

Advice for wheelchair-bound people



This fact sheet offers general advice for people who are wheelchair-bound but everyone is different. It is therefore beneficial to have a personal health and nutrition assessment to get specific advice for your individual needs including medical conditions, digestive health, hormonal imbalances, sleep disorders etc.

The scale of your immobilisation and/or paralysis will directly affect the function of your digestive organs. They are your 'engine' responsible for absorbing all the nutrients from the foods you eat. So, before you even think about your food, it's important to make sure that your digestive system is performing efficiently.

A common symptom experienced by those in a wheelchair is constipation, simply due to the fact that peristalsis (the wave-like motion that moves food through your digestive tract) does not take place. Eating foods that break down more easily is therefore beneficial.

Lack of 'regular' exercise means that calories don't get burnt off as quickly as they should, so weight gain becomes an issue for many.

The following foods take account of the issues highlighted above and should suit most people (but does not take account of individual intolerances or separate needs as noted earlier)

Food

Include:

- Mostly low Glycaemic Index (GI) foods such as brown rice, buckwheat
- Plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Amongst the best fruits are pears, peaches, pineapples, apricots, bananas and red grapes. Non-starchy vegetables such as carrots, cauliflower, broccoli and spinach are good choices.
- Fish - at least 3 times a week
- White meat
- Whole grains, seeds and nuts – chewed thoroughly!
- Salads are a welcome addition and should include seeds and sprouts

Limit intake of:

- Red meat (it is VERY hard to process!)

Exclude:

- Alcohol
- Caffeine
- Processed foods (i.e. lots of additives, preservatives and colourings)
- High fat foods
- Sugary foods, including honey and syrup
- Food additive 320 (butylated hydroxyanisole)
- **Helpful Supplements**
- Zinc (15mg)
- Chromium (500mg)
- Omega-3 (with at least 800mg of both EPA & DHA)

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- Magnesium (500mg)
- Vitamin B6 (100mg)
- Vitamin B12 (100mcg)

Beneficial Herbs

- Kava kava
- Siberian ginseng
- St John's Wort (*but not if you are taking anti-depressants or oral contraceptives*)