

Nutrition Tips for Joint Surgery

Healthy eating before and after surgery will help you to recover as quickly as possible, and may reduce complications after surgery.

Body Mass Index (BMI):

BMI is a simple calculation using a person's height and weight. The formula is $BMI = \frac{kg}{m^2}$ where kg is a person's weight in kilograms and m² is their height in metres squared.

BMI is used to assess the feasibility and risk of surgery. Having a BMI 40 or greater increases the difficulty of surgery as getting to the joint to operate may be challenging.

Having a BMI 40 or greater also increases the risk of surgery by 5 to 8 times.

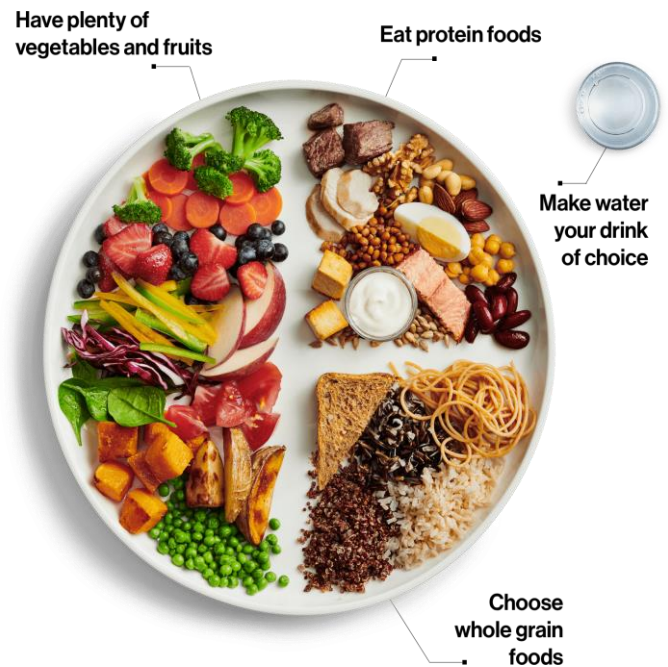
Potential risks include infection after surgery, poor wound healing, difficulty breathing, blood clots, etc.

And more weight on the new joint after surgery may impact recovery.

Before Surgery:

- Achieve a healthier weight with BMI less than 40 will be beneficial for surgery.
- Specific nutrients like protein and some vitamins and minerals will help with wound healing, and keep your immune system functioning well.
- Follow Canada's Food Guide for general principles of healthy eating.

- More healthy eating tips and recipes online at food-guide.canada.ca



- Eat small regular meals.
- Eat whole foods.
- Limit processed, fried, surgery foods.
- Choose more low fat high protein foods like lentil, beans, egg, fish, poultry, lean meat, low fat dairy products, etc.
- Choose high fibre foods like vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Avoid liquid with hidden calories like juice, soft drinks, smoothies, and alcohol.
- Avoid eating when you are not hungry. Find ways to fill the time without food. Read a book. Go for a walk. Phone a friend.

Exercise BEFORE and AFTER surgery is NECESSARY to:

- Ensure a faster and easier recovery.
- Increase your metabolism.
- Help you lose weight.
- Prevent constipation.

Refer to the “Exercise Guide” or CoHealth app for exercise instructions. Go to your local community centre to look for exercise programs that suit you.

After Surgery:

In hospital, depending on the type of surgery, you may start on a liquid diet or you may eat foods as tolerated. Please alert the nurse or dietitian to any food allergies or intolerances, or any special diets you are on. For example vegetarian, gluten free, lactose restricted, etc.

If any changes to your diet are required, your dietitian will explain this to you.

Otherwise, once you go home you may continue your regular eating habits to your comfort level. You may want to have frozen meals on hand, or arrange for assistance with your meals when you first return home since you may not be able to grocery shop or cook.

Problems you may encounter

Anaesthetics, pain medications, iron supplement, decreased activity, and decreased intake of food may slow down your bowels for a few days after surgery. You may not have regular bowel movements during this time.

- Add high fibre foods to your diet such as bran, prunes, vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.
- Be sure to drink extra fluids when you increase the fibre in your diet.
- Discuss with your family doctor or pharmacist about taking a stool softener or laxative if needed.

Maintaining a healthy weight will help with your recovery after surgery.

Further questions

- Ask your doctor for a referral to the Outpatient Dietitian at your local hospital.
- Call 8-1-1 to speak with a registered dietitian and a qualified exercise professional at HealthLink BC.
- Go to Fraser Health website at www.fraserhealth.ca and search “hip and knee”, then click on “Hip and Knee Arthroplasty - Central Intake and Optimization Clinic”.