

Good nutrition is important

Children feel better and have more energy to do things when they are well nourished.

Good nutrition is especially important for children with burn injuries.

Adequate energy, protein, vitamins and minerals will help encourage healing and also prevent infection and wound breakdown.

In large burns, nutritional needs can be double what they are normally. So although your child may not be moving around much, a lot of energy is being used in the healing process.

Barriers to good nutrition

It can sometimes be difficult for your child to meet these increased requirements for many reasons

- > the shock of burn
- > the position of the burn may interfere with feeding eg burn to hands or mouth
- > being in hospital with unfamiliar foods and surroundings.

All these things can affect your child's eating.

A variety of foods from all the food groups is important

Breads and cereals group is a good source of energy and vitamins

- > noodles
- > bread/toast
- > rice
- > pasta
- > breakfast cereal
- > fruit buns or muffins

Fruit and vegetables contain many vitamins and minerals and are a good source of fibre.

- > fruit salad
- > dried/tinned fruit
- > fruit juice
- > soups
- > baked potato
- > roasted vegetables

Milk and dairy foods are an excellent source of protein and energy.

- > milk
- > flavoured milk
- > soy alternatives
- > yoghurt and custard
- > milkshakes
- > cheese

***for children under one it is important that breast milk or infant formula is the main drink.*

Meat and meat alternatives provide an excellent source of protein, zinc and iron all of which are important for recovery.

- > roast meat
- > meat or fish patties
- > baked beans
- > cold meats
- > fish fingers
- > eggs

Fats and oils have a high energy content. It can sometimes be useful to add fats to your child's food if their intake is very small and they have lost weight during admission.

Extra fat can be added in cooking and in snacks such as margarine on bread or oil on pasta.

Snack ideas for home

- > fruit smoothies
- > grilled ham and cheese toast fingers
- > fruit toast with jam and cream cheese
- > mini pizzas on English muffins
- > toasted sandwiches (tuna, cheese, tomato, ham, baked beans)
- > banana split
- > home made muffins
- > creamed rice
- > cereal fruit and yoghurt
- > dried fruit and nuts (over 4 yrs only)
- > pikelets (see below).

Pikelets

- > 1 cup self raising flour
- > 1 tbs golden syrup
- > ¾ cup milk
- > 2 eggs

Mix all ingredients into a smooth batter.

Heat a heavy based pan, greased with a little margarine. Cook spoonfuls of batter over a moderate to slow heat. Wait until the mixture bubbles before flipping each pikelet over.

Nutrition for burns

Information for
parents & carers

What you can do to help

Encourage small, frequent meals, snacks and drinks. Use the nourishing snack list available from nursing staff to help increase variety.

Do not pressure your child to eat and *never* try to force him or her to eat.

Try bringing in your child's favourite foods from home.

When food is not enough

Sometimes even though your child is trying very hard, they can not eat and drink enough to meet the high energy needs associated with healing.

In this situation, a nasogastric tube may be used. A fine tube is passed into the stomach via the nose, and it is used to give a formula feed.

This formula contains energy, vitamins and minerals, just as food would. It tops up nutritional needs to help ensure your child is getting all they need.

As the burn heals and your child begins to eat more, the amount of formula can be decreased.

Going home

Good nutrition is important to help prevent wound breakdown after you go home. Sometimes your child's appetite will remain low. Use small frequent meals and the ideas provided in this pamphlet to help achieve appropriate intake.

As the burn heals, the extra energy that was required decreases and requirements return to normal. The quality of the diet remains important and is a good idea to continue to aim to include food from all food groups.

If you are concerned about your child's eating while in hospital or when you go home, speak with your doctors and ask to arrange a time to speak with the dietitian.

Food product information contained in this resource was up to date at the time of revision.

Produced by

**Women's and Children's Health
Network**

Nutrition Department

72 King William Road

North Adelaide SA 5006

Telephone: (08) 8161 7233

Non-English speaking: for information in languages other than English, call the interpreting and Translating Centre and ask them to call The Department of Health. This service is available at no cost to you, contact (08) 8226 1990.

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