

# Holistic Recovery From Surgery



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## *Target your Diet and Supplements to Heal Better and Faster*

Already the 21st century offers a wealth of new surgical advances. New health plans provide coverage for more surgical techniques. As many as 40 million Americans every year have in-patient surgery procedures. Yet, surgery is always traumatic on the body, and as more and more Americans go under the knife, I see a disconcerting trend. Patients are rushed in and out of operating rooms, and then rushed out of the hospital with no tools on how to recover. Most doctors provide little or no information on how diet choices and supportive therapies can jumpstart healing from surgery and get you on the fast track back to health.

Regardless of the advances, surgery is still invasive, still highly stressful. The body's healing response is still painful as it is in any injury. Even new state-of-the-art anesthesia drugs used in surgery today can severely tax an exhausted liver as it works to detoxify from the drugs. Both research and common sense tell us to eat the best diet possible before a known surgery date. Adding supplements like zinc, vitamin K and vitamin C, is another smart step, because they're known to speed wound healing and recovery.

### *What about herbs? Are they safe to take before surgery?*

The beneficial effects of whole herbs and whole herb formulas on recovery and tissue healing are undeniable, often dramatic. Reports of interactions of whole herbs with drugs, especially blood thinning or anesthetic drugs, reported in an extremely small number of cases, don't always show clear evidence that the whole herb was the problem.

Many nutritional supplements, foods and herbs (which in their whole form *are* foods), make great sense as a way to fortify your body for the stress and trauma of surgery and healing. Consult your doctor, anesthesiologist or surgeon if you feel doubts or uncertainty.

### *Important information in this chapter about better healing:*

- ...Recovering from surgery or serious illness**
- ...Normalizing after chemotherapy and radiation**
- ...Best results with minimal scarring after cosmetic surgery**
- ...Herb interactions with surgery procedures and drugs used during surgery**

# Healing Naturally After Surgery

When your body is in crisis, orthodox medicine is at its best. It plays a heroic role with emergency intervention technology that can stabilize a crisis condition, or arrest a life-threatening disease long enough to give your body an opportunity to fight, a chance to heal itself. But whether your visit to an operating room is elective or unplanned, surgery and major medical treatments are always traumatic on body systems.... and the recovery period is often the most difficult part.

I've seen it happen over and over again.... preparing your body well before surgery, and following up with a good post-op program makes an enormous difference in accelerating your recovery. Your body has the power to heal itself, but its vital recuperative forces need extra nutritive help after surgery to do it; a speedy recovery calls for more concentrated nutrients than a normal diet provides. Take healing steps *before and after* your surgery to strengthen your system, alleviate body stress, and increase your chances of rapid recovery and healing.



**Note:** Advise your doctor of any supplements or herbs you're taking well before your scheduled surgery. While whole herb combinations are generally safe and have few known interactions, standardized herbs may cause reactions to prescription drugs, anesthesia, even surgery itself. Please refer to my list of suspect herbs on pg. 69.

## *Pre-op techniques to build up your body's defenses before surgery*

### **Start 2 to 3 weeks before your scheduled surgery, include daily:**

- Extra vegetable protein. You must have protein to heal. Eat brown rice, other whole grains, sea greens.
- Vitamin C 3000mg with bioflavonoids and rutin for tissue integrity.
- B Complex 100mg with pantothenic acid 500mg for adrenal strength.
- A multivitamin/mineral with antioxidants, beta-carotene, zinc, calcium, magnesium for tissue repair.
- Take a full spectrum, pre-digested amino acid compound drink, about 1000mg daily.
- OPCs, pycnogenol or grape seed, 50mg 2x daily, as powerful antioxidants.
- Garlic capsules, 4-6 daily until 3 days before surgery, a natural antibiotic that enhances immunity.

### **Strengthen your ability to heal. Include daily:**

- Bromelain 750mg twice daily (with Quercetin 250mg to curb inflammation).
- CoQ-10, 120mg daily and/or germanium 150mg capsules daily - as free radical destroyers.
- CHLORELLA 15 tablets, 1 packet powder, or Crystal Star ENERGY GREEN RENEWAL™ drink.
- Centella asiatica* (gotu kola) capsules, 2 caps 2x daily for nerve tissue repair and collagen development.
- Crystal Star FEEL GREAT NOW!™ with ginseng caps, 2 daily for recuperation strength.
- Vitamin K for blood clotting. Food sources: leafy greens, blackstrap molasses, alfalfa sprouts. *Note: The best source of vitamin K is made by your own "friendly" intestinal bacteria. Supplementing with a good probiotic (like Crystal Star DR. PROBIOTICS™ with FOS) is one of the best ways to synthesize vitamin K in your body.*
- Take a potassium juice (page 291), a potassium supplement liquid, or a protein-mineral drink daily.

