

Guidelines for Wound Healing

Your Responsibilities

Eliminate damage to the wound:

Allowing the tissue at the wound to heal without repeated damage is the first step to healing. This means not letting the site be bumped, rubbed, forced to bear weight or collect a lot of fluid (like hanging down for prolonged periods). If you are in a special device to prevent trauma (such as a walking cast or splint) then use this device as it is ordered. Avoiding repeated stress (such as walking on a foot injury) helps the wound heal and decreases the swelling to the area. Swelling can be as damaging as trauma since it interferes with the flow of oxygen and nutrients to the wound. A good rule is for every 15 minutes up, you have to have 30 or 45 minutes down to recuperate. This helps the tissue rebuild, and decreases the pain as well.

Drink plenty of water:

Hydration is very important to healing a wound. Caffeine pulls fluid out so avoid coffee, tea and caffeinated sodas (Coke, Pepsi, Mountain Dew, Dr. Pepper). Water, milk, juice, Jello, ice cream, soup, pudding and popsicles are good sources of water. At least 2 liters of fluid a day is good. If you are diabetic, you can have low sugar fluids. *If you are on a fluid restriction, discuss your fluid alternatives with your practitioner.*

Eat plenty of protein:

Protein is the building blocks of new tissue, the body can't build tissue without it. Good protein sources are: lean (lo fat) meats, beans, milk, eggs, cheese, cottage cheese and ice cream. Lesser sources of protein are whole grains in cereal and breads. An easy and inexpensive way to increase your protein without increasing calories and fat is with powdered milk. One tablespoon can be added to cereals, gravy, soups, meats, milk based drinks, desserts without changing the taste of the item. The addition of 3-6 tablespoons per day can triple your protein intake and make your wound heal much faster. *If you are on dialysis or a protein restriction for medical reasons, discuss your protein alternatives with your practitioner.*

If you are Diabetic: Control your Blood Sugar:

Good blood sugar control promotes your overall health, but is essential to healing your wound. Elevated blood sugars increase your susceptibility to infection, and decrease the body's ability to make new tissue.

Target blood sugars are: Fasting AM 80-110 2 hours after a meal 110-140

Healing a wound often requires more calories than you normally eat, so close discussion with the practitioner who sets up your diabetes management is very important. You may need to adjust your diet and medications while your wound is healing.