

Patient information

Nutrition & Pressure Ulcers

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about Nutrition and Pressure Ulcers. Please contact the team if you require further information via the details at the end of this leaflet.

What is a Pressure Ulcer?

Pressure ulcers, also known as pressure sores or bed sores, can develop when pressure is continually placed on the same part of the body. Good nutrition and hydration are essential for healing and prevention.

You are more likely to develop a pressure ulcer if you are underweight, dehydrated and/or living with diabetes. Ensuring that you are having adequate food and drink is important for allowing your skin to heal and prevent future ulcers from developing.

Following a balanced diet is important; however more focus should be placed on getting enough of the following nutrients:

- Energy
- Protein
- Vitamin C
- Zinc
- Iron
- Fluids

Energy

Carbohydrates and fat provide our body with energy for everyday bodily functions. If we do not have adequate amounts of energy, the risk of weight loss is higher.

If you have a poor appetite, the following tips may help you to increase your energy intake:

- Try eating small frequent meals and snacks spread throughout the day
- Choose foods and drinks that are high in energy and protein – such as full fat yoghurts, cheese and biscuits, nuts, mini sausage roll/scotch egg.
- Choose full fat and full sugar products – such as full fat dairy products, and avoiding “diet” or “light” versions of foods and drinks
- Try to drink higher calorie fluids – such as full fat milk drinks.

Important to note: If you are living with Diabetes, it is important to keep your blood glucose levels controlled. Poorly controlled blood glucose can prolong wound healing and could put you at risk of developing further pressure sores.

Protein

Protein is required to help the body make new tissue, which is an important part of healing pressure ulcers. Protein requirements are likely to be higher if you have a pressure ulcer. In order to meet your protein requirement, you should aim to include protein rich foods at every meal.

Protein rich foods:

Food	Average Portions	Approximate protein content
Meat and Fish		
Chicken breast	Grilled without skin (100g)	32g
Beef patty	1 patty (100g)	16g
Lamb chop	1 chop (70g)	20g
Sausage (pork)	2 thick sausages (80g)	10g
Tinned tuna in oil	Small can drained (100g)	24g
Battered cod	1 medium fillet (180g)	25g
Prawn cocktail	88g	6g
Eggs and Dairy		
Egg	1 medium (50g)	10g
Cheddar cheese	2 slices	10g
Yoghurt, whole	1 pot (125g)	7g
Milky puddings (rice pudding/custard)	1 pot (125g)	5g
Skimmed milk powder	1 heaped tablespoon (13g)	5g
Milk, semi-skimmed	100ml	4g
Plant based proteins		
Tofu	80g	19g
Quorn	100g	13g
Roasted peanuts	1 bag (50g)	13g
Baked beans	1 small can (150g)	8g
Chickpeas	1 tablespoon (40g)	3g
Lentils – green	1 tablespoon (40g)	4g
Peanut butter	1 portion (25g)	6g

Vitamin C

Vitamin C is needed in wound healing and formation of new tissues. You should aim to include 5 portions of fruit and vegetables in your diet a day. Vitamin C enables the body to absorb iron rich foods. Vitamin C sources include:

- Oranges and citrus fruits, including juice
- Berries
- Tomatoes
- Peppers
- Broccoli
- Potatoes

Zinc

Zinc is a key mineral required in wound healing and new tissue formation. A zinc deficiency can also lead to taste changes and loss of appetite. Sources include:

- Red meat (e.g. beef and lamb)
- Milk and dairy products
- Shellfish (e.g. crab, mussels, shrimp)
- Beans and lentils
- Breads and cereals
- Leafy green vegetables

Iron

Iron plays an important role with how our body uses oxygen to make energy. Iron deficiency anaemia means our tissue isn't able to receive oxygen as well as it should. This will then affect and slow down the healing process. Iron sources include:

- Red meat (e.g. beef and lamb)
- Liver and offal meats - NB: Liver and liver products should be avoided during pregnancy unless specifically advised by a healthcare professional
- Fortified breakfast cereals
- Leafy green vegetables
- Dried fruit

Fluids

Hydration is essential for healthy and healing tissues. Whatever your age, aim to drink at least 8 glasses or cups of fluid/day:

- Water, milk, fruit juice, squash, tea, coffee and hot milky drinks all count towards your total
- If you are trying to reduce your weight, choose skimmed milk for drinks and avoid sugary drinks
- If you are underweight, try using full fat fortified milk

Important to note:

Multivitamin/mineral supplements may be helpful, especially if you find it difficult to have a varied diet. Your GP might prescribe one for you or alternatively you could buy an “over the counter” combined multivitamin/mineral supplement (available at most supermarkets or

pharmacies).

If you are underweight... you are at higher risk of developing pressure sores.

- Aim for 3-5 smaller meals per day
- Include a carbohydrate and protein with every meal
- Fortify your meals with high energy ingredients
- Have high energy snacks
- Ensure good hydration

If you are overweight... you might be at risk of developing pressure sores.

- Aim for 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day
- Choose wholegrain varieties such as wholewheat bread and pasta
- Cut down on foods high in saturated fat (such as fried foods) and sugar
- Opt for low/low fat sugar drinks

Additional notes:

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Contacting the team

If you have any further questions, please contact the Nutrition and Dietetic team on: Telephone: 01279 827443

Office hours: 08:00am – 4.30pm

There is an answerphone available outside of these hours. Please leave a message and a member of the team will contact you.

If you would like this leaflet in another language or format, or you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team on paht.pals@nhs.net

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