**Note 1:** The medical community uses information and testing results from synthetic, rather than naturally-occurring vitamin E sources, like wheat germ and soy. Thus, many doctors insist that no vitamin E be taken four weeks prior to surgery in an effort to curb post-operative bleeding. I have not found this to be a problem with natural vitamin E, but suggest that you consult your physician if you are in doubt.

**Note 2:** Immediately prior to surgery, take a pinch of ginger powder (or 8 - 10 drops ginger extract) in water to relieve nausea after surgery. Don't take garlic 2 to 3 days before surgery (it's a slight blood thinner.)

## *Post-Op techniques to help you recover faster when you come home.*

### **Eat a very nutritious diet. Include frequently:**

- AloeLife ALOE GOLD drink, one 8-oz. glass daily.
- A potassium broth (page 291), or a mixed vegetable drink.
- A protein drink, like Nature's Life SUPERGREEN PRO 96, or Nutri-Tech ALL ONE multi drink.
- Plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Have a green salad every day.
- Daily sushi (at least 6 pieces), or daily sea veggies for vitamin B<sub>12</sub> and new cell growth.
- Brown rice and other whole grains with tofu for protein complementarity and more B vitamins.
- Yogurt and other cultured foods re-establish normal, friendly intestinal flora.
- Bromelain 1500 with quercetin 500mg daily (or Crystal Star® DR. ENZYME™ with protease and bromelain) to reduce bruising, swelling, pain and tenderness.
- Evening Primrose oil caps 3000mg daily for EFAs that rebuild and nourish delicate post-op skin.
- Gotu kola, fast acting to repair nerve damage, reduce numbness and promote collagen synthesis.

## **Accelerate Healing After Surgery**

*Herbal combinations can contribute much to the success of surgery—nurturing, normalizing and supporting healing.*

### **Specific systems that herbs can help in healing:**

- Cardiovascular System and Blood Vessels - *hawthorn, garlic and ginkgo (best used after surgery)*
- Respiratory System - *mullein and coltsfoot*
- Digestive System - *chamomile and lemon balm*
- Glandular System - *panax ginseng*
- Bowel/Urinary System - *corn silk for the bladder; yellow dock for the bowel*
- Reproductive System - *women: black cohosh, false unicorn root. men: saw palmetto and damiana*
- Nervous System - *oats, gotu kola and St. John's wort*
- Musculo-Skeletal System - *aloe vera, oatstraw, sarsaparilla*
- Skin - *sea vegetables, nettles, red clover, and calendula, St. John's wort oil or cream for scarring*
- Immune System - *nettles, cleavers, red clover*
- Drug and Liver detoxification - *milk thistle seed*

**Note:** Dairy foods and iron supplements interfere with some antibiotics. Acid fruits (oranges, pineapples, grapefruit) may inhibit penicillin and aspirin action. Avocados, bananas, cheese, chocolate, colas and fermented foods interfere with monoamine oxidase (mao), an anti-depressant drug. Avoid fatty foods; they slow nutrient assimilation.

### **Clean the body and vital organs, to counteract infection. Include daily for one month:**

- High potency, multi-culture like UAS DDS-Plus with meals.
- Crystal Star LIVER RENEW™ capsules, or LIVER CLEANSE FLUSHING™ tea.
- REISHI MUSHROOM extract helps clear toxicity and provides deep body tone.
- Fight infection with Lane Labs BENEFIN cartilage caps 6 daily for 1 to 2 weeks.
- Enzyme therapy like Crystal Star DR. ENZYME™ with protease and bromelain, or Prevail VITASE.
- Fresh carrot juice, or one can of BE WELL juice daily.

### **Build up the body tissues. Include daily for one month:**

- Crystal Star RESTORE YOUR STRENGTH™ drink, with ADRENAL ENERGY BOOST™ caps.
- Vitamin C with bioflavonoids and rutin 500mg only, with pantothenic acid 1000mg.
- Carnitine 250mg with CoQ-10, 60mg 3x daily, or Siberian Eleuthero, 2000mg daily, as antioxidants.



