

CHAPTER 3

Days 2–5

BEVERAGES:

Apple Cider *

Banana-Peanut Butter Shake *

Coffee

Milk

Nutritional Supplement drink (eg: Slim•Fast, Carnation Instant Breakfast, Ensure)

Ovaltine Chocolate Malt

Peach Iced Tea *

Rich Hot Chocolate *

Tea – Green, Black or Herbal

Water

BREAKFAST:

Broccoli Omelette *

French Toast *

Hot Oatmeal *

Pancakes *

Scrambled Eggs

Soft Cereals

Waffles

BREADS:

Honey/Wheat Bread (with crusts broken off)

Rolls

Soft Brown Bread

White Bread

LUNCH/DINNER:

Chicken Pesto Pasta*

Chickpea Hot Pot Recipe *

Fish Fillets (steamed or baked)

Fish in Foil *

Frittata *

Grilled Cheese Sandwich

Lamb and Winter Vegetable Stew *

Macaroni and Cheese

Meatloaf

Mediterranean Fish Stew *

Okra Stew with Shrimp *

Orzo Shrimp Stew *

Quiche *

Rajasthani "Buttermilk" Curry *

Warm Pasta Dishes

DESSERTS:

Apple Rhubarb Crumble *

Bread and Butter Pudding *

Crème Brûlée

Cold Puddings

Fruit with Warm Custard

Jell-O Desserts

Rice Pudding

Strawberry Parfait *

Very Berry Pie *

Yogurt or Kefir

BEVERAGES

Apple Cider

Long touted by ancient Egyptians to be an elixir of eternal youth, apple cider is indeed a natural multi-vitamin and mineral treasure trove. Even Hippocrates — the father of medicine — acknowledged the vast healing properties of apple cider.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups apple juice
- 1 cinnamon stick, 2 inches
- 3 cloves (whole)
- 2 tbsp. orange peel
- sugar, if desired

DIRECTIONS:

Place all ingredients in a saucepan and bring to a simmer. Cover and continue to simmer for 15–20 minutes. Taste and add sugar if desired. Strain and serve warm.

Banana-Peanut Butter Shake

Peanut butter is rich in protein, giving this shake an energy boost. It is also known to help protect against heart disease.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup milk
- 1 tbsp. creamy peanut butter
- ½ banana
- 1 scoop protein powder (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

Place all ingredients in a blender and puree until smooth. Enjoy!

Peach Iced Tea

Tea is known for its antioxidants and healing properties, while peaches, a source of natural sugars, also contain vitamins A and C. You can even add a bit of peach puree to create a mock Bellini. This beverage is a great twist on an old favorite.

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 cups water
- 3 tea bags
- 3 tbsp. sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick, 2 inches
- 1 cup peach nectar
- 1 peach, sliced in thin wedges

DIRECTIONS:

Boil the water, and make tea. Once steeped to your preference, three to five minutes, remove tea bags. Add sugar and cinnamon while liquid is still warm, and stir to dissolve. Mix in peach juice and peach slices. Chill in the fridge before serving over ice.

BREAKFAST

Broccoli Omelette

Everyone now knows broccoli's nutritive power extends beyond just multi-vitamins and antioxidants. It also contains enough calcium to supplement the diets of those who do not consume dairy products. However, are you an expert at selecting broccoli? Choose only the darkest greens and the thinnest stalks, and go for organic. Color is key: never choose yellow.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 3 eggs
- dash of salt and pepper
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup cooked broccoli, small pieces
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cheddar cheese, shredded

DIRECTIONS:

Warm a frying pan on medium heat and add the oil. In a bowl, beat eggs, salt and pepper together, then add the mixture to the hot pan. Turn the temperature to medium-low and cook the egg. Once the top side has set (looks mainly firm), add the cheese and broccoli to one-half of the top side of the omelette. Fold the egg in half, covering the cheese and broccoli. Cook for two to four more minutes, until cheese has melted.

Pancakes

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- 3 tbsp. sugar
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup blueberries
- 2 eggs
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups milk
- 1 tbsp. melted butter

DIRECTIONS:

Combine the dry ingredients and stir together. Add in and coat the blueberries. In a separate bowl, mix the wet ingredients, beating the eggs slightly. Combine both dry and wet ingredients together, just until mixed. (They don't need to be smooth.) Spoon the batter in small portions ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the mixture) onto a hot, oiled frying pan, on low-medium heat. When the pancakes have "bubbles" on the top, the pancake is ready to flip. The other side will only need two to three minutes. Should your pancake be overcooked on the underside, before the bubbles appear, turn down the heat for the next batch. Serve with maple syrup, fresh fruit or simply butter.

Indian Mulligatawny Soup

This delicious Anglo-Indian soup is a product of the notorious 18th century British Raj in India. The name "Mulligatawny" is an English version of the Indian phrase for "pepper water." Originally it was a rich, curried soup made with peppers, chicken stock, coconut milk, apples, almonds, chunks of chicken, and various vegetables. Our version is much healthier, opting for less cream, no coconut milk, and organic veggies. We also suggest spot-sautéing the vegetables to prevent losing the vitamins found therein. Serve it with Basmati rice or with a piece of Naan bread! You'll understand why the British stole the recipe and made it theirs.

