Patient Information

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

Nutrition and Dietetics

Kidney disease - Haemodialysis and diet

This leaflet is only for patients on haemodialysis and should be followed under the guidance of a dietitian.

Healthy kidneys remove excess fluid and waste products from your blood. When your kidneys are not working properly, waste products including excess phosphate and potassium can build up in your blood.

Haemodialysis (HD) helps to remove these waste products. Along with your diet, this supports your overall health. Your diet will be tailored to your needs based on your blood tests and how much fluid you need. It may also change over time and your **renal dietitian will advise you on these changes.**

Your personalised dietary plan, on (date) ……

Meet your protein requirements (see section 1) ……. ☐

Follow the low phosphate diet (see section 2)…… ☐

Follow the low potassium diet (see section 3)…… ☐

Follow the low salt advice (see section 4)…… ☐

Follow the fluid restrictions (see section 5)…… ☐

1. Protein

Protein helps repair, maintain body tissues, and build muscles. Some protein is lost during dialysis, so it's important to eat enough protein to replace what's lost. This helps prevent malnutrition.

Good sources of protein include:

- Meat, fish, chicken, turkey
- Eggs
- Cheese and milk.
- Plant-based foods such as beans, lentils and soy products.

Individual protein requirements

To meet your protein needs, you should aim for ……...

portions of protein per day.

1 protein portion is equal to:

- 30g (1oz) meat or chicken (cooked weight) such as 1 small chicken breast (4-5 protein portions) or 2 slices roast meat (3 protein portions)
- 30g (1oz) fish (cooked weight), such as 1 fishcake or 2 fish fingers
- 30g (1oz) hard cheese: about the size of a matchbox
- 60g (2oz) cottage cheese: 2 tablespoons
- 1 egg
- 200ml ($^1/_3$ pint) milk (dairy or soya)
- 1 tub of yogurt (dairy or soya)
- 90g (3oz) cooked peas, beans, or lentils
- 30g (1oz) dried or raw beans or lentils:1 heaped tablespoon
- 60g (2oz) Quorn (equivalent to 1 Quorn steak)
- 60g (2oz) cooked soya beans (2 tablespoons)
- 90g (3oz) cooked tofu - about 1/3 of a standard pack of firm tofu
- 30g (1oz) fried tofu

Foods high in phosphate

The following are high in phosphate and may need to be limited:

Milk limit to 300mls (½ pint) per day (you may swap ¼ pint (140ml) of milk for 1 yogurt)

- Eggs - up to ..... a week
- Cheese - up to ……. a week

2. Phosphate

It is important to control the phosphate and calcium in your blood If your phosphate level becomes too high, it can lead to:

- Itchy skin
- Bone damage
- Hardening of blood vessels

Recommended phosphate level for people on dialysis:

1.1 - 1.7 mmol/L

Your renal dietitian will advise you if you need to limit phosphate in our diet and will give you more information.

3. Potassium

Potassium is a natural mineral found in most foods. Normally, your kidneys control the amount of potassium in your blood. Although dialysis removes a lot of potassium, it can build up again in days when you don't have dialysis.

High potassium levels in the blood can cause muscle weakness and may seriously affect your heart.

Recommended potassium level for people on haemodialysis:

3.5 – 6.0 mmol/L

You can manage your potassium levels by:

- Following a low potassium diet **if advised by the renal team**
- Maintaining regular bowel movements and avoiding constipation.
- Following your treatment plan, including attending dialysis sessions, taking sodium bicarbonate if prescribed, and managing your blood sugar levels.

4. Salt

Too much salt can make you feel thirsty, making it harder to stay within your fluid limits. It can also cause your body to hold onto extra fluid and may raise your blood pressure.

How to reduce your salt intake:

- Avoid adding salt at the table (this includes sea salt, pink Himalayan salt and regular table salt).
- Avoid salty foods such as tinned and packet soups, Oxo, Bovril, Marmite, stock cubes, and salty snacks such as crisps and salted nuts.
- Check food labels, if a food has more than 1.5g of salt per 100g, it's high in salt, so try to find a lower salt option.
- Use herbs, spices, garlic, vinegar, pepper and lemon juice instead of salt to add flavour to your food.

Try to limit the following foods:

- Cheese
- Bacon, tongue, tinