



# YOU EAT. WE'LL FUEL.



## Healthy Eating for Wounded, Ill, and Injured Sailors and Marines

### Let's start with some nutrition basics.

Just as the right kind of fuel is important for Navy jets, so is the right kind of fuel for the human body to support optimal performance. Furthermore, if you are recovering from a wound, illness, or injury, your body needs the right balance of nutrients to support the healing process. The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center Health Promotion and Wellness Department understands the challenges to eating healthy if you have been wounded, ill, or injured. We have the educational resources and materials you need to help you select nutrient-dense, healthy food for a more rapid and successful recovery and optimal well-being.

### The importance of good nutrition for recovery.

For those who have been wounded, ill, or injured, nutrition can impact your return to functional status and overall health. Food is fuel for the body. Eating healthy is an important part of a balanced lifestyle that supports recovery and resilience. For example, protein aids in muscle recovery,<sup>1</sup> vitamin C supports tissue repair,<sup>2</sup> and vitamin A promotes wound healing, bone development, and immune function.<sup>2</sup>

It's important that you maintain a healthy body weight and body fat percentage, consume the recommended nutrients from food, and incorporate physical activity and exercise into your lifestyle under the supervision of a health professional. When you eat nutrient-dense foods, you are on the right path to return to optimal health and reduce your risk of developing heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and osteoporosis, as well as maintain a healthy body weight.<sup>3</sup>

### What exactly is healthy eating?

As described in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, eating healthy means<sup>4</sup>:

- Consuming a variety of nutritious foods and beverages.
- Limiting intake of saturated fats, added sugars, and sodium.
- Keeping trans fat intake as low as possible.
- Balancing caloric intake with calories burned to maintain a healthy body weight.

### How can you eat healthier to promote recovery and improve function?<sup>5</sup>

The body needs proper nutrients to heal efficiently, and to reach and maintain peak performance. You can eat healthier by:

- Avoiding oversized portions.
- Making half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Making at least half of your grains 100% whole grains.
- Switching to fat-free or low-fat milk products.
- Choosing foods with less sodium.
- Drinking water instead of soda or sugary drinks.
- Not skipping meals, especially breakfast.
- Asking your doctor or dietitian for nutrition recommendations to support recovery specific to your wound, illness, or injury.

### Want to maintain a healthy weight?

Before starting a weight loss or weight gain program, or before resuming a normal diet, be sure to contact your local dietitian or health care provider for guidance on receiving the proper nutrients, the amount of calories you should consume, and any dietary restrictions. Permanent and healthy weight management can be achieved by eating a balanced diet that supports optimal well-being. This balance provides needed vitamins and minerals found in protein which is of benefit for muscle recovery,<sup>1</sup> and also in nutrient dense carbohydrates and healthy fats which provide energy for exercise, therapy, and healing as well as achieving or sustaining a healthy weight.<sup>5</sup>

To learn how our resources and tools can help facilitate recovery and strengthen resilience, visit us at [WWW.MED.NAVY.MIL/SITES/NMCPHC/WOUNDED-ILL-AND-INJURED/PAGES/HEALTH-PROMOTION.ASPX](http://WWW.MED.NAVY.MIL/SITES/NMCPHC/WOUNDED-ILL-AND-INJURED/PAGES/HEALTH-PROMOTION.ASPX).

<sup>1</sup> Protein in diet. U.S. National Library of Medicine. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Institutes of Health. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002467.htm>. Updated 12 January 2015. Accessed March 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Vitamins. Medline Plus. U.S. National Library of Medicine. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Institutes of Health. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/vitamins.html>. Updated 5 December 2014. Accessed March 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/aag/nutrition.htm>. Published May 2011. Accessed April 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010. United States Department of Agriculture. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/dietary-guidelines-americans-2010>. Updated February 2014. Accessed March 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Carbohydrates. National Institutes of Health. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002469.htm>. Updated May 2014. Accessed April 2015.

For more information on your local resources, contact:



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