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup onion, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 carrot, diced
- ¼ cup butter
- 1½ tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 1½ tsp. curry powder
- 4 cups organic chicken broth
- ½ apple, cored and chopped
- ¼ cup white rice
- 1 skinless, boneless chicken breast, cubed
- salt, to taste
- ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 pinch dried thyme
- ½ cup heavy cream, heated

DIRECTIONS:

Sauté onions, celery, carrot, and butter in a large stockpot. Add flour and curry, and cook five more minutes. Add chicken stock, mix well and bring to a boil. Simmer about 30 minutes. Then, add the apple, rice, chicken, salt, pepper, and thyme, simmering 15-20 minutes, or until rice is done. Add hot cream just before serving.

LUNCH AND DINNER

Chicken Pesto Pasta

Eating this delicious dish can also prevent infection. Basil, the main ingredient of pesto, is actually a natural, gentle sedative that helps to relieve high blood pressure and the symptoms of peptic ulcers. The unique array of volatile oils found in basil — which contain estragole, linalool, cineole, eugenol, sabinene, myrcene, and limonene — provide protection against unwanted bacterial growth. Some bacteria that basil works best against are strains of bacteria from the genera *Staphylococcus*, *Enterococcus* and *Pseudomonas*, all of which are not only widespread but have now developed a high level of resistance to antibiotics.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, chopped
- 1 tbsp. salt
- 8 oz. fettuccini
- 2½ cups basil
- 5 cloves garlic
- ½ cup pine nuts
- ⅔ cup olive oil
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese, grated

DIRECTIONS:

In a frying pan, heat the vegetable oil, and add the chopped chicken. Saute the meat and fully cook the chicken before setting it aside. To make the sauce, combine the basil, garlic and pine nuts in a food processor (or blender) until it reaches a paste-like texture. Slowly pour in the olive oil while still blending together. Then, stir in the cheese. Taste and season with salt and pepper, as needed. At the same time, boil a large pot of salted water. When it reaches a rolling boil, add the fettuccini and cook until al dente. Toss the cooked pasta with the pesto sauce, topping the dish with the cooked chicken pieces.

Lamb and Winter Vegetable Stew

We like cooking but we can be a little bit impatient. Parsnips and sweet potatoes add depth to this stew; parsnips also add potassium and fiber, while the sweet potato is abundant in vitamin A. This is a great recipe for good health.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 lb. lamb stew meat, cubed
- 2 cups beef broth
- 1 cup dry red wine
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp. fresh thyme, chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. black pepper
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 cups butternut squash, peeled, seeded and sliced
- 1 cup parsnips, peeled and sliced
- 1 cup sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 1 cup celery, sliced
- 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream
- 3 tbsp. all-purpose flour

DIRECTIONS:

Heat the oil in a large saucepan, and brown the lamb on all sides. Drain fat, and stir in the beef broth and wine. Add the spices and bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer 20 minutes. Mix in the squash, parsnips, sweet potatoes, celery, and onion. Again, bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender. In a small bowl, blend the sour cream and flour together. Slowly stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the hot stew mixture into the sour cream blend. Then stir the sour cream mix into the stew. Remove the bay leaf, and continue to cook until thickened, stirring often.

Orzo Shrimp Stew

Orzo is often thought of as “Italian rice,” yet it is simply small rice-shaped pasta full of carbs and protein.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2½ cups chicken broth
- 5 cups broccoli florets
- 1 can diced tomatoes, undrained (14.5 ounce)
- 1 cup uncooked orzo
- 1 lb. uncooked medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- ¾ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- 2 tsp. dried basil
- 2 tbsp. butter

DIRECTIONS:

In a large nonstick saucepan, bring the broth to a boil. Add the broccoli, tomatoes, and orzo, and reduce heat to a simmer. Cook uncovered for five minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the shrimp, salt and pepper and cover, cooking for four to five minutes or until shrimp turns pink and orzo is tender. Stir in basil and butter to finish.

Rajasthani Buttermilk Curry

We personally recommend this dish because of its healing properties. Turmeric, which gives curry its yellow color, contains curcuminoid, a property known to help prevent Alzheimer's and arthritis, reducing any inflammation of joints and muscles. But recently, studies have shown it also may prevent asthma, multiple sclerosis, and osteoporosis. Try using a yogurt that has probiotic cultures, which provide "good" bacteria to aid digestion. This authentic dish will make you feel like you traveled all the way to India to taste it.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1½ tsp. black mustard seeds
- ½ tsp. cumin seeds
- ½ tsp. turmeric
- 2 medium scallions, trimmed and sliced
- 1 green cayenne pepper, minced
- 1 cup plain yogurt OR 1¼ cups buttermilk
- ¼ cup water, if using yogurt
- ½ tsp. salt
- ⅔ tbsp. chopped cilantro

DIRECTIONS:

Heat oil in a wok or heavy pot over high heat. When hot, toss in mustard seeds. Then, once most have "popped," add cumin, turmeric and stir. Lower the heat to medium and add the scallions and peppers, stir-frying until softened, about three minutes. If using yogurt, stir in the water. Reduce the heat to low, and pour in the yogurt or butter milk. Stir until warmed throughout, but do not allow the mixture to boil. Stir in the salt and transfer to a serving bowl. Garnish with chopped cilantro.

