

Wound Care at Home

When you return home after surgery you may have some questions about caring for your wound as it heals.



Nutrition

Following surgery good nutrition is important for healing wounds. It is recommended you follow a diet high in protein. Protein helps to build and repair muscle, skin and other body tissues. Protein helps fight infection, balance body fluids and carry oxygen through your body. During wound repair collagen deposition is crucial to increasing the tensile strength of the wound. Collagen is sourced from protein in your body.

Foods recommended:

Dairy: milk, cheese, yoghurt. Meat: fish, chicken, beef. Eggs. Beans (soy beans), lentils, legumes, nuts and seeds. Tofu.

Vitamin C: citrus fruit, red and green pepper, tomatoes, broccoli and other green vegetables. Zinc: meats, shellfish, nuts, lentils and beans. Copper: liver, oysters, nuts and seeds, leafy greens, dark chocolate.

Hydration

Keep well hydrated to improve the healing process and skin turgor. Aim to drink approximately 1.5-2 litres of water per day (unless you are fluid restricted).

Rest

Your body will need energy to heal, therefore rest and take things easy the first week after surgery.

Medication

You may have been prescribed antibiotics on returning home. Please complete the full course of antibiotics.

Wound care

Wash your hands: Before and after touching your wound/s, please wash your hands with liquid soap and warm water for at least one minute, paying attention to under the nails and all surfaces of your hands. Dry your hands with a clean towel.



Avoid touching your wound if possible, which includes scratching or irritating the skin around the wound.

Avoid using cream, lotions and powders on your wound unless you have been directed otherwise.

On some occasions, you will be instructed to apply chloromycetin ointment to wound morning and night.

Keep your wound dry:

You may shower 24 hours after your surgery. Avoid deodorant soaps.

If you have an **exposed wound** (i.e. no dressing), pat wound dry after your shower with a freshly laundered clean towel (or a piece of paper towel).

If your wound is on your head/scalp, you may shower and use shampoo. Pat wound dry after your shower and apply chloromycetin ointment to your wound morning and night with clean hands for the first 7 days.

If you have a **waterproof dressing** over your wound, keep your wound waterproof for the first 2 weeks. Pat your dressing dry after your shower with a freshly laundered clean towel. If the dressing starts to lift or peel off, please replace this dressing with a similar dressing obtained from the hospital or your pharmacy. You will notice that you have steri-strips underneath the waterproof dressing. Leave these in place and only change the outer waterproof dressing. Anytime you touch your dressing or wound, remember to have clean hands.

At 2 weeks you will generally see the practice nurse in Dr Vasica's rooms, who will remove your dressings and review your wound. If you have sutures, the practice nurse will remove these at 2 weeks and apply steri-strips to the wound, which you will leave in place, pat dry after your shower, until they fall off. .

Avoid swimming pools, having a bath or sitting in a spa or sauna for the first 4 weeks.

Be mindful in what and who is around your wound: Avoid pets, animals, babies, soiled linen, soiled clothing, wound drains and indwelling urinary catheters. These may pose an infection risk. Change underwear and clothing daily that comes into contact with your wound.

Observe your wound and surrounding skin: Check your wound and surrounding skin daily, or ask a relative to check for you if your wound is difficult to see. Any concerns you may have, please call Dr Vasica's rooms.

Most wounds will be flat initially, then they will become more tight, red and lumpy after a few weeks, before maturing over many months to become pale and soft. This may take more than 12 months.

Scar management: At 6 weeks, you may massage your scar with vitamin E oil

If you had a hernia repair: you may notice a bulge where the hernia was. This is fluid from the repaired hernia and will resolve with time. Depending on where the hernia was, you may notice bruising around the genitals after a day or two. Your scrotum may turn black and blue. This usually settles spontaneously. Male patients may experience mild testicular discomfort or a heaviness into their groin and/or scrotum. You may want to wear tighter underwear, like male fitness compression tights or double undies for the first week.

You may be discharged from hospital with a **binder** in place, which is a compression garment supporting your abdomen. Please leave this on all day and all night for the first two weeks, only

removing for a shower. After the first two weeks, you can sleep without the binder and wear it during the day for the next two weeks.

Wound problems you may encounter

Bleeding: there may be a small amount of bleeding once the local anaesthetic wears off. This is normal. You can apply gentle pressure for 10 minutes and then apply an ice pack.

Pain: the anaesthetic will wear off after a few hours, and you may experience some pain. This is usually minimal. Take paracetamol or panadeine as soon as possible after the procedure and continue this every 5-6 hours as necessary (maximum 8 tablets over a 24 hour period). Do not take any medication containing ASPIRIN unless this has been cleared by Dr Vasica, as this may cause bleeding in the surgical wound.

Wound: try to keep the operated site still and elevated. Take things quietly for the first 24-48 hours.

Facial and head wounds: keep activities to a minimum. Avoid raising your blood pressure which may cause bleeding. Avoid stooping, bending, straining or heavy lifting.

