

Diet and Nutritional Supplements for Concussions

It is highly recommended that fresh vegetables, fruits, fish, meats and grains are superior to processed foods and build the immune system. Most commonly utilized nutritional supplements are:

Fish oil (DHA/EPA): 1000 mg twice daily Under 7: 500 mg twice daily
Magnesium: 200mg once daily Under 7: 100mg once daily
Vitamin D: 2000IU once daily Under 7: 1000IU once daily

Multivitamins can supply the basic vitamins and supplements that your diet may be lacking. Omega-3 fatty acids (fish oil) counteract free radicals that cause oxidative damage to brain cells and may help improve nerve signal transmission at synapses. In addition, antioxidants which include vitamins C, E, and beta carotene counteract oxidative damage caused by certain foods, and the stress caused by brain injury. B vitamins boost metabolism and effect brain and nervous system functioning.

Migraine: Butterbur, feverfew, and coenzyme Q 10
Sleep: Melatonin and valerian root
Cognitive/Mood: DHA, lutein, vitamin D, and alanine

Other Nutritional Tips for Head Injuries

Eat small meals every three to four hours. Keep small baggies of healthy snacks with you during the day to boost your energy, such as nuts, trail mix, apples, cheese, hard-boiled eggs, and energy bars. Ask a member of your family or support group to make these for you and put them in a small cooler to take with you when away from home.

Balance small meals with a combination of protein, healthy fats and oils, and carbohydrates. Proteins include fish, lean meats, nuts, and eggs. Healthy fats and oils can be found in avocados, seeds, and nuts. Carbohydrates are found in vegetables, fresh fruits, and grains. Many individuals report that sugar and chocolate increase headaches, so eat sweets sparingly.

Eat by the clock. If your brain/body signals are not working well, set a timer, watch alarm or a mobile phone to alert you that it's time to eat. Since weight gain is common following brain injury, this is another reason to stick to a healthy diet. Try to eat around the same time every day. The body does best when it is on a routine schedule. It is very important to eat healthy foods to help the brain function efficiently. Feed your brain with protein snacks throughout the day.

Foods to Avoid

Alcohol

Caffeine

Salty foods

Sugary beverages, sweets, high fructose corn syrup

Migraine type headaches can also be triggered by certain foods. Common known food triggers for migraines include: Chocolate Tyramine/Tannins (Wine/beer, aged cheese, avocados, bananas, pork, processed meats, coffee/tea, nuts, apple juice)

Food additives and artificial sweeteners (aspartame, nitrates, MSG)