DESSERTS

Apple Rhubarb Crumble

Rhubarb was brought to America from Europe in the late 1700s. Today there are more than 60 varieties of this interesting vegetable available. Folk remedies often used rhubarb to aid with indigestion and constipation. Today we also know rhubarb can regulate fat absorption. Got your attention now?

INGREDIENTS:

Filling:

- 2 cups apples, peeled, cored, sliced
- 2 cups rhubarb, chopped
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ cup pecan pieces
- 1 tsp. cinnamon

Crumble:

- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup flour
- dash of salt
- ¼ cup butter
- ¼ cup rolled oats

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 400°. In an oven-proof deep dish, mix together the fruit, sugar, pecans and cinnamon. In another bowl, combine the brown sugar, flour and salt. Cut in the butter with a fork until it looks crumbly. Add the rolled oats and sprinkle over the fruit mixture. Bake 30-40 minutes until golden brown on top.

Strawberry Parfait

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup vanilla yogurt
- 1 cup granola
- 1 cup strawberries
- ½ cup whipped cream
- ¼ cup slivered almonds
- 2 sprigs of mint leaves

DIRECTIONS:

Using either parfait glasses or simply tall drink glasses, layer ¼ cup of yogurt, ¼ cup of granola and ¼ cup of strawberries; then repeat these layers again. Top with a dollop of whipped cream, slivered almonds and mint sprig. Complete the entire process again in a second glass. For added decadence, try drizzling chocolate sauce on top.

Very Berry Pie

Eat, drink and be berry! This pie will have any precancerous cells running for cover. Raspberries contain significant amounts of polyphenol antioxidants such as anthocyanin pigments. Buy the frozen organic berries: they work just as well as fresh. Raspberries are also a rich source of vitamin C, about 50% of our daily-recommended value. Drench in delicious vanilla ice cream or custard. Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 unbaked 9-inch pie crusts
- 2 cups raspberries, fresh or frozen
- 1 cup strawberries, sliced, fresh or frozen
- 1 cup blueberries, fresh or frozen
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour
- 1 tbsp. butter

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat the oven to 400°. Mix together the berries and lemon juice in a large bowl. In another bowl, stir the sugar and flour together. Combine the dry ingredients with the fruit mixture, coating the berries evenly. Place berries in one of the pie shells and dot with small pieces of butter. Invert the second pie shell on top of the filled shell and pinch around the edges to seal. Cut several slits on the top of the pie, allowing steam to escape. Bake at 400° for 15 minutes, then reduce heat and bake at 375° for 45 minutes, until golden on top. Let rest 15 minutes before serving.

CHAPTER 4

Days 6-14

In addition to cooking many of the fine dishes from our previous menus, your mouth will now be ready to enjoy the nourishing and comforting meals below.

MAIN COURSES

Almond-Crusted Halibut Crystal Symphony *

Broiled Tilapia Parmesan *

Chicken Fettuccini Alfredo *

Fish in Ginger-Tamarind Sauce *

Grilled Salmon Kyoto *

Lasagna *

Orange Roughy *

Salmon Patties *

Sesame Seared Tuna *

All of the fish in these dishes are a good source of protein and, of course, contain omega-3 fatty acids, which are known to benefit your cardiovascular system and your nervous system. Fatty fish, in particular, is recommended to be eaten at least twice a week.

Fish in Ginger-Tamarind Sauce

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 tsp. mustard seed
- 2 tbsp. fresh ginger, chopped
- 1 cup onions, chopped
- 2 cups water
- 1 tbsp. tamarind paste
- 2 tbsp. coriander, ground
- ½ tsp. chili powder
- salt, to taste
- ½ lb. cod fillets, cut into 1-inch cubes
- fresh curry leaves (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

Heat oil in a saucepan over medium-high heat. When hot, add mustard seeds and cook until they begin to crackle. Then add ginger and onion, cooking until softened, about five minutes. Pour in water and add the tamarind paste. Bring this to a boil before adding coriander, chili powder, and salt. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add fish to the pan and cook thoroughly. Garnish with fresh curry leaves.