- Zinc 30-50mg, Futurebiotics VITAL K potassium, or Flora VEGE-SIL to help rebuild tissue.
- Regrow hair and nails with sea veggies and Co-enzyme B complex sublingual, 3x daily.
- AloeLife ALOE SKIN GEL or Crystal Star SCAR REDUCER™ gel to heal skin and scars.

### Important recovery and recuperation tips:

- If you are taking antibiotics, take them with bromelain 750mg for better effectiveness, and supplement with B Complex, Vitamin C, Vitamin K and calcium.
- If you are taking diuretics, add Vitamin C, potassium and B complex, to strengthen kidneys.
- If you are taking aspirin, take with vitamin C for best results.
- If you are taking antacids, supplement with Vitamin B<sub>1</sub> and/or calcium.
- If your surgery involved bone and cartilage, take Crystal Star OCEAN MINERALS™ caps 4 daily.
- If you smoke, add Vitamin C 500mg, E 400IU, beta-carotene 50,000IU and niacin 100mg.
- Considering chelation therapy?** It works in your body like a magnet collecting heavy metals and triglycerides. It is not recommended if you have weak kidneys; too many toxins are dumped into the elimination system too fast, stressing a healing body. Try CARDIO-CHELATE by Metabolic Response Modifiers.

## Normalize after Chemotherapy and Radiation

Chemotherapy and radiation treatments are widely used by conventional medicine for several types, stages and degrees of cancerous growth. While some partial successes have been proven, the effects of both chemotherapy and radiation can be worse than the disease itself in terms of healthy cell damage, body imbalance, and reduced immunity. Cancer experts at Duke University estimate that 40% of cancer patients actually die from malnutrition, largely as a result of the severe nausea, vomiting, lack of appetite and poor nutrient uptake that follows chemotherapy treatment. Amazingly, analysis of more than 100 clinical studies published in *Surgical Forum* showed no benefits, but did show significant damage when chemotherapy was the sole treatment for breast cancer patients! Radiation treatment, given to about 60% of cancer patients, has debilitating side effects, too. Painful swallowing, unusual fatigue and skin reactions are acute side effects. Long-lasting ulcers, painful sores, reproductive malfunction and chronic diarrhea are frequently reported. Many patients actually develop *other* cancers because the risk for leukemia is so much higher. Doctors and therapists do recognize the drawbacks to chemotherapy and radiation, but under current government and insurance restrictions, neither they nor their patients have insurer-approved alternatives.



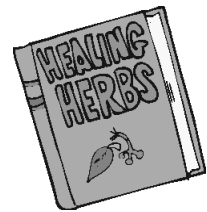
Bewilderingly, even with all of the new information on alternative methods and new, less invasive procedures, surgery, chemotherapy, radiation and a few extremely strong drugs are still the only protocols approved by the FDA in the United States for malignant disease. The cost for these treatments is beyond the financial range of most people, who, along with physicians and hospitals must rely on health insurance to pay the expense. Medical insurance will not reimburse doctors or hospitals if they use other healing methods. Thus, exorbitant medical costs and special interest regulations have bound medical professionals, hospitals, and insurance companies in a vicious circle where no alternative or new measures may be used to control cancer. Everyone is caught in a political web where it comes down to money instead of health. This is doubly unfortunate, since there is advanced research being done and new choices available in Europe and other countries to which Americans are denied access. (Unfortunately, recent 2002 legislation passed in Europe denies Europeans access, too, banning over-the-counter ability to purchase many supplements, forcing EU citizens to get remedies like high potency vitamins and herbal supplements only through their doctors.)

Scientists admit that current treatments have been pushed to their limits. But new testing and research are extremely expensive. Even today, the vast majority of funds provided by the National Cancer Act supports research to improve the effectiveness of existing therapies—radiation, surgery and chemotherapy. This practice is easier and cheaper, but it leaves patients with the same three therapies, just more precise use of them. Even when a new treatment is substantiated, there is no reasonable investment certainty that government (and therefore health insurance) approval can be obtained through the maze of red tape and politics.

Some of this is changing as cancer patients refuse to become victims of their medical system as well as the disease. The American people are demanding access, funding and insurance approval for alternative health techniques and medicines. Slowly, state by state, especially in the western states, legislators and regulators are listening, health care parameters are expanding, and insurance limitations are becoming more inclusive.

Conventional medicine rarely treats cancer as a systemic illness, defining it instead only by location and symptomatology. It's the way lab science and our left brains work, breaking things down into one-for-one causes and effects, assaying, isolating, identifying... in consequence, hardly ever looking at the whole person or the whole picture.

