Good nutrition is one of many ways to manage a Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) and possible complications like neurogenic bowel, urinary tract infections, and pressure wounds. Eating the right amount of calories and protein can help you protect your skin and maintain a healthy weight.

**Bowel Management**
People with SCI may have neurogenic bowel, meaning muscles in the bowel may not work right. A healthy diet can be helpful in regulating your bowel program.

- **Eat 25-35 grams of fiber every day**
  Fiber helps move the stool through the bowel. Good sources include plain popcorn, whole wheat bread, whole grain cereals, legumes and beans, fresh fruits and vegetables.

- **Drink enough liquid each day**
  Fluid keeps the stool soft, making it easier to pass.

**Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) Prevention**
People with SCI may also be at higher risk for a urinary tract infections.

- **Get enough fluids, (but not too much)**
  Drink plenty of fluids, preferably water, to help flush your bladder and keep your urine light in color. This also helps prevent kidney and bladder stones. To avoid drinking too much fluid, drink small amounts throughout the day. You can ask your dietitian how much you personally should drink.
Wound Prevention
Those with a spinal cord injury are at risk for pressure wounds.

- **Eat your meals and snacks**
  Be sure you eat enough calories and protein to help prevent skin breakdown. Drinking water keeps your skin hydrated, which helps to avoid skin tears.

- **If you are overweight**
  Extra weight makes transfers more difficult and puts your skin at more risk for pressure wounds. Keep as active as possible. Choose foods lower in calories like lean meats, low fat dairy, fruits and vegetables. High fat foods have more calories so eat them less often. Foods to limit are fried foods, sweets, chips, and ice cream.

- **Eat nutrient rich foods**
  Eat a variety of foods to get vitamins and minerals such as Vitamins A, C, iron and zinc. How? Choose fruits, vegetables, fortified whole grain cereals and breads. Check with your physician or dietitian to see if you may need a multi-vitamin.

Wound Healing
If you already have wounds, it is important to eat protein foods at each meal. Protein builds and repairs body tissues and helps fight infection.

- **Eat enough protein**
  Good sources of lean protein are meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts, low fat dairy, beans, and peanut butter.

- **Get your vitamins and minerals**
  A steady supply of nutrients is needed for wound repair. The best way to get what you need is to eat a rainbow of colors from different fruits and vegetables. Fortified whole grain products like breads and cereals also provide many vitamins and minerals.