Chicken Fettuccini Alfredo

INGREDIENTS:

- 6 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cubed
- 1 tbsp. Italian seasoning
- 6 tbsp. butter
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 lb. fettuccini
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 pkg. sliced mushrooms (8 ounce)
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp. salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. white pepper
- 3 cups milk
- 1 cup half and half
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 2 cups Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
- 3 plum tomatoes, diced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream

DIRECTIONS:

In a large skillet over medium heat, combine chicken, Italian seasoning, and two tablespoons each of butter and garlic. Fully cook the chicken and remove from the skillet and set aside (chicken should no longer be pink inside). Next, bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil; add pasta and cook 10 minutes or until al dente and drain. Meanwhile, melt four tablespoons of butter in the skillet; saute onion, remaining garlic, and mushrooms, cooking until onions are transparent. Stir in flour, salt, and pepper, cooking for two minutes. Slowly add milk and cream, stirring until smooth and creamy. Then, gradually add both cheeses and stir until melted. Finally, add chicken, tomatoes and sour cream. Serve over cooked fettuccini.

Orange Roughy

The orange roughy is a large deep-sea fish typically found in the cold, deep waters of the western Pacific Ocean, eastern Atlantic and Indo-Pacific.

This fish is notable for its lengthy lifespan — 150 years — and bright red scales that fade to a yellowish orange by the time it arrives on your plate.

Ridiculously low in fat, the orange roughy is also an excellent source of selenium, vitamin B12 and niacin.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 3 green onions, chopped
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 1 can whole peeled tomatoes with liquid, chopped (14.5 ounce)
- 4 4-ounce orange roughy fillets
- 1 tbsp. fresh basil, chopped
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 1 pinch dried thyme, crushed
- 1 pinch dried rosemary, crushed
- ¼ cup black olives, sliced and drained
- ½ lb. feta cheese, crumbled

DIRECTIONS:

To prepare, heat olive oil in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add green onions, and cook until tender, about five to 10 minutes. Then, stir in white wine and tomatoes and bring to a boil. Place the fish fillets in the white wine mixture, seasoning with basil, pepper, thyme, and rosemary. Reduce heat and simmer the fish 15-20 minutes, until fish is easily flaked with a fork. Remove fish fillets from skillet and top with black olives and feta cheese.

Salmon Patties

To benefit from antioxidants and omega-3 fatty acids, salmon is an ideal source.

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ lb. salmon
- 1 red potato, peeled and chopped
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1 egg, beaten
- ¼ cup Italian seasoned breadcrumbs
- 1 tsp. Italian seasoning
- salt and pepper, to taste
- ½ cup cornflake crumbs
- 2 tbsp. olive oil

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350° and lightly grease a small baking dish. Place the salmon in the prepared baking dish; cover and bake 20 minutes, or until easily flaked with a fork. While the fish is cooking, boil the potato in a small saucepan and cook until tender, 10-15 minutes. Once cooked, drain and mash the potato. Next, combine the salmon, potato, shallot, egg, and breadcrumbs in a bowl, and add the Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper. In a separate bowl nearby, place the cornflake crumbs. Then, using the salmon mixture, create 1-inch balls of salmon. Roll the balls in the cornflakes to coat, and press into patties. Heat the olive oil in a medium saucepan, and fry the patties over medium heat, three to five minutes a side, or until golden brown. Delicious!

CHAPTER 5

Day 14 and Beyond

Health and Nutrition

Congratulations! You made it. With a fantastic foundation built within the past two-week period where your mouth has had ample time to heal by eating softer, gum-sensitive nutritional food, you have now reached the 14-day marker, where you can resume a normal diet.

After Day 14 you can eat whatever you wish, but be careful not to disturb any residual swelling that might be present in the surgical site. Add solid foods to your diet as soon as they are comfortable to chew.

But now that you have conscientiously integrated this healthier eating regime into your life, we believe you will want to continue.

Oral health is a critical part of your overall health. Don't wait until the next dental surgery to focus on taking good care of your teeth and your gums.

Fitness 101

Your overall health and wellbeing are key to a speedy recovery process from any type of surgery, including dental surgery.

Along with healthy eating, as guided by the menus within the preceding chapters of this book, you should be conscious of the value of nutrition in your diet and the level of fitness in your daily activities. This ideal combination of a balanced amount of vitamins and nutrients along with regular exercise is critical for post-operative recovery. Not to mention, by being aware of both these factors, you can aim to stay at an optimum health level in the weeks, months and years to come.

You don't need to enlist a fitness trainer and nutritionist. All you need to do is follow a suitable plan that includes exercises, proper nutrition, and embracing a healthier lifestyle plan.

In the days following surgery, it will be natural to feel tired and achy, so common sense says that you shouldn't overexert yourself. This especially

means taking care not to exacerbate sensitive or delicate areas; in this case, around your head and mouth area.

It's not recommended that you attempt any vigorous physical exercise that involves head-turning, nodding, neck strain, or inverting your body. For example, strenuous yoga positions, sit-ups, push-ups, or running might be too stressful in these early days of recovery.

However, a moderate amount of fitness and exercise will be a productive way to build your body into a stronger, fitter, and healthier machine.