By contrast, alternative healers regard cancer as a reflection of the whole body state rather than a localized disease in one part. Naturopaths believe that a healthy body with strong immune response can prevent, even destroy abnormal cells. Alternative therapists seek to strengthen the immune system of the cancer patient, generally avoiding highly toxic modalities like radiation and chemotherapy, rather using a multifaceted, non-toxic treatments which rely on bio-chemistry, metabolic, nutrition and herbal therapies.



*You can help your body clean out drug residues, minimize damage to healthy cells, rebuild strength after chemotherapy and radiation, and get over the side effects.*

### **For three months after chemotherapy or radiation, take the following daily:**

- Take *Turkey Tail* mushroom daily to rebuild immune defenses against tumor growth.
- Crystal Star RESTORE YOUR STRENGTH™ broth — 1 heaping tsp. in 8-oz. hot water.
- CoQ<sub>10</sub> capsules, 60mg 3x daily, and/or germanium 150mg daily.
- Vitamin C crystals with bioflavonoids, ¼ tsp. in liquid every hour, about 5 to 10,000 mg daily.
- 800mcg folic acid to normalize DNA synthesis, especially if methotrexate was used in your treatment.
- Floradix HERBAL IRON, 1 tsp. 3x daily, or Crystal Star ENERGY GREEN RENEWAL™ drink to counteract the anemia that causes such extreme fatigue after chemo treatments.
- An herbal anti-inflammatory to reduce swelling: *turmeric* (curcumin) or Crystal Star ANTI-FLAM™ caps.
- HAWTHORN or GINKGO BILOBA extract, 30 drops daily under the tongue as a circulatory tonic.
- Aloe vera concentrate, like AloeLife ALOE GOLD for detoxification and to ease nausea.
- A liver support capsule or tea, like Crystal Star LIVER RENEW™ capsules.
- Sea veggies 2 tbsp. dry snipped daily, or Co-enzyme B complex sublingual 3x daily for hair regrowth.

### **And consider:**

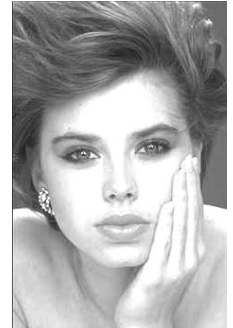
- Medicinal mushrooms rebuild immunity, and may help prevent cancer reoccurrence—Maitake D-Fraction, *Agaricus*, *Reishi*, *Cordyceps* and *Turkey Tail*, available from Maitake Products.
- For chemo-induced stomatitis, consider BHI's TRAUMEEL (Found effective by injection in recent studies. Injectable TRAUMEEL is available by prescription).
- Ashwagandha* (extract) 30 drops daily to rebuild immune white blood cells.
- Chamomile* tea or Lane Labs NATURE'S LINING™ for inflammation of mucous membranes.
- For chronic dry mouth, add *flax seed* oil to your diet; try Crystal Star WOMAN'S DRYNESS™ extract.
- Keep your diet about 60% fresh foods for the first month after chemotherapy.
- Exercise with a morning sun walk and some stretches on rising and retiring.



# Facial Surgery Healing Program

We all want to look great at every age. The plastic surgery industry is booming! As cosmetic surgery technology has raced ahead, Americans are racing to reclaim their youth under the knife. An amazing 6.6 million cosmetic surgery procedures were performed in 2002 and the figure is growing. In 2002, over 100,000 face lifts were performed—up from 36,981 procedures in 1990!

I've worked closely with Dr. Harry Mittelman of Menlo Park, CA. to develop a comprehensive program to boost healing from facial surgery. My own mother-in-law used the program from start to finish and became one of the oldest women at age 87 to undergo a full face lift. The results were amazing. The doctors said her skin actually healed faster than most young people! If you choose to have cosmetic surgery, consider this Healthy Healing Facial Surgery Healing Program to boost the benefits.



## **PRE-OP: daily - 2 to 3 weeks before surgery:**

- Bromelain 1500mg to reduce inflammation.
- Evening Primrose oil* caps 1000mg for skin healing essential fatty acids.
- Royal Jelly/Siberian ginseng tea drink or Prince of Peace ROYAL JELLY-GINSENG vials.
- Ester C - 5000mg with bioflavonoids 500mg to increase collagen production.
- Vitamin K, sea greens and-or plenty of alfalfa sprouts for capillary integrity.
- Crystal Star ZINC SOURCE THROAT RESCUE™ drops, IODINE-POTASSIUM-SILICA drops or OCEAN MINERALS™ caps.
- Brown rice and a green salad every day.

