Having surgery is like running a marathon. Both require preparation and nutrition in the weeks leading up to the main event, and in the days and weeks after, for recovery and healing. Here are some steps you can take to get ready:

**HERE ARE SOME REASONS TO IMPROVE YOUR DIET.**

**Increases Energy Needs**
Your body uses up a lot of energy during and after surgery. Add calories by eating foods with extra nutrients, such as nuts, dried fruit, eggs, and cheese.

**Lowers Immunity**
Stress from surgery can weaken your immune system. Be sure to eat fruits and vegetables in addition to adequate amounts of protein. If you think you don’t eat all the nutrients you need, consider taking a multi-vitamin daily.
Eating a healthy diet before and after surgery will help your body handle the stress of surgery, fight infection and heal quickly.

**Major workout**

In surgery, you will burn more energy than you would running for 2½ hours. Increasing your carbohydrate (carb) intake a few days before surgery can keep you from running out of energy.

**Muscle Loss**

After using up carbs and protein, the body starts breaking down muscle to create energy. Muscle loss can lead to lower strength and longer recovery. Protect your muscles by adding high protein foods to each meal or snack.

**Weight Loss**

After your procedure, you may have nausea or other side effects and may not feel like eating or drinking. This can result in unwanted weight loss. Your doctor or dietitian may suggest meal supplement shakes so that you get enough nutrients for healing.

*Eating a healthy diet before and after surgery will help your body handle the stress of surgery, fight infection and heal quickly.*

**HERE ARE SOME FOODS TO EAT BEFORE AND AFTER SURGERY.**

**Protein**

Eat at least 6-8 oz of protein daily. Your body will have higher protein needs after surgery or other treatments like radiation or chemotherapy. Good sources of protein include tender, well-cooked meats, poultry, fish, eggs or soy foods, yogurt, milk, cheese, nut butters, protein powders, beans, peas, nuts and lentils. Eat the high protein foods that you enjoy and tolerate and be sure to include a serving at each meal or snack.

*NOTES*
Fruits and Vegetables

Eat several servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Fresh and frozen are preferred over canned. Fruits and vegetables are full of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that promote healing tissue and bone growth. To turn fruits and veggies into a high protein drink, add protein powder and blend up with fruits or veggies you enjoy. This high protein smoothie can be used as a snack or a meal replacement.

Whole Grains

Include whole grains daily. Whole grain foods are labeled as “whole” grain or “whole” wheat. Whole grains contain generally more fiber, iron and B vitamins. Limit your intake of sugar.

Meal Supplements

Many people need to supplement their diet after surgery with high protein shakes or bars. These shakes and bars are very useful to patients to help meet their calorie and protein needs. There are many different products available and the most important thing is to find a supplement that you enjoy. If you do not like the taste of a supplement it is unlikely you will drink it. So, don’t stock up before sampling. Some examples of meal supplements include Ensure, Boost, Carnation Breakfast Essentials and Premier Protein. You can also make your own high protein shakes/supplements using protein powder, yogurt, or peanut butter mixed with fruits or veggies. Homemade versions are less expensive than commercial products.

What healthy foods will I keep on hand at home?

Who can support me in choosing healthy foods? How?