Exercise has multiple benefits in addition to controlling weight: it can reduce the risk of cardiac disease, lower blood pressure, improve mental function, improve blood glucose levels, reduce the risk of some cancers, and improve the immune system. When it becomes apparent it is safe to do so, try to get at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day.

Physical activity is defined as activities in addition to your normal daily routines such as going to work, shopping, or housekeeping.

Running might be too hard on your body at this time, but fast walking or even a short walk around the block will be worthwhile and rewarding. In fact, you will be amazed at how good it will make you feel!

Five Pillars of Fitness

Supporting your entire fitness plan, the five pillars of fitness are essential elements for healthier, stronger and longer living.

Strength, agility, flexibility, cardiovascular, and endurance exercises should be included as part of every well-rounded and balanced fitness regime. Of course, there are many different exercises that can benefit each pillar from this group; however, all of the exercises that are specially recommended within these five pillars are intended as safe for post-operative patients who are 14 days into their recovery, and onwards.

However, if in doubt, or you do not feel 100% ready for this type of movement, please do not attempt it.

Strength

Building and toning muscles is what strength training is all about. This can involve using weights and repetitions of movement — essentially, fewer reps can be performed with heavier weights to achieve results similar to more reps with lighter weights.

Ultimately, strength training is about completing the action not once or twice, but repeating it 6 to 12 times (called a “set”). This helps to develop strength and endurance.

Types of weight equipment can include barbells, dumbbells, and even using your own body weight by performing chin-ups and push-ups.

Push-Ups

Target Area: chest and arms (pectoral, triceps, biceps)

In a classic push-up, you lie flat, face down on the floor, with your stomach to the ground; bring your hands up to your shoulders and raise your toes, so the bottom of your toes touch the ground.

With your legs out straight behind you, push up, keeping your back straight and stomach tight. Then, lower yourself in this horizontal position until your elbows make a right angle and/or your chest almost reaches the floor.

VARIATION: If this is a challenge, try with your knees bent to begin with, gradually working up to a full-body push-up.

Are you improving? Once a month, do as many push-ups as possible to find out your maximum repetition level. This number should increase over time, with more practice and training.

Crunches

Target Area: Abdominal muscles

Lie on the floor, face up, with your back flat and knees bent, so the soles of your feet are flat on the floor.

Place your arms gently behind your head. Curl your neck and shoulders up off the floor and feel your abdominal muscles “crunch.” Then,

release and lower your shoulders back down. You should be using your abdominals, not your arms, to curl you up. There should be no pull on your neck.

VARIATION: Try raising your legs in the air, with bended knees; keep your legs in this position throughout the crunch. Alternatively, try lifting only one shoulder and twisting to target the oblique abdominal muscles; be sure to crunch both sides.

Are you improving? Once a month, do as many crunches as possible to find out your maximum repetition level. This number should increase over time, with more practice and training.

Squats

Target Area: lower body (quadriceps, hamstrings, calves and gluts)

The idea of a squat is basically bending your knees and rising again. To begin, start with your feet shoulder width apart; bend your knees and squat as low as possible.

During your bend, bring your arms out in front of you, parallel with the floor. Then straighten back up to a standing position again; and repeat.

VARIATION: For more of a challenge, try it on one leg. Support yourself on one leg and lift the other in front of you while bending. Be sure to repeat on the other leg.

Are you improving? Once a month, do as many squats as possible to find out your Maximum Repetition level. This number should increase over time, with more practice and training. Also, you may notice a difference in the level of squat that you can achieve; with time, you may be able to bend lower, into a deeper squat.

Lunges

Target Area: glutes, hamstrings

To try this lunge, stand with one foot in front of the next, 2-3 feet apart. The goal is to have both knees at a 90° angle when you're bending your knees, so you may need to bring your feet closer or further apart.

To begin, bend your knees: your front heel stays down on the floor, with the knee directly over the foot, while the back leg/knee is lowered towards the floor. Your upper body should remain straight throughout the movement. Then, push up through your front foot and return to the starting position, keeping your knees bent slightly in the top position. Try doing 2-3 sets of 10-15 repetitions.

VARIATION: As you increase your level of strength and comfort with this exercise, add extra weight. For instance, hold hand weights in each hand as you perform this exercise. If you don't have barbells, try a can of soup or bottle of water in each hand instead.

Are you improving? Once a month, do as many lunges as possible to find out your Maximum Repetition level. This number should increase over time, with more practice and training.

Leg Lift

Target Area: lower body (legs, hips, abs)

Lie on the floor, face up, on your back, placing your hands under your hips; your legs should be straight in front of you. Slowly lift one leg off the floor, about six inches high, and hold it in the air. Then, lower and repeat with the other leg.

Once this movement is comfortable, try raising both legs off the ground together. When they're in the air, spread your legs out wide and then bring them back together; then lower them to the ground.

VARIATION: Instead of spreading your legs apart, simply keep them hovering six inches off the ground and hold this position for 30-45 seconds before lowering.

Are you improving? Continue until your strength improves to desired level.

