

Healthy eating for kidney patients (CKD 1-3)

Introduction

This leaflet gives you information on the importance of eating a healthy balanced diet during the early stages of kidney disease.

What changes do I need to make?

In addition to eating a healthy diet, taking more exercise can be beneficial. Making these changes can help reduce the build up of waste products and fluid in your body. The following points are important:

Diet

- Have three regular meals a day - missing meals, especially breakfast, can lead to snacking later. Examples: Breakfast could be cereal with milk or toast with jam, marmalade or honey (use a thin spread and a low sugar version if you are diabetic).
- Have smaller portions of protein – protein foods include meat, fish, chicken, cheese, eggs, milk and meat substitutes such as soya, tofu, Quorn.
- Eat carbohydrates regularly – include starchy food at each meal, e.g. bread, rice, pasta, couscous, chapatti, potato, yam, sweet potato, noodles.
- Increase your fibre, vitamin and mineral intake by eating five portions of fruit and vegetables each day. Try to include pulses, beans and oat-based foods, wholegrain breads and cereal.
- Have two - three portions of fruit every day. A portion is equal to one apple, pear or orange / one slice of melon or pineapple / two small fruits such as plums, kiwis or satsumas / one cupful of berries / two - three tablespoons of fruit salad/stewed/tinned fruit.
- Eat vegetables or salads at two meals per day. A portion is equal to: two heaped tablespoons or one large salad bowl.
- Eat less fat - avoid regularly eating high fat snack foods such as crisps, Bombay mix, samosas, pastries, pies and chocolate.
- When cooking, try to bake, grill or steam foods instead of frying or roasting.
- Choose lean cuts of meat and remove visible fat and skin before cooking.



- Use low fat dairy products such as semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, low fat spreads (sparingly), reduced fat cheeses and yoghurts that are low in fat and sugar.
- Eat sugar in moderation. Try using sweeteners and choose low sugar drinks that are labelled 'diet', 'reduced sugar' or 'no added sugar'.
- Try to include one or two portions of oily fish per week. Oily fish includes mackerel, fresh tuna, trout, salmon, haddock, kippers and pilchards.

Salt

A high salt intake is linked with increased blood pressure and heart disease – so it is important that you limit your salt intake. Some salt is naturally present in foods but most comes from processed foods such as cheese, bacon, sausages, ham, tinned and packet soups, stock cubes, soya sauce, fish sauce and ready meals.

You can help reduce your salt intake by:

- Only using a pinch of salt in cooking – and don't add salt to meals after cooking.
- Eating more fresh foods and avoid adding stock/salty seasonings/gravy.
- Eating fewer processed foods and takeaways.

Use nutrition labels on food packaging to help you cut down on salt:

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|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High is more than 1.5g salt per 100g (or 0.6g sodium)• Low is 0.3g salt or less per 100g (or 0.1g sodium) |
|--|

Weight

Maintaining a healthy weight will help control your blood pressure, blood sugars (if you have diabetes) and blood cholesterol.

A healthy weight means achieving an appropriate weight for your height. This is measured using the Body Mass Index (BMI). Your Body Mass Index (BMI) should ideally be between 20 - 25 kg/m². You can calculate your BMI by:

- dividing your weight in kilograms (kg) by your height in metres (m)
- then divide the answer by your height again to get your BMI

As a guideline, if you are trying to lose weight, aim to lose 0.5-1 kilogram (1-2 lb) per week.

Use the information in this leaflet to help you and take regular exercise.

Exercise

Regardless of your age or physical ability, regular exercise is very beneficial for anyone with kidney problems. There are a number of benefits including improving



your health and well being, improving blood pressure and helping to control your weight.

Ideally, exercise should form part of your daily routine.
You can increase your daily exercise by:

- Walking instead of taking the bus.
- Taking the stairs instead of the lift.
- Involving and encouraging your family to be more active with you.

Alcohol

If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation. For example, try not to drink more than one or two units per day – and have at least one alcohol-free day a week.

One unit = 1/2 pint ordinary strength beer, lager or cider (3.5%),
One pub measure of spirits (25ml)
One small glass of wine (125ml).

Where can I find more information?

Ask your kidney doctor or GP to refer you to a dietitian. You may also find the following organisations helpful:

- Edinburgh Royal Infirmary Renal Unit: www.edren.org/pages/edreninfo/kidney-stones.php
- British Kidney Patients Association: www.britishkidney-pa.co.uk
- National Kidney Federation: www.kidney.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

For help, advice and support with services in our hospitals and the wider NHS:

Tel: 020 3594 2040/42050 Fax: 020 3594 3235

For this leaflet in **large print**, ring 020 3594 2040/42050

For help in **interpreting** this leaflet in other languages, ring 020 7377 7280.

Your health records

To enable us to improve the quality of the care that we provide, your health records are kept by the Trust and may be used for teaching, training, audit and research.

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