*No aspirin or alcohol 1 week before to 2 weeks after surgery; they increase bleeding tendency and reduce healing ability.*

## **POST-OP: pre-suture removal, daily for 1 week:** (*Apply ice packs hourly for 3 days to reduce swelling*)

- Crystal Star ANTI-FLAM™ capsules 4 at a time as needed, for pain relief or swelling
- Bromelain 1500mg with quercetin, or Crystal Star DR. ENZYME™ with protease to reduce bruising.
- Co-Q10, 150mg daily, for enzyme therapy tissue repair.
- Gotu kola*, for nerve damage repair and reducing numbness.
- Ester C - 5000mg w. bioflavonoids for new collagen production, tissue tightening, capillary healing.
- Evening Primrose oil* caps 1000mg daily, for essential fatty acids.
- ROYAL JELLY + GINSENG VIALS by Prince of Peace.
- Vitamin K, sea veggies, 2 tbsp. daily, or plenty of alfalfa sprouts, (for bruising and bleeding).
- Brown rice and a green salad every day, for B vitamins (skin) and chlorophyll healing (blood).

## **POST-OP: post-suture removal, daily for 3 weeks:**

- Bromelain 1500mg with Ester C - 5000mg with bioflavonoids - reduce inflammation, boost collagen.
- Evening Primrose oil* caps 2000mg with a Royal Jelly-Siberian ginseng tea combination.
- Apply Crystal Star BEAUTIFUL SKIN™ gel and/or AloeLife SKIN GEL, for scar and scab healing.
- Yoanna OXYGEN FIRMING C COMPLEX with DMAE and ALOE PEARL cream for skin renewal.
- Co-Q10, 150mg daily and *Centella Asiatica* (gotu kola), capsules by Solaray for nerve restoration.
- Brown rice and a green salad every day. Add sea vegetables for skin tone and texture.

## **2 Months later:**

- Try TOKI, Lane Labs collagen drink for 6 months for beautiful skin tone and texture.
- Seaweed-aloe mask if you've had a face lift: mix 1 tsp. kelp granules, 1 tsp. aloe vera gel, drops jojoba oil.
- Continue with Ester C and royal jelly to rebuild and nourish delicate post-op skin on the face.

## Herbs, Drugs and Surgery

*Do herbs and the drugs used in surgery procedures interact? If they do, are you risking your health during or after surgery?*

These are legitimate questions today, and you should be informed about the answers because the medical world is changing at light speed. Drugs, especially pain-killing and tissue rejection drugs used in surgery, are far more sophisticated than they were even a decade ago. Surgical techniques have made huge advances, transplanting, even replacing whole body parts successfully. Herbs have changed too, with the widespread introduction of standardized herbal products (see page 66), the laboratory concentration and potentizing of certain compounds from herbs in an attempt to provide a more natural alternative to drugs.



**So what's the story on herbs?** Should you feel safe taking herbs before and after surgery to help you heal and recover faster? We are frequently warned by the American medical world that herbs may have dangerous interactions with drugs. Clearly, herbs are both foods and medicines; many have strong therapeutic properties on their own. Much of Europe and most of Asia commonly prescribe herbs to help recovery... even for advanced surgical procedures. Milk thistle seed extract, for example, is especially helpful to reduce drug toxicity to the liver caused by anesthetics and other prescription drugs.

After talking with many surgery patients, and my own experience, here's my opinion: clearly, people who took specific supplements and herbs before and after their surgeries tolerated the surgery better and recovered faster with less scarring. (See preceding pages.) There was a difference in the risk of interaction when using a whole herb formula and a standardized herb, or an herbal formula where the natural balance of the plants had been changed. Whole herbs are generally much gentler (not weaker), because they have protective benefits built into the make-up of the plant.

*Which herbs and supplements are most controversial in the surgery?*

•**Ginkgo Biloba** may increase the risk of bleeding: Ginkgo's blood-thinning ability has raised concerns about abnormal bleeding during surgery, especially if a patient is also taking *warfarin*, a drug blood thinner. I agree that care should be used before taking ginkgo if you are taking *warfarin*. However, ginkgo is a powerful antioxidant that neutralizes free radicals (generated in large amounts by surgery trauma) that can be helpful after your procedure. As a circulation enhancer, it helps accelerate healing and convalescence.