Lifestyle activities which also encourage strength:

weightlifting, swimming, rowing.

Lifestyle activities which encourage flexibility:

yoga, tai chi, dance/ballet, stretching.

Cardiovascular

Cardiovascular refers to both the heart and lung components of fitness. It is the cornerstone of overall health and wellbeing. A well-tuned cardio system usually results in improvements across your whole body. The basic idea is to get involved in an activity which raises your heart rate and breathing to an elevated level, for an extended period of time, ideally for 20-40 minutes, depending on your fitness level.

However, you do need to monitor your heart rate to ensure it stays within a healthy range, and that you're not overworking yourself.

In regards to your breathing, here's the rule of thumb: you should always be able to carry on a conversation with a friend; if you're too winded to do this, you're working too hard.

When beginning a new cardio program, the key is to build up to the 20-40 minutes. If you haven't done any activity for a while, don't make your first workouts too long or you'll never want to work out again. For example, try 10 minutes for the first week; then add 5 additional minutes every week until you build up to your target of 20-40 minutes. Also, be sure to warm up, to get your heart rate going, before every session.

Jumping Rope

Get a skipping rope and find a wide area to jump in. Skipping is a very difficult exercise to do for prolonged periods. So, start slow; don't jump as fast as you can right away, but instead jump at a rate that you can hopefully sustain for several minutes.

VARIATION: Try alternating your jumping style: try on one foot, alternating feet; try jumping with your feet apart; or even try bringing your knees up high when you jump. Also, try varying the intensity: jump as fast as you can for 1 minute, and then at your regular speed for 5, repeating this pattern throughout your workout.

Are you improving? Measure your success by the length of time skipping, and the intensity/speed of your jumping. Both have their advantages and signal your ongoing improvement.

Swimming

Head to the local swimming pool, or perhaps just outside if you have your own pool, and swim a couple laps. With swimming, you're trying to maintain your increased heart rate, so swimming laps are an ideal activity.

VARIATION: You can use any stroke you like, or any combination or variation, but keep at it, and you can swim like you're Michael Phelps. Note: if you're not swimming in a life-guarded area, never swim alone.

Are you improving? Look for an increase in distance, or an ability to swim for a longer period of time. If time is limited, then try to swim harder than you were before, i.e., swimming a longer distance in the same amount of time.

Fast Walking

Grab a sturdy pair of walking shoes or gym shoes, and head outside. You don't need any equipment other than healthy determination to start walking. Though to help improve your cardio, you need to walk fast enough to get your heart rate up, so pick up the pace — this isn't a leisurely stroll. In bad weather, try the mall for a dry, covered area to walk.

VARIATION: Try alternating fast walking with light jogging. For example, try a combination such as walking 4 minutes, jogging 1 minute, for the duration of your workout. Or consider varying your route to include a hill or incline. Also, terrain makes a difference — walking on sand provides more resistance, while walking in the woods demands more thought and attention.

Are you improving? Over time, you should be able to walk faster, and for a longer period of time, without adding an uncomfortable amount of stress on your body. You can measure your improvement in terms of distance walked, steps taken, or distances that you walked in a certain amount of time. A pedometer will definitely help keep track of some of these figures.

Endurance

Endurance training involves low to medium-intensity exercising for longer periods, such as jogging several miles, instead of sprinting once around the block.

Tips for building endurance:

▶ *Aim for longer, slower paced workouts*

When striving to build endurance, slow and steady wins the race. Once you've decided on the time goal, set an appropriate pace so that you're able to sustain your activity throughout the time period. Pace yourself — this is playing the long game.

▶ *Dedication goes a long way*

Ideally, try to work out several times a week, and build up to daily workouts. As endurance training doesn't have the same intensity as strength training, daily workouts are fine. However, don't try to do too much at once: start at 5 or 10 minutes, and work your way up to 30-40 minutes of activity.

▶ *Positive mental attitude*

A large part of endurance is your mental attitude. Making a commitment to follow a fitness routine requires a certain mental attitude; it is this same perseverance that is also required when you're almost at the end of your energy. This means that towards the end of your cycle, jog or swim, dig deep and keep going. Take it one step at a time, and you can do it.

▶ *Balanced workout*

Incorporate all the other elements of fitness — strength, flexibility, agility and cardio — as each of these will help you achieve your endurance goals.

Lifestyle Activities which encourage endurance:

Swimming, bicycling, walking briskly, tennis, volleyball, rowing, dancing, climbing stairs or hills, skiing, hiking, jogging.

ABCs of Vitamins, Minerals and Nutrition

When having surgery, you're under the care of a capable health care team, but once you leave, you need to do everything you can for yourself. Thus, this section will provide the general nutritional support and advice that is vital for consuming the nutrients that any body requires to function at its peak performance.

Naturally, we don't all necessarily stick to a strict dietary regime of carrots and celery; a hamburger or a tempting bowl of chicken wings are bound to creep into the picture. Yet, especially after surgery, it's important to give your body an added boost, so it can get back on track and repair itself.

