

Good nutrition is imperative to achieving optimal health. Thinking about what you eat and making educated decisions as to what you put into your body is important on a daily basis, but even more so when your body is enduring injury, surgery, and post-operative recovery. There are a few key building blocks to a surgical recovery diet. Fortunately, it's possible to obtain most of these nutrients from eating whole foods. Refer to the chart below for a quick summary on what to eat to support your recovery:

Nutrient	Benefits	Best Food Sources
Protein	Studies show higher protein intake may, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase bone mass • Reduce medically related complications • Shorten post-operative hospital stays ✓ Aim for 1-1.2 grams/kg body weight post-surgery 	Meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, dairy, nuts & seeds, soy, combinations of beans and seeds or beans and nuts
Calcium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works synergistically with protein • 99% of our calcium stores are in our bones ✓ 1200 mg daily 	Dairy, fortified foods like tofu or almond milk, seeds, dark leafy greens such as kale and spinach, broccoli, and beans (navy, soy, pinto, garbanzo, Lima)
Vitamin D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Necessary for calcium absorption and utilization • Deficiency is associated with poor bone health, and other conditions ✓ 1,000-4,000 IU daily 	The sun (May-October between 10am and 3pm), fatty fish like salmon, mackerel, and tuna, egg yolks, cheese, and fortified whole milk
Vitamin C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antioxidants neutralize free radicals that negatively affect bone health • Helps heal wounds, improve immune system, speed recovery following fracture and surgery • Aids in collagen synthesis • May prevent post-operative regional pain syndrome ✓ 500 mg daily 	Citrus fruits, kiwi, guava, strawberries, mango, cantaloupe, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, bell peppers, and sweet potatoes
Zinc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works synergistically with vitamin C and protein • Promotes wound healing and collagen synthesis • Assists bone healing • May help prevent osteoporosis ✓ 12-15 mg daily 	Oysters, beef, dark poultry meat, pork, crab, dairy, beans, and nuts

<p>Omega-3 fatty acids (DHA & EPA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-inflammatory properties protect against bone loss • Positive effect on bone formation ✓ 1 gram daily 	<p>Cold-water fatty fish like salmon, tuna, and/or halibut (2x/wk), flax seeds, walnuts, tofu, and cod liver oil supplements</p>
<p>Vitamin B6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neuritis prevention ✓ 200 mg daily 	<p>Fish, organ meats, and starchy vegetables</p>