

GUIDELINES TO FASTER HEALING

1. **Schedule elective surgery when you're healthy.** If you are planning elective surgery, try to schedule it during a period of relatively good health. This will give your immune system the best possible chance toward a speedy recovery.
2. **Get enough essential nutrients.** You should supplement your diet before and after surgery with high levels of vitamin C and vitamin A. Each plays a role in wound healing and in building the immune system thereby reducing the chance of infection.
3. **Get enough protein and calories.** Two of the most important healing elements are calories and protein. Extra protein is needed to build new tissue and blood vessels, repair injured tissue and step up production of cells that repair the wound.
4. **Stay well hydrated by drinking water.** It is important to drink at least 6/8 glasses of water each day and especially the day prior to surgery to help cleanse and hydrate the body. Water is especially important prior to surgery, as fluid intake is reduced the day of surgery. To avoid complications during surgery, be sure that you do not drink anything after midnight the night prior to your surgery unless told otherwise by your surgeon.
5. **Do not take aspirin or aspirin-containing products for two weeks prior to surgery.** Aspirin is not recommended prior to surgery because it is an anticoagulant (blood thinner) and can promote bleeding during surgery.
6. **Do not take the following supplements for two weeks prior to surgery.** Doing quai, Echinacea, fish oil caps, garlic, ginger, ginkgo biloba, ginseng, kava kava, ephedra, St. Johns Wort and vitamin E. While beneficial for a number of conditions, these products are not recommended during the peri-operative period because they can cause problems.
7. **Do not drink alcohol for 72 hours prior to and after surgery.** Alcohol suppresses the immune system and should be avoided around the time of surgery.
8. **Do not smoke 2 weeks prior to and 3 months after surgery.** Smoking inhibits wound healing because less oxygen is supplied to the body's cells. In addition, smoking increases the risk of complications during surgery.
9. **Participate in relaxation techniques.** Listening to relaxation CD's or soothing music, taking a yoga or meditation class are examples of relaxation techniques that help to reduce stress.
10. **Build a support structure.** Rely on your family and friends to help you during the stressful time of a surgery. Have them bring the foods that are nutritious and discuss with them your feelings.