Nutrition falls into six major nutrition groups: carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals, and water. Read on to learn some of the ways you can build a good nutritional base to help pave your road to recovery.

There are a total of 13 vitamins, which are essentially organic compounds that are necessary for your body's normal metabolic functions. They constantly need to be replenished as we lose them every time we urinate. So, it's important to ensure a daily intake of the nutrients you need.

Here's a cheat sheet of vitamins and what they do:

Vitamin A

WHY YOU NEED IT: This vitamin helps you see in the dark and promotes a healthy immune system. This includes aiding the growth and development of cells, keeping your skin healthy, and promoting the formation and maintenance of healthy teeth, too.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: Vitamin A can be found in milk, eggs, liver, fortified cereals, carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, cantaloupe, apricots, peaches, papayas, and mangos — the majority of your orange fruits and vegetables.

Vitamin B1

WHY YOU NEED IT: All B vitamins help to create energy by breaking down and metabolizing fats and carbohydrates. In

addition, vitamin B1, also known as thiamin, helps to maintain the heart's functions, and the nervous, cardiovascular, and digestive systems.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: Oatmeal, brown rice, whole grain flour, asparagus, potatoes, oranges, pork, liver and eggs.

Vitamin B2

WHY YOU NEED IT: Vitamin B2 (or riboflavin) aids the body's antioxidants, to protect against free radicals.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: Milk, cheese, green leafy vegetables, liver, kidneys, and legumes.

Vitamin B3

WHY YOU NEED IT: Vitamin B3 aids antioxidants and plays a role in our digestive systems. Be aware that deficiency of B3 (or niacin) can cause the disease pellagra (a vitamin deficiency); while in mild cases, lack of B3 may slow the body's metabolism, causing intolerance to cold.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: Often in pill form.

Vitamin B4

WHY YOU NEED IT: Vitamin B4 (or adenine) produces energy along with the other B vitamins.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: In whole grains (breads and cereals), raw honey, bee pollen, royal jelly, and most fresh vegetables and fruits.

Vitamin B5

WHY YOU NEED IT: Vitamin B5 (or pantothenic acid) is also known as the anti-stress vitamin because of its support of the adrenal gland's release of cortisol. It also stimulates the immune system to produce antibodies.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: Beef, eggs, fresh vegetables, kidney, legumes, liver, mushrooms, nuts, pork, saltwater fish, whole rye flour, and whole wheat.

Vitamin B6

WHY YOU NEED IT: Vitamin B6 (or pyridoxine) is crucial for normal brain function.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: In a variety of foods, including potatoes, bananas, beans, seeds, nuts, red meat, poultry, fish, eggs, spinach, as well as added to some breakfast cereals.

Vitamin B9

WHY YOU NEED IT: Otherwise known as folate, this vitamin is important in DNA production, producing new cell bodies, and preventing changes that may lead to cancer. Particularly important for expectant moms.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: Spinach, turnip greens, lettuces, fortified cereal, and sunflower seeds.

Vitamin B12

WHY YOU NEED IT: Vitamin B12 (or cobalamin) helps make red blood cells and gives you energy, of course.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: Fish, red meat, poultry, milk, cheese, eggs, and fortified cereals.

Vitamin C

WHY YOU NEED IT: Vitamin C is essential for healthy bones, teeth and gums. It also helps in the healing of wounds, and plays a part in forming collagen.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: In red berries, kiwi, red and green bell peppers, tomatoes, broccoli, spinach, and orange and grapefruit juice.

Vitamin D

WHY YOU NEED IT: Vitamin D strengthens bones by aiding in the body's absorption of calcium.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: Uniquely, this vitamin is manufactured when your skin is exposed to sunlight. It is also found in egg yolks, fish oils, and fortified foods such as milk.

Vitamin E

WHY YOU NEED IT: An antioxidant, vitamin E helps protect cells from damage and keeps red blood cells healthy.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: Found in many foods, such as vegetable oils, nuts, avocados, wheat germ, whole grains, and green leafy vegetables.

Vitamin K

WHY YOU NEED IT: Regulating normal blood clotting, vitamin K is part of the synthesis process of several proteins that are necessary for coagulation and anticoagulation. Also, it prevents the hardening of arteries, so can reduce the occurrence of heart disease and failure.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: Found in green leafy vegetables, in particular the dark ones such as spinach and kale, as well as cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, and sprouts, and fruits such as avocado and kiwi. Parsley is full of vitamin K.

Top Five Minerals

Unlike vitamins and other nutrients, minerals are inorganic compounds. Typically, a mineral is usually nothing more than a molecule, or a couple of molecules, of an element. They help maintain normal function of your nervous system, cellular reactions, structural and skeletal systems, and water balance in the body.

