



# YOU EAT. WE'LL FUEL.



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

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

Just as high-octane fuel is important for fighter jets, healthy eating is crucial for fueling the human body. 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 Health Promotion and Wellness Department of the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center 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 and eating healthy is an important part of a healthy lifestyle that supports recovery and resilience. For example, protein aids in muscle recovery, Vitamin C supports tissue repair, and Vitamin A promotes wound healing, bone development, and immune function.

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, it helps you to return to optimal health and reduce your risk of developing heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoporosis, and several types of cancer, as well as helps to maintain a healthy body weight.

### What exactly is healthy eating?

As described in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, eating healthy means:

- ▶ 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; and
- ▶ Balancing caloric intake with calories burned to maintain a healthy body weight.

### How can you eat healthier to promote recovery and improve function?

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 whole grains
- ▶ Switching to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk
- ▶ Choosing foods with less sodium
- ▶ Drinking water instead of 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 lose weight?

Before starting a weight loss program, be sure to contact your local dietitian or health care provider to help you safely lose weight. Permanent and healthy weight management can be achieved by eating a balanced diet that supports optimal well-being. This balance must include protein for muscle recovery, vitamins and minerals for tissue repair and reduced scarring, and complex carbohydrates to ensure needed energy during exercise and healing.

To learn how our programs 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).

For more information on your local resources, contact:



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