•**Garlic** may increase the risk of bleeding: A mild blood thinner, patients are now commonly warned not to take garlic just prior to surgery to avoid the risk of excess bleeding, especially if already taking blood thinners like *warfarin*, *heparin* or aspirin. Clearly, care should be taken if you are taking blood thinning drugs. However, garlic is a very mild blood thinner, and as a powerful antioxidant and anti-infective, it can help prevent free radical cascades and infections after surgery. It's a good liver detoxifier that helps eliminate drugs from your system after surgery. Garlic contains germanium, a known wound healer; and increases glutathione levels for better immune response.

•**Kava** may increase anesthesia's effects: Kava's muscle-relaxing, pain killing qualities seem to over-potentiate the effects of some tranquilizers used in surgery procedures, as well as cause interactions with certain long term antidepressants and anti-convulsants. Avoid this possibility by avoiding kava 2 to 3 days before your surgery. After your surgery, kava's pain killing qualities are beneficial against body stress, and may reduce your need for toxic drug analgesics.

•**Vitamin E** (synthetic): may increase the risk of bleeding: doctors warn against this blood thinning vitamin for up to a week before surgery, especially if the patient is taking *warfarin*, *pentoxifylline*, *heparin* or aspirin. Study cases showing increased hemorrhagic stroke caused by bleeding, used synthetic vitamin E instead of natural vitamin E from soy or wheat germ oil; even in these studies, however, the risk of more common types of stroke was reduced. (There was a definite cumulative effect in the vitamin E- aspirin cases). In my experience, especially when vitamin E is part of a natural multi-vitamin or other multi-supplement formula, or as natural vitamin E from soy or wheat germ, there has not been appreciable extra bleeding. Post-operatively, vitamin E can be protective against the side effects of some drugs and for faster skin healing.

•**St. John's Wort** may decrease the effectiveness of anesthesia and other drugs: I agree with the medical community that St. John's Wort, especially the standardized products and in concentrated formulas, has numerous unhealthy interactions with a fairly wide spectrum of current drugs. It should be avoided for 1 to 2 weeks before surgery; and the anesthesiologist should know that you are taking it.

•**Ephedra** can cause irregular heartbeat and spikes in blood pressure: I agree that you should avoid high dose ephedra formulas before surgery.

•**Feverfew** may inhibit blood coagulation: Anesthesiologists warn that feverfew interferes with blood coagulation ability, especially when used with blood thinning drugs like *warfarin*, *heparin* and aspirin. People who use the herb post-operatively for drug-induced headaches report no adverse effects.

•**Panax Ginseng (American and Asian)** may elevate blood pressure and heart rate in some people: One of the best herbs for enhancing recovery energy and stamina, ginseng has gotten a bad rap based on one report of interference with the anticoagulant *warfarin*. Another unconfirmed report, 24 years ago, in JAMA stating that ginseng at high doses raises blood pressure and increases heart rate, nervousness, sleeplessness and diarrhea, has been thoroughly discredited, yet is still widely believed in many quarters.

•**Ginger** in high doses may increase the risk of bleeding: Recommended by European physicians for decades to curtail nausea after surgery, drug reports show that ginger, like feverfew may increase the risk of abnormal bleeding, especially if taken along with some of the blood thinning drugs like *warfarin*, *heparin* or aspirin. So far, the effects seem to be based on theory or don't seem to be significant, especially in the cases of ginger-containing foods like ginger ale, or cookies like ginger snaps.

•**Gotu Kola** may increase the effects of anesthesia: Some reports show that gotu kola has an additive effect for some anesthetics. If you decide to stop taking it because of this before your surgery; consider taking it after surgery for its noticeable, sometimes dramatic ability to accelerate nerve and tissue repair.

•**Nightshade plants (potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, peppers and tobacco)**: Compounds in nightshade plants inhibit two enzymes that help break down anesthetic drugs, interfering with the body's ability to clear anesthetics from the bloodstream. Patients who eat, or smoke, nightshade plants within 24 hours of surgery have up to 80% of the compounds in their blood at surgery time and have a more difficult time waking up and moving after surgery. Keep this in mind for at least two days before your surgery.

•**Valerian** may increase the effects of anesthesia: but helps after surgery to ease and relax stress.

•**Echinacea** may increase allergies in some people; may increase risk of poor wound healing: It helps mightily after surgery in accelerating nerve and tissue repair and decreases infection.

Note: For more information on how to use your diet to help heal and recover faster, see Section 4.