

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

Renal Disease: Christmas on a renal diet

Christmas can be a difficult time to manage your renal diet, but with a little planning you will be able to enjoy some traditional Christmas foods.

Whilst some foods are high in potassium there are lots of lower potassium alternatives. The following information should help you to manage your diet over the Christmas period.

On Christmas Day and New Years Day indulge in one or two extra high potassium foods in addition to your normal renal diet. You may find using the festive food swaps list overleaf a useful way to include other Christmas treats. Ask your Dietitian for our 'Renal Christmas Recipes' for some extra seasonal ideas.

If you are attending Christmas parties or events consider planning ahead and reduce potassium, phosphate and fluid intake during meals before hand to increase the range of foods you can eat when you are out. Ask your Dietitian for our 'Eating Out on a Renal Diet' for additional ideas.

Fluid

Fluid can be very difficult to manage over the Christmas period, especially if you are dialysed less frequently. Unfortunately since fluid overload can be very dangerous and can lead to hospital admission, it is important to continue to monitor your fluid intake and keep within any targets you may have. Avoid salty foods and snacks such as salted nuts and crisps, to help to control your thirst.

Alcohol

Try to include alcohol within your fluid allowance and drink within recommended safe alcohol limits; please ask your dietitian for information regarding safe drinking limits if you need to. Spirits are low in potassium, whilst beer, lager, cider and wine contain much larger amounts of potassium and should be limited to 1 small glass per day.

Christmas Foods

Cakes and puddings:

- Mince pies – try to limit these as they can contain a lot of dried fruit which is high in potassium. If you are making your own, add extra grated apple to the mixture to reduce the potassium content (see our recipe).
- Rich fruit cakes such as Christmas cake and Christmas pudding also contain a lot of dried fruit and should be avoided. If you would like to try making a low potassium Christmas cake as an alternative, you could try our low potassium recipes.



Patient Information

- As an alternative to high potassium fruit cakes and mince pies try sponge cake, Madeira cake, vanilla swiss roll, cherry cake, crème brulee, panna cotta and Pavlova or meringue; these are ideal low potassium, sweet treats. If you are feeling adventurous, a baked Alaska is a fun low potassium pudding. A Christmas trifle is a suitable festive choice.

Sweets and Chocolate

- Boiled sweets, mints, jellies, marshmallows and Turkish delight are low potassium.
- Chocolate is high in potassium - if having occasionally, it is best to choose a chocolate coated biscuit, wafer or a soft centre rather than solid chocolate. Plain chocolate contains less potassium than milk chocolate

Fruit and nuts

- Satsumas, tangerines, and clementines are a healthy, low potassium fruit snack.
- Avoid dried fruit and nuts.
- Dried cranberries and glace/cocktail cherries are ok.

Nibbles

- Low potassium nibbles include corn snacks (Doritos's, Organix corn crisps, Tortilla chips, Niknaks, Quavers, and Wotsits), rice biscuits and Snack a Jacks, bread sticks, carrot or cucumber sticks. Take care, since some of these snacks may be salty.
- Suitable dips include those made with crème fraiche, mayonnaise, cream cheese or yoghurt (small amounts).
- Avoid dips such as hummus or taramasalata, guacamole or salsa.

Party snacks

- Chicken nuggets or goujons, mini pizzas, sausage rolls and cocktail sausages are suitable.
- Avoid garlic mushrooms, loaded potato skins and any other snacks containing high potassium vegetables and nuts.

Christmas day lunch menu

Starter

Prawn or Crab Cocktail

Parma Ham with Pear

Salmon and Chive pâté with Melba toast (see our recipe)

Garlic bread

Main Course

Roast turkey/pork/beef/lamb/chicken

Roast potatoes (par boiled), boiled or mashed potatoes

Small portion of high potassium vegetables for example, brussel sprouts, parsnip

Portion of low potassium vegetables for example, carrots, cauliflower, peas

Small portion of gravy, stuffing, sausage or bacon

Dessert

Pear flan (see our recipe)

Lemon meringue pie

Renal Christmas pudding (see our recipe)

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Christmas day tea menu

Turkey and cranberry sauce sandwich

Bread or crackers and butter

Portion of meat, salmon, cheese or paté (see our recipe)

Small green salad or 1 tomato

Trifle (count in fluid allowance), sponge, swiss roll, fruit pie,

Cake made with glace fruit or tinned fruit with double cream

Remember your fluid restriction

Take medication as normal, including your phosphate binders with meals

Christmas exchanges

During the festive season you may like to swap some of your fruit and vegetable portions for special festive treat foods.

Each of the following can be exchanged for one fruit or vegetable portion from your daily allowance:

- 6 brazil nuts (20g)
- 5 whole walnuts (34g)
- 20 hazelnuts (20g)
- 20 peanuts (20g)
- 1 small bag of twiglets
- 5 small squares of milk chocolate
- 6 small squares of white chocolate
- 8 small squares of plain chocolate
- 6 fancy/filled chocolates
- 1 small bag of toffees or fudge

All recipes are available on request from Dietetic Department

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