

Good Food to Aid Healing

Do you know that your FOOD choices aid your performance, can help prevent injuries, and is an important aid to HEALING? So much confusing information out there, but it's actually pretty easy really. Healthy nutrition is about understanding some simple basics, cooking well, and using easy recipes you can enjoy.

So here's the basic food formula we should aim to eat:

- 1/2 of our Food should be yummy Plant Based Foods
- 1/4 Complex Wholegrain Carbs like brown rice, whole meal pasta, barley, whole meal cous cous, whole grain bread, boiled sweet potato, other complex grains, and so forth.
- 1/4 Quality Protein
- Fluids. And get enough fluids to replace lost water. Low fluids can affect your concentration & increase injury risk. Watch your pee: if dark, then you need fluids - ideally not from sugary drinks, alcohol or fruit juice. Fluids can include water, tea, coffee (not more than 2 per day), milk (this is one the best sports recovery drinks), and even yummy soups (in winter).

This basic formula may vary during our lives according to our needs (see below for your special needs)

More Protein

If we are injured, sick, pregnant, an older adult, or trying to build muscle mass, then our nutrient needs increase. For example, for tendon injuries we need more protein & vitamin C, for wounds more iron, for bone fractures, more calcium & vitamin D. However, generally in this situation you need more PROTEIN, approximately 1.5 gm of protein per kg of your body weight. Increased protein helps to prevent loss of essential muscle, which can come from being sick, injured or older.

Ideally the protein should be spread over your 3 daily meals - breakfast, lunch & dinner.

A match box size piece of meat gives you about 30 gm, 1 cup milk 10 gm, 1 egg gives 6gm, and half cup of lentils provides 6gm of protein. Fish is also a good source of protein.

Good sources of protein for vegetarians include cheese, nuts, nut butters, seeds, chickpea & humus, lentils, soy, eggs, and so forth.

More Micronutrients

Micronutrients aid healing: zinc from whole grains, seafood, meat; Vitamin C to aid collagen repair; Vitamin A for the immune system - think red & orange fruit & veggies.

Aid your Bones

Bones need many things:

Calcium from dairy, sesame, fortified foods, fish bones

Vitamin D to aid calcium adsorption from sunshine, oily fish, eggs, pate

Phosphorus from dairy & nuts

Magnesium from nuts, seeds, green leaf veggies

And higher protein intake.

Powerful Anti-inflammatory Foods

Certain foods can help reduce inflammation in your body.

Pour fresh Extra Virgin Olive oil on your veggies & salads

Add fresh turmeric to dishes or make up warm turmeric milk

Add ginger to your recipes

Drink some quality green tea.

Inflammation can also be helped by nurturing your GUT Health & GUT BIOME.

The good bacteria in your GUT need to be fed well - fibre such as from lentil or chickpeas can help, along with soaked oats, barley, mangoes, garlic & onions (these also promote serotonin the feel good hormone)

After Training Hard

High levels of exercise produce stress hormones & fatigue in the body. You can aid quicker recovery by eating soon after a hard training session. Don't forget to include some relaxation response training also, ie yoga relaxation.

The Magic Plant Foods

Plant foods include huge numbers of nutrients & enzymes which keep you well & aid your healing.

Always include lots of plant foods such as veggies & a small amount of fruit to your daily food.

Aim for 5 serves at least (1 serve is about 1/2 a cup)

Make your veggies tasty & appetising

Soups, salads, curries, char grilled ie zucchini, stir fried, pizza toppings, pasta sauces, avocado to make rich, toasted sandwiches filled with tomato & spinach, and so forth. Add extra virgin olive oil for a tasty anti-inflammatory touch.

2 serves of fruit can be good for the immune system as they include Vit C, A & folate & also fibre for the GUT Biome. Consider making fruit appetising eg fruit salad or fruit platter.

Cruising along in our middle age years...

Recent research suggests that when in maintenance mode, ie our middle age years, we can reduce our protein and slightly increase the healthy carbs. This helps our cells to not burn out and produce so many toxins, and aids in promoting healthy ageing.

Final Word

Don't get food hung up - enjoy your food and aim to be healthy 80% of the time.

Ref: Healing & Recovery Nutrition Tips (from Sports Nutritionist Simone Austin APA ETalk)