

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

Renal Disease: Eating well when starting haemodialysis

Now that you have started haemodialysis, you will need to be seen by a renal Dietitian within four weeks. This will be an opportunity for you to discuss your diet, appetite and blood results in much more detail with the Dietitian. If you have not seen a Dietitian within four weeks of starting Haemodialysis please ask the nurses to refer you.

In the meantime:

- Continue your current diet and any dietary changes you have previously been advised by the Dietitian.
- If you have a poor appetite, this should improve over time with regular dialysis. Until then try to eat small regular meals, and include snacks. If your appetite remains poor after a month ask to see the Dietitian.

The nurses in the renal unit will talk to you about fluid intake, and advise you if you need to restrict your intake. The amount of fluid in the body is controlled by the kidneys. When the kidneys are not working properly and are unable to produce enough urine, any excess fluid is retained. Dialysis removes this extra fluid from the body but not as well as healthy kidneys so you may need to limit your daily fluid intake to prevent fluid retention and fluid overload. The Dietitian will discuss this with you further and give some hints and tips to help, if necessary.

The doctors or nurses will give you a 'dry weight' or 'target weight'. This is the weight we estimate that you would be when the excess fluid has been removed, and your body contains the right amount of fluid. This is the weight we aim for at the end of a dialysis session. Your 'Dry weight' or 'target weight' will change if you are losing or gaining flesh (i.e. muscle or fat) weight – **it is really important that you tell the nurses on the dialysis unit if you are eating poorly or especially well, as your 'dry' or 'target weight' may need to be adjusted.**

Patient Information

Once you are established on dialysis, the renal dietitians will meet regularly with you to discuss your diet and diet related blood results.

We encourage a good protein intake, so we will recommend a suitable amount of meat and fish and moderate amounts of milk, eggs and cheese to make sure you are having enough.

If necessary, you will also be offered advice about potassium, phosphate and salt in food, in order to keep your blood results within safe limits.

You can contact the Renal Dietitians at the University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire base (024 7696 6151), or ask the dialysis unit nurses to make us aware that you have started dialysis and we will see you on the haemodialysis unit.

Warning - Starfruit contains a chemical which can be extremely dangerous to people with kidney problems. They should be avoided.

Produced by Coventry Renal Dietitians, University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire

Contact number: 024 7696 6151

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6151 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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