Head wounds: keep above level of your heart

Leg and foot wounds: try to keep your feet up and avoid walking around too much

Back wounds: respond poorly to excessive activity and can break open if you do not restrict your movements. Avoid over stretching the area.

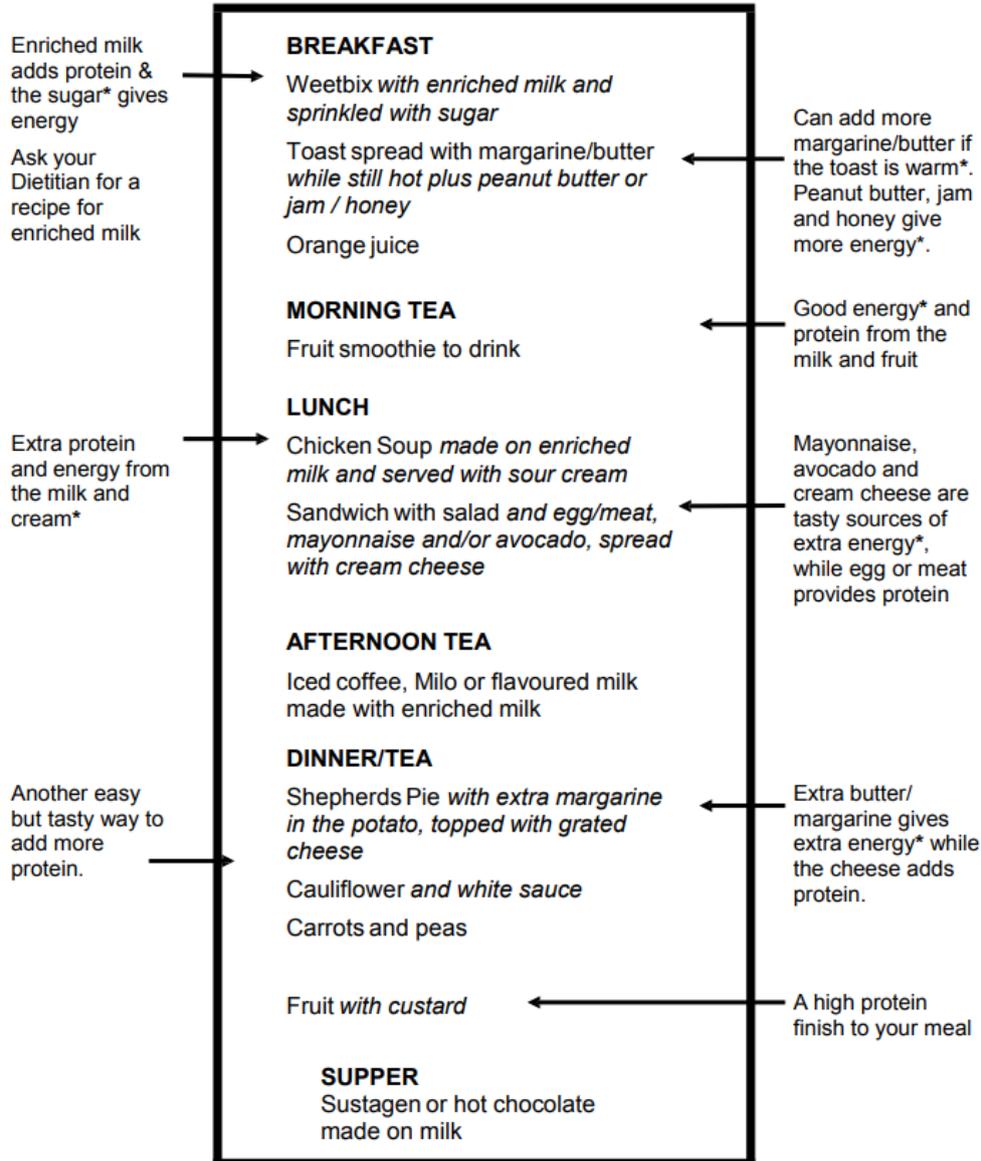
Signs of wound infection

- Increased pain
- Increased redness, swelling and/or hot to touch of wound and surrounding skin
- Increased bleeding
- Increased wound discharge (that may or may not have an offensive smell)
- General feeling of being unwell (aches and lethargy)
- Increased temperature (chills and fever)
- Delayed wound healing
- Wound breakdown (you notice the wound edges are open or starting to separate)

What to do if you suspect you have an infection or any concerns relating to your wound

Please ring our rooms and speak to our practice nurse on 99977346. Or if this is out of hours or over the weekend, please call your GP.

SAMPLE HIGH PROTEIN AND ENERGY MEAL PLAN



Your Dietitian will advise you if you need extra energy, as not all people need extra energy for wound healing. *Indicates food that is higher in energy.

Sydney General Surgeons

Suite 502/20 Bungan St, Mona Vale NSW 2103

Telephone 02 9997 7346 Facsimile 02 9979 7540

Email admin@sydneygeneralsurgeons.com.au Website sydneygeneralsurgeons.com.au

ABN 97 153 604 972