There are many minerals found within the human body, but there are at least 16 “essential” minerals. Here are our top five, in reverse order:

5. Potassium

WHY YOU NEED IT: Potassium is an electrolyte that works alongside another mineral, sodium, to regulate the body’s water levels. A poor potassium/sodium balance ultimately can lead to dehydration and weakness.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: Potassium is commonly found in all balanced diets that include foods like orange juice, potatoes, bananas, avocados, tomatoes, broccoli, and apricots.

4. Iron

WHY YOU NEED IT: Iron is a constituent of hemoglobin, which is responsible for transporting oxygen around your body. Thus, with a healthy amount of iron in the body you can get more oxygen to your muscles, and you will recover much, much faster.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: Red meat, fish, poultry, lentils, beans, tofu, chickpeas, black-eyed peas, fortified bread and breakfast cereals. Iron in meat is more easily absorbed than iron in vegetables.

3. Sodium

WHY YOU NEED IT: The human requirement for sodium in the diet is about 500 mg per day. Yet, many people consume far more sodium than is needed, so this may be a case of balancing your intake of sodium to get just the right amount. Together with potassium, this electrolyte plays an important role in the body.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: Table salt.

2. Zinc

WHY YOU NEED IT: Zinc is necessary for sustaining all life. And it's critical for all phases of growth: without it, you are susceptible to numerous chronic diseases.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: In pill form, but also naturally occurring in oysters, beans, nuts, almonds, whole grains, pumpkin seeds, and sunflower seeds.

1. Calcium

WHY YOU NEED IT: Great for teeth and bone-building, calcium is also needed for healthy muscles, hearts and digestive systems.

WHERE YOU FIND IT: Dairy products, calcium-fortified foods, canned fish with bones (salmon, sardines), and green leafy vegetables.

Balanced Diet

Find a balance with vitamins and minerals — make sure your intake is just right so that you get enough, but not too much, of one alone. Some turn to nutritional supplements such as a multivitamin to guarantee the consumption of a sufficient quantity of selected nutrients. However, when mixing and matching supplements, there is a chance that you might overdose or underdose on certain vitamins and minerals, which is a recipe for disaster.

Too much of one mineral, for instance, could cause a functional imbalance of another, or even negative side effects. As an example, if you consume too much zinc, you can inadvertently lower your HDL levels (the “good” cholesterol).

At the end of the day, the secret to getting a well-balanced proportion of nutrients is eating a healthy diet. Strive to follow the “five-a-day” rule of five portions of fruit and vegetables. Whole-grain breads and cereals, low-fat poultry and meat, non-fried fish, and low-fat milk, cheese and yogurt are also key factors in a balanced diet. It sounds simple, because it is!

Protein Power

Illness and injury take a nutritional toll on the body. People who have had surgery need extra protein, calories, and other nutrients that support this repair and recovery.

Those who are well-nourished are likely to recover from illness, injury, and surgery better and more quickly than those who are poorly nourished. Medical research has shown time and again that people who are not well nourished take longer to recover, are more likely to have complications, and are more likely to be re-hospitalized.

Protein is especially important for healing. The body uses the amino acids in protein to build and repair body cells and tissues. Those who are undernourished may not have the nutritional resources — especially the protein — they need for the body's "extra" work of healing.

4 Tips for a Protein-Packed Day

Extra protein can be especially beneficial if you're embarking on a major healing process, such as during post-surgery recovery. These suggestions will help you get more protein and extra calories in about the same amount of food you usually eat.

1. Add nonfat dry milk or powdered protein supplements to regular whole milk. You can also add them to sauces and gravies or use them for breading meat, fish, or poultry. Cook cereals with milk instead of water. Use milk, half and half, and evaporated milk when making instant cocoa, canned soups, mashed potatoes, and puddings. Add extra ice cream to milkshakes. One cup of whole or nonfat milk contains about eight grams of protein.
2. Add small pieces of meat, fish, or poultry to soups and to vegetable, noodle, and rice casseroles. A three-ounce portion of meat, fish, or poultry contains approximately 21 grams of protein.

3. Add grated cheese to cream sauces, casseroles, or vegetables. Melt sliced cheese over hot apple pie. Combine cottage cheese and cream cheese with fruit. Use cream cheese and margarine on hot bread or rolls. A one-ounce slice of American cheese contains about 5 grams of protein. One-half cup of cottage cheese has approximately 12 grams of protein.
4. Blend finely chopped hard-boiled eggs into sauces, gravies, chopped meats, or salad dressings, or sprinkle over salads. One very large egg contains about 6 grams of protein.

Ultimately, changing to a healthier lifestyle is key to getting better after surgery and onwards for the rest of your life, leading to increased wellness and longevity, as well as peak physical fitness.

Eating the right things and exercising regularly isn't a big secret. But, the real secret to success is finding your passions: the foods that taste great, and deliver vitamins, proteins and minerals; and the lifestyle exercises that you enjoy, like playing tennis, golf, or squash, or going swimming and jogging with a friend. Only then will you give your body what it needs, while putting a smile on your face.

It's our job to give our patients a winning smile. The next steps of keeping that smile are the choices you make.

Good luck and thanks for reading!