

Food choices For Optimal Post-Operative Healing

Proper care after your periodontal surgery will help your mouth heal quickly and cleanly. Listed are some food suggestions to help you prepare in advance for your upcoming periodontal surgery.

Your temporary soft food diet may seem challenging at first, but with a little planning it doesn't have to be boring. Luckily, it can be much more than just soup and ice cream! Variety will help ensure your diet has all the nutrients you need to heal quickly.

Drink approximately 8 cups of fluid per day. Start drinking nutritious fluids such as juices, milk and milkshakes as soon as you are able to. Drink water too. Avoid using a straw, drink normally out of a glass. Avoid hot liquids like coffee and tea - let them cool first before drinking. Hot fluids increase the flow of blood and your wound can start to bleed again.

A general rule of thumb for the first two weeks post-surgery is to avoid and foods that take “more than three chews” to swallow.

Try to base your daily meals for the first two weeks around the food groups outlined in the Canada's Food Guide.

Fruits and Vegetables: Seven (males 51 years and older; females 31 years or older) or eight (males 31-50 years) servings of soft fruit and well-cooked vegetables (to make them soft and less likely to damage the healing site) each day. Consume more dark green and orange vegetables, and more servings of vegetables than fruits. Suggested foods include apple sauce stewed or canned fruit or smoothies. Try soups, containing lower levels of sodium, made with lots of veggies. This should be well cooked or pureed, but not served very hot. Sweet potatoes, mashed vegetables such as carrots, turnip or other root vegetables are both filling and nutritious. Broccoli cooked until soft and served with melted cheese adds variety and allows you to incorporate a serving from the milk and alternatives group.

Grain Products: Six (women) or seven (men over 51 years) or eight (men 31-50 years) servings of bread, cereal, pasta or couscous each day. Half of your servings of grains should be whole wheat each day. Choose grain products low in fat, sugar and or salt. This could be achieved with porridge, oatmeal or cream of wheat (cooled), or other cereals without nuts or fruit. Pasta dishes made with small shapes or noodles and plenty of sauce (cooled, and prepared with soft vegetables to help you consume enough vegetables for the day). Soft bread without crusts is another choice.

Milk and Alternatives: Two (men and women under age 51 years) or three (men and women over age 51 years) servings of milk and alternative each day. Choose skim, 1 percent or 2 percent milk. Select lower fat milk alternatives whenever possible. Calcium fortified soy or rice milk can be included here if you prefer. Puddings, yogurt or cheeses such as cottage cheese are all choices you might include. Pay attention to serving size; a serving of dairy is 250mL (1 cup) or 50 g (1.5 ounces) for cheese.

Meats and Alternatives: Two (females) or three (males) servings of tender meat, poultry or fish, eggs, peas, beans or lentils each day. Choose meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu often as they are rich in vitamins and minerals and healthier fats (less unhealthy saturated fat and more of the healthier polyunsaturated fats). Consume at least two servings of fish each week and choose lean meat and alternatives prepared with little or no added fat or salt. Suggestions include tuna, salmon or other flakey fish served without crunchy coating. Poultry should be well-cooked and cut into small bite sized pieces. Baked beans are an option. Omelets or scrambled eggs can add diversity served with or without cheese and provide a strategy for incorporating a serving of vegetables.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Avoid alcohol and tobacco as much as possible during the healing period of two weeks as both are known to delay the healing process. You may wish to take a multivitamin supplement as it may promote healing.

We also encourage you to visit Canada's Food Guide on line at <http://www.hc-gc.ca/fn-an/foodguide-aliment/index-eng.php> before your procedure to help you plan your diet options after surgery. You can develop a diet plan that is individualized by selecting food options that most appeal to you. Also, there are useful planning tips and information about serving size for each food group.