

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

Renal Disease: Eating out on a renal diet

This information is written for patients who are following a renal diet. A renal diet should only be followed with supervision from a dietitian.

Introduction

It is important to continue to enjoy your food and eating out with friends and family when following a renal diet. This information sheet should help you choose more suitable foods for your diet when eating away from home.

General strategies to help with eating outside the home

- It is best to plan ahead, and reduce your food and fluid intake during the day to allow for your meal out.
- It may help to think about what type of restaurant you may be going to or if it is to a friend's house then perhaps chatting things through first with the host. Many restaurants are used to accommodating special requests for food items or preparation.
- It is normal for people to compare themselves and what they eat to each other. It may therefore be helpful to keep in mind that this is your diet which you follow as part of a self-management programme for your health.
- If you are having difficulty choosing foods when eating out, or avoiding social situations because of this, then please contact your dietitian to discuss alternative strategies.

First course (starters/appetizers)

To help with potassium and fluid intake, it would be best to have a starter or dessert when eating out, rather than 3 courses.

The most suitable low potassium starters would include: pate, egg mayonnaise, smoked salmon or cold meats, a green salad, garlic bread or a small prawn cocktail.

Some of these foods are high in phosphate; for example cheese & pate, however it would be acceptable to have occasionally. It is still important to take your phosphate binders with meals eaten out so try to remember to take them with you.



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Main course

Roast meat or fish are often the best choices as they tend to be lower in potassium. If a dish is in a tomato sauce, it is best eaten with pasta or rice (e.g. spaghetti bolognese, lasagne or curries) as these are lower in potassium than potatoes.

Potatoes are high in potassium so boiled or creamed may be the best options. Being mindful of how many potato dishes you have had in a day may help you follow your low potassium diet. You should only have potatoes a maximum of once a day and watch out for high potassium foods such as chips, sauté, roast or jacket potatoes. Ask for rice, pasta or bread as an alternative.

Choose low potassium vegetables where possible, or a small salad. French dressing, oil and vinegar, mayonnaise or mustard are suitable condiments as they are low in potassium.

Desserts

Meringue, fruit pies (particular if using tinned fruit), gateau with cream, sorbet, ice cream or cheese and biscuits are good choices. Choose desserts that **don't** contain nuts, dried fruit or lots of chocolate. Take care with fruit - choose a low potassium fruit or mixed fruit salad, and leave the juice.

Chinese food

Choose meat or fish dishes with suitable vegetables and plain or fried rice or noodles. Chinese food tends to be salty, so take care not to add extra salt or soy sauce. Avoid soup if on a fluid restriction. Dishes containing nuts and mushrooms will need to be avoided as these will be high in potassium.

Indian food

Choose chicken, meat or prawn curries with boiled or pilau rice and plain naan or chapatti. Dry dishes such as tandoori, tikka, shashlik or bhuna are lower in fluid and are better choices if on a fluid restriction. Hot curries such as vindaloo may increase thirst - take care with the amount you drink during the meal. Avoid curries containing potatoes, mushrooms, spinach, nuts and coconut (e.g. korma) as these will be high in potassium.

Italian Food

Pasta dishes with tomato or cream sauce will be suitable if no potato is taken with it. Have with bread or garlic bread. Take care of sauces with mushrooms, or spinach. Pizza is generally suitable but toppings such as pepperoni, salami and anchovy as these are very salty and higher in phosphate. Take care with mushrooms as they are high in potassium.

American Grill style food

Suitable starters would be a small portion of ribs or nachos with a dip or garlic bread. Good choices for main courses include pasta dishes with bread or garlic bread, chicken or beef fajitas or a burger with a green salad or rice. Chips, potato skins and jacket potatoes are all high in potassium and would be best avoided. Most of these foods tend to be quite high in salt so take care with what you drink.

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Fast foods

Beef burgers, chicken burgers and fish burgers are all suitable for a low potassium diet. Again these tend to be high in salt and phosphate so avoid having regularly. Avoid chips and fries as these are high in potassium. Doughnuts or fruit pie would be suitable as a pudding. It would be best to have a **small** soft drink and limit milkshakes.

Holidays

When you are away try to enjoy your meals and snacks and make sensible choices. This may be a more challenging time as the restaurant or surroundings may not be familiar to you. If you have no choice on the food provided you may find the following useful:

- Avoid potato based meals and choose rice, pasta or bread instead.
- If having a tomato based dish try not to combine this with potatoes.
- Save some of your allowed lower potassium fruit and vegetables for salads or meals out.
- Choose puddings that don't contain nuts, dried fruit or chocolate.

Limit wine and beer to 1 glass a day. Spirits for example gin, whisky and vodka are low in potassium and can be taken within safe recommended limits.

Take care when choosing mixers and avoid juices or cola mixers.

Why not cut out the below, and keep as a reference when you first start to eat out.

Kidney friendly food choices

Consider choosing more often ...	Instead of...
Rice, naan bread, noodles, white bread	Chips or French fries
Pasta with oil, garlic, basil	Tomato-based pasta
1 slice of pizza with side salad	2 slices of meat/ mushroom pizza
Cream cheese or brie with crackers	Cheddar, stilton, red Leicester
Pies or desserts made with low potassium fruit, meringue based desserts	Custard, puddings with nuts/ dried fruit, fresh fruit salad
Water, lemon-lime soda, ginger ale, pineapple juice	Cola, 'real fruit' based soft drinks, tomato/ orange juice
Sorbet	Ice cream or frozen yoghurt

Warning - Star fruit contains a chemical which can be extremely dangerous to people with kidney problems; these should be avoided.

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Further Information

For further information or if you have any other questions, please contact the Renal Dietitians on 024 7696 6151.

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