

Nutrition

- **A healthy diet is important for long-term health and to reduce the risk of chronic disease**
- **Eating good quality lean protein can help to minimise muscles wastage and reduce twitching**
- **A good diet can enhance immunity, concentration and endurance**

Nutrition In A Nutshell

Nutrition is the science of how food is used in your body. This refers to the digestion, absorption and metabolism of the food we eat and nutrients. For most people nutrition refers simply to our diet, or the everyday food we eat, and how it can help or hinder health outcomes.

Good nutrition ensures a varied diet that gives you all the vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that you need. We also need a balanced distribution of the macronutrients (carbohydrates, proteins and fats). Good nutrition can also assist with weight management, reducing the risk of developing chronic diseases and improving mood.

Food Matters: Late Effects of Polio And Your Diet

Some of the issues seen in the Late Effects of Polio can be better managed with a good diet, including:

- Muscle atrophy (or sarcopaenia): when muscles waste away
- Muscle fatigue: decreased ability of a muscle
- Inflammatory musculoskeletal issues
- Osteoporosis: brittle bones leading to a higher risk of breaks
- Osteopaenia: thinning of bones

All of these conditions can reduce mobility and quality of life, as well as increase chance of development or progression of comorbidities such as:

- Overweight and obesity
- Cardiovascular disease and stroke
- Type 2 diabetes
- Mild cognitive impairment and dementias
- Low mood and depression
- Some cancers

The good news is that making a change to your diet can improve your health outcomes and help you better manage the symptoms of Late Effects of Polio by:

- Improving body composition and weight
- Reducing systemic inflammation
- Reducing muscle pain and weakness, restless legs
- Reducing muscle fatigue
- Improving muscle strength
- Improving mobility – fewer falls and reduced impact of falls
- Increasing exercise endurance
- Improving sleep and sleep apnoea
- Reducing snoring and general fatigue
- Enhancing general healing and immunity
- Improving mood and cognition
- Reducing disease risk and may reduce reliance on medications

What Foods To Eat?

Anti-inflammatory foods

- Eat plenty of vegetables & fruit, nuts and seeds
- Include fibre – mostly from fruits and vegetables but include small portions of wholegrains like buckwheat, brown rice, quinoa, starchy vegetables like potato, sweet potato and pumpkin
- Include fresh herbs and spices – ginger, garlic, onion, chillies, turmeric

Protein

- Aim for 25g-30g protein at each main meal to preserve skeletal muscle mass (for example, 1 egg contains about 6g protein and 100g beef contains about 25g protein)
- Include plant-based protein such as legumes (chickpeas, lentils etc), nuts and seeds and tofu

Fats

- Don't be afraid to include fat but not too much
- Quality is key: olive oil and olives, oily fish like salmon sardine and mackerel, nuts and seeds and avocado

Water

- Stay well hydrated
- Ditch the soft drink and stick with water

Reduce these foods

- Processed and 'junk' food
- Processed and cured meats
- Alcohol

- Sugars, cakes, biscuits, confectionaries, chocolate and ice-cream
- Tea and coffee

Other Tips

- Eat a broad and varied diet – add new vegetables to your meals; try new foods
- Be prepared; take your lunches to work so you don't rely on takeaway
- Keep some healthy snack options at work (fruits, plain yoghurt or nuts)
- Exercise: do what you can and increase as you can
- Practice mindful eating – eat more slowly
- Waist circumference: chronic disease risk is increased when women have a waist circumference greater than 80 cm, and for men when their waist circumference is greater than 94cm
- Quit smoking
- Maintain friendships and stay social; if you live alone find a meal buddy and share the load of preparing healthy foods

More Information

Visit a **nutritionist or dietitian** to discuss your specific needs.

Thank you to Melinda Overall from [Overall Nutrition](#) for preparing this fact sheet.

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