



YOUR GUIDE TO NUTRITION DURING

RECOVERY



“I know what I eat affects my health, so how do I ensure I’m meeting all my nutritional needs?”

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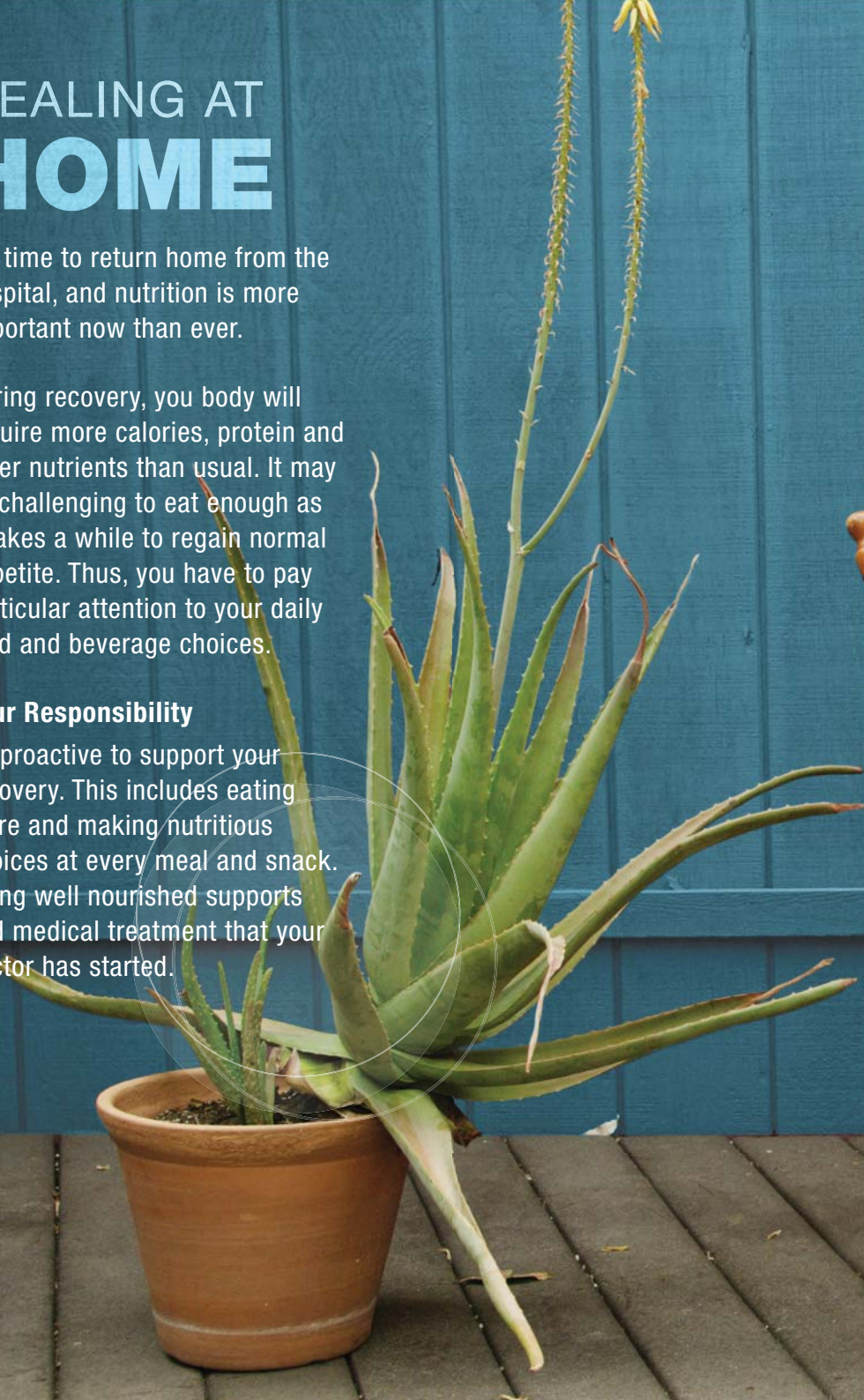
HEALING AT HOME

It's time to return home from the hospital, and nutrition is more important now than ever.

