

# CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE AND NUTRITION

## Why is good nutrition important for people with kidney disease?

Making healthy food choices is really important to us all, but it is even more important if you have chronic kidney disease (CKD).

Why?

Good nutrition gives you,

- Energy to do your daily tasks
- Immunity to prevent infection
- Protein to build muscle
- Help maintain a healthy weight

It may keep your kidney disease from getting worse.

## Will you need to change your diet if you have kidney disease?

There is no single nutrition plan that is right for everyone with kidney disease. What you can or cannot eat will change over time, depending on how much kidney function you have and other things, like having diabetes, high potassium, and dialysis. Your doctor can refer you to a nutrition doctor who can teach you how to choose foods that are right for you.

## What are the basics of good nutrition?

A healthy eating plan gives you the right amount of:

- Protein
- Calories
- Oil and fats
- vitamins
- Minerals

You will need to choose foods that give you the right amounts of protein, calories, fat, vitamins, minerals each day. This will help to keep you healthy. It may also help to keep your kidney disease from getting worse.

## What about protein and kidney disease?

Protein foods are essential to help keep your body healthy, repair body muscle and tissues, and heal wounds.

Fish, chicken, fish, eggs, milk, dairy foods, soya, and pulses are good examples of protein foods. When you have kidney disease, eating too much or too little protein can make you feel unwell. Eating moderate portions of protein can help to reduce the work load of the kidneys and reduce high levels of waste products in your blood.

Your nutrition doctor can advise on how much protein to eat.

There are two kinds of proteins. “Higher quality” proteins are found in animal products like meat, poultry, fish, and eggs. They are the easiest proteins for your body to use. “Lower quality” proteins are found in vegetables and grains. A well-balanced diet for kidney patients should include both kinds of proteins every day.

## How many calories do you need?

Every person is different. Calories are like fuel—they provide your body with the energy you need to live.

It is important to plan meals that give you enough calories each day. Otherwise, your body may not have the energy to stay healthy.

## How do you get enough vitamins and minerals?

Healthy people get enough vitamins and minerals to stay healthy by eating a wide variety of foods each day. However, if you have kidney disease, you may need to limit some foods that would normally give you these important vitamins and minerals. If so, you may need to take special vitamins or minerals instead.

- Take only the vitamins and minerals your doctor recommends, because some vitamins and minerals may be harmful to people with kidney disease.
- Check with your doctor before taking any herbal supplements or medicines you can buy without a doctor's prescription. Some may be harmful to people with kidney disease.

## Will you need to control any other nutrients?

You may need to balance fluids and other important nutrients too. They are:

- Sodium (salt)
- Phosphorus
- Calcium
- Potassium

## What about salt?

Too much salt (sodium) affects the amount of fluid the body holds on to and this can cause problems such as high blood pressure and puffy or swollen feet and ankles.

You may be asked to have less salt in cooking and cut down on salty foods. To help keep your salt intake down:

- DO not use salt (iodized) in cooking
- Adding salt to food at the table (1 teaspoon per day per person)
- Avoid foods high in salt such as - sausages, meatballs, processed foods, salted chips, crisps, salted nuts, instant noodles and soups, stock cubes, salty crackers, salty sauces, and pickles.

Most takeaway foods To help keep your salt intake down buy fresh foods and make home-prepared meals. Use fresh herbs, spices, flavored vinegar, and lemon juice for extra flavor.

## What about fruit and vegetables?

Fruits and vegetables are important in your daily meals. They contain a mineral called potassium. As kidney disease progresses, potassium in the blood may start to rise. This is because the kidneys are not able to remove extra potassium. This can be dangerous. You may be advised to limit or avoid certain types of fruits and vegetables that are high in potassium.

Fruit and vegetables high in potassium include:

- Bananas
- Pure fruit juices
- Dried fruit
- Potatoes
- Tomatoes

Your doctor regularly checks your blood potassium levels and will tell you if you need to cut down on high potassium fruits and vegetables in your diet. Your nutrition doctor can help to choose suitable fruits and vegetables.

## What about phosphate?

Phosphate is a mineral, which together with another mineral called calcium, helps to keep your bones strong. When your kidneys are not working properly phosphate builds up in the blood instead of being removed by the kidneys. High phosphate levels can cause problems such as:

- Itchy and dry skin
- Hardening of your blood vessels
- Painful joints
- Weak bones

Large amounts of phosphorus are found in dairy products such as milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream and pudding, nuts and peanut, dried beans and peas such as kidney beans, split peas, and lentils, beverages such as cocoa, beer, and dark cola drinks n bran bread and bran cereals.

Calcium is a mineral that is important for building strong bones. However, foods that are good sources of calcium are often also high in phosphorus. The best way to prevent loss of calcium from your bones is to limit high-phosphorus foods. You may also need to take phosphate binders and avoid eating calcium-fortified foods. Your doctor may have you take a special form of vitamin D as well to help keep calcium and phosphorus levels in balance and to prevent bone disease. Do not take over-the-counter vitamin D or calcium supplements unless recommended by your kidney doctor.

## Do you need to restrict fluid?

Most people with kidney disease do not need to limit the amount of fluids they drink if they are in the earlier stages of kidney disease.

If your kidney disease gets worse, your doctor will let you know if you need to limit fluids and how much fluid is okay for you each day. You also want to avoid dehydration, so let the experts help you plan.

Good nutrition in kidney disease is essential to maintain good health and to improve quality of life. Your nutrition doctor will help you to have an individualized nutrition plan whenever necessary.

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