promote optimal nutritional status
- High protein supplements may help prevent pressure injuries in those at high risk
- Refer those at nutritional risk to a dietician

Ways to promote good nutrition and hydration

- Encourage a healthy, balanced diet including the 5 food groups: bread/grains; vegetables; fruit; dairy products and protein
- Encourage 6—8 glasses of fluid/day
- Provide assistance with meals if needed and allow sufficient time
- Ensure good oral and dental care
- Position upright for eating/ drinking
- Provide a pleasant mealtime environment

Which nutrients are important for wound healing?

Protein: Good sources include meat, fish, dairy products, legumes, nuts, seeds and grains

Vitamin C: Good sources include citrus fruits, berries, capsicum, kiwifruit, parsley, broccoli, rockmelon, cauliflower, spinach and cabbage

Vitamin A: Good sources include liver, sweet potato, carrots, broccoli, leafy vegetables, eggs

Zinc: Good sources include meat, seafood, poultry, dairy products, seeds, wholegrains