During recovery, your body will require more calories, protein and other nutrients than usual. It may be challenging to eat enough as it takes a while to regain normal appetite. Thus, you have to pay particular attention to your daily food and beverage choices.

Your Responsibility

Be proactive to support your recovery. This includes eating more and making nutritious choices at every meal and snack. Being well nourished supports and medical treatment that your doctor has started.



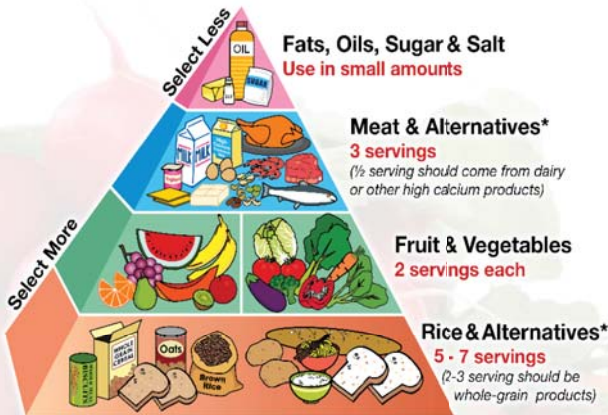


Four Food Tips for Recovery

1. Eat a Well-Balanced Diet

Make a continuous effort to eat a complete and balanced diet that is adequate in rice and alternatives (particularly whole grains), fruits and vegetables, and meat and alternatives (including a calcium rich food). Choose a wide variety of different colored fruits and vegetables to get a range of vitamins, minerals and anti-oxidants that would help your body to recover from damage caused by the disease and boost your immune system.

Healthy Diet Pyramid For Adults



Source: Health Promotion Board

* For older adults (>50years)

- 1 serving of Meat & Alternatives should come from dairy or calcium-fortified foods
- 4-6 servings are recommended for the Rice & Alternative food group

Food Group	Examples of a serving
Rice and Alternatives	½ bowl of rice or noodles 2 slices of bread 2 plain biscuits 2 small pieces of chapatti
Fruit	1 small apple 1 wedge of papaya 10 grapes
Vegetable	¾ cup of cooked leafy or non-leafy vegetables 1 mug of salad
Meat and Alternative	1 palm sized portion of meat 5 medium prawns 2 glasses of milk 3 eggs 2 small blocks of bean curd ¾ cup of cooked lentils

2. Make Nutritious Choices

Make an effort to select the most nutritious choices from every food group.

Rice and Alternatives: Select wholegrain food items such as brown rice, wholemeal bread, wholegrain biscuits and cereals instead of refined foods like white rice and white bread. Wholegrain choices are naturally rich in fibre and are more nutrient-dense.

Fibre supports bowel regularity. Some unique fibres like fructo-oligosaccharides (FOS) stimulate the growth of 'good' bacteria in the gut which supports the nourishment of the immune cells in the intestines. A healthy gut helps to improve the absorption of nutrients into your body. All these nutrients may work together to improve your ability to fight off infection. Sources of FOS include onion, leek, chicory and some oral nutritional supplements.

Fruits and Vegetables: Select fresh fruits and vegetables more often than canned versions. Cook vegetables lightly to preserve the nutrients.

Meat and Alternatives: Include fish, meats (chicken, pork, and beef), eggs and dairy products like milk and cheese, and soya bean products. These contain all the essential amino acids needed for tissue repair and maintenance. Other foods like legumes (e.g. chickpeas, lentils) also contain protein but not as complete as the above mentioned protein rich foods.

Fat, Oil, Salt and Sugar: A little additional 'healthier' fat is good for you, especially if you have lost weight and need the extra calories for recovery and weight gain. Choose from monounsaturated fat sources like olive oil, avocados and almonds as well as polyunsaturated fat sources like fish oil or flax seed oil. Use small amounts of salt and sugar to flavor food and to make them more appetizing.

3. Increase Portion

Start with small, frequent meals and snacks. As your appetite improves, increase the portion gradually until you are able to eat the normal portion. As you are recovering, you may even need to increase this quantity to meet the additional nutritional needs.

4. Consider including an Oral Nutritional Supplement

If you are eating less than 50% of your regular meals and snacks, supplement meals with a complete and balanced oral nutrition supplement.

Consult your doctor or dietitian to find out the type of oral nutritional supplement that suits your specific needs, and how you can incorporate it in your daily diet.



A close-up photograph of a middle-aged woman with dark, wavy hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a purple patterned top and a necklace. She is holding a clear glass filled with a light-colored liquid, likely milk. The background is a plain, light color.

WHAT YOU NEED TO LOOK OUT FOR **DURING RECOVERY**

If recovery is not as speedy as planned, you may want to review your condition with your doctor as soon as possible. At the appointment, discuss your current food choices to ensure that it is support your increased nutritional needs.

Here are some practical pointers that may suggest that your food and beverage intake is not optimal:

- Persistently eating less than your usual portion of food
- Missing meals
- Having difficulty with chewing or swallowing food
- Losing weight
- Experiencing poor wound healing
- Have difficulty coping with activities of daily living such as eating, shopping, cooking, bathing, etc.

MYTHS ABOUT

EATING FOR RECOVERY

Myth: Soft and bland foods such as porridge, clear soup and chicken essence support recovery.

Fact: In some conditions, these food choices are a great way to start introducing food. However, they are not nutrient rich choices as they do not contain much calories, protein, 'healthy' fat or vitamins and minerals. A better option would be complete and balanced meal made up of rice with meat and vegetable dishes and a piece of fruits. As your appetite improves, select more nutritious choices.

Myth: 'Heaty' food or 'cooling' food such as chicken or shell fish interfere with wound healing.

Fact: These common beliefs should not be taken too far as they may compromise overall nutritional intake and recover. It is alright to eat chicken and fish during recovery as they contain good quality protein and other nutrients for wound healing. A complete and balanced diet with a focus on additional nutrients for recovery will support your overall health.

Myth: Do not take milk products or citrus fruits as they cause phlegm.

Fact: While some people may have intolerance to milk and may experience diarrhea, few may complain of increased phlegm production. In general, milk and dairy products are good sources of protein. However, if you are not used to taking milk, you can choose calcium fortified soy milk as a substitute. Complete and balanced nutritional supplements provide more nutrients than just a glass of milk. Even though they may look like milk, they do not contain lactose.

Similarly, citrus fruits (such as oranges, pomelos and grapefruit) are high in Vitamin C which assists in restoring immune function and wound healing, and as such should not be avoided. However, if you do have intolerance to citrus fruit; select other fruit that can also provide a generous amount of vitamin C such as guava and papaya.

Myth: Beverages served cold are not allowed during recovery.

Fact: There is no scientific evidence to support this belief. The temperature of food is moderated by the body's temperature and does not impact nutritional absorption or recovery. Taking milk, soya milk or complete and balanced nutritional supplements cold may enhance their taste and encourage consumption.



Developed with a global advisory board of respected physicians and nutrition experts, **feedM.E.** is a nutrition awareness, education, and call-to-action program designed to highlight the value of good nutrition and optimize health across the continuum of care from hospital to home.

A BETTER LIFE THROUGH
BETTER NUTRITION

When you or someone you care for is recovering from illness, injury, or surgery, eating right and paying attention to nutrition can make the difference for a speedy, full recovery. By being aware and taking action, you can help ensure a healthy recovery... and take charge of the future.