

Tips for Eating Right with Kidney Failure

Your choices about what to eat and drink can make a difference in how you feel. Work with your dietitian to set goals for your daily liquids, potassium, and protein; and limit phosphorus and sodium. You should also set a daily calorie goal. Keep working on the plan until you have goals and limits you can live with.

Set daily liquid goals

You may feel better if you limit how much liquid you eat and drink. Work with your dietitian to set a goal for how much liquid you can have each day.

I can have a total of _____ ounces of liquid each day.

Daily plan:

I can have _____ ounces of _____ with breakfast.

I can have _____ ounces of _____ in the morning.

I can have _____ ounces of _____ with lunch.

I can have _____ ounces of _____ in the afternoon.

I can have _____ ounces of _____ with supper.

I can have _____ ounces of _____ in the evening.

TOTAL: _____ ounces. This number should equal the goal that you set with your dietitian.

Set daily potassium goals

Potassium helps your nerves and muscles work the right way. Talk with your dietitian about how much potassium is in different foods. Avoid salt substitutes, which can be high in potassium. Portion size can make all the difference.

Your dietitian can help you choose foods you like that have the right amount of potassium.

I can have _____ serving size(s) of _____.

I can have _____ serving size(s) of _____.

I can have _____ serving size(s) of _____.

In the chart below, potassium level is based on one serving.

One serving of fruit is one small piece; ½ cup fresh, canned, or cooked fruit; ¼ cup dried fruit; or ½ cup juice.

One serving of vegetables is ½ cup fresh or cooked vegetables, 1 cup raw leafy vegetables, or ½ cup juice.

Foods Lower in Potassium (200 mg or less)	Foods Higher in Potassium
<p>Fruits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples/apple juice/applesauce • Apricots (canned)/apricot nectar • Berries • Cranberry juice • Fruit cocktail • Grapes/grape juice • Grapefruit • Lemons and limes • Papayas • Pears • Peaches • Plums • Pineapple • Rhubarb • Tangerines • Watermelon <p>Vegetables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alfalfa sprouts • Bell peppers • Bamboo shoots (canned) • Broccoli (fresh) • Cabbage • Carrots • Cauliflower • Celery and onions (raw) • Corn • Cucumber • Eggplant • Green beans • Kale • Lettuce • Mushrooms (fresh) • Okra • Summer squash (cooked) 	<p>Fruits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apricots (fresh) • Bananas • Cantaloupe • Dates • Nectarines • Kiwi • Prunes/prune juice • Oranges/orange juice • Raisins <p>Vegetables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acorn and butternut squash • Avocado • Baked beans • Beet and other greens • Broccoli (cooked) • Brussels sprouts (cooked) • Chard • Chili peppers • Mushrooms (cooked) • Potatoes • Pumpkin • Spinach (cooked) • Split peas, lentils, beans • Sweet potatoes, yams • Vegetable juice • Tomatoes/tomato juice/tomato sauce

Set daily, high-quality protein goals

Try to choose lean, or low-fat, meats that also are low in phosphorus, such as chicken, fish, or roast beef. If you're a vegetarian, ask about other ways to get protein. Talk with your dietitian about the protein you eat.

A regular serving size of cooked meat is 3 ounces, or about the size of the palm of your hand or a deck of cards.

I can have _____ serving size(s) of _____.

I can have _____ serving size(s) of _____.

I can have _____ serving size(s) of _____.

Low-fat milk is a good source of protein. However, milk is high in phosphorus and potassium. Milk also adds to your liquid intake. Talk with your dietitian to see if milk fits into your food plan.

If milk is in my food plan, I will drink _____ ounce(s) of milk a day.

Set daily phosphorus limits

When you have kidney disease, phosphorus can build up in your blood. Too much phosphorus can weaken your bones. Packaged foods may have added phosphorus. Look for phosphorus, or for words with "phos," on food labels such as "pyro**phos**phate." Choose a different food when the ingredient list has words with "phos." Your dietitian can help you find ways to get the protein you need without getting too much phosphorus.

I can have _____ serving size(s) of _____.

I can have _____ serving size(s) of _____.

I can have _____ serving size(s) of _____.

Foods <i>Lower</i> in Phosphorus	Foods <i>Higher</i> in Phosphorus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh fruits and vegetables • Rice milk (not enriched) • Breads, pasta, rice • Corn and rice cereal • Light-colored sodas/pop • Home-brewed iced tea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat, poultry, fish • Dairy foods • Beans, lentils • Nuts • Bran cereals • Colas • Some bottled iced teas

Set daily sodium limits

To limit sodium, buy fresh foods more often; cook from scratch; and use spices, herbs, and salt-free seasonings instead of salt. Rinse canned foods to remove salt. Your dietitian can help you find spices and low-sodium foods you might like. List them here:

Instead of _____, I can use this spice _____.

Instead of _____, I can use this spice _____.

Instead of _____, I can use this spice _____.

Instead of _____, I can eat _____.

Instead of _____, I can eat _____.

Foods <i>Lower</i> in Sodium	Foods <i>Higher</i> in Sodium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables • Rice, noodles • Cooked cereal without added salt • Fresh meat, poultry, seafood • Low-fat, low-sodium cheese • Unsalted nuts • Low- and reduced-sodium frozen dinners, peanut butter, salad dressings • Air-popped popcorn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bacon, corned beef, ham, hot dogs, luncheon meats, sausage • Bouillon, canned soups, instant soups, and ramen noodle packages • Boxed mixes, such as hamburger meals and pancake mix • Canned beans, chicken, fish, and meat • Canned tomato products, including juice • Canned and pickled vegetables, vegetable juice • Cottage cheese • Frozen meals • Frozen vegetables with sauce • Olives, pickles, relish • Pretzels, chips, crackers, salted nuts • Salt and salt seasonings, such as garlic salt • Seasoning mix and sauce packets • Soy sauce • Salad dressings, bottled sauces, marinades • Some ready-to-eat cereals, baked goods, breads • Ready-to-eat boxed meals and side dishes

Set calorie goals

Everyone's calorie needs are different. You might need to cut down on calories if you're overweight, or you might need to find ways to add calories to your diet if you're losing weight without trying. Talk with your dietitian about how many calories are right for you.

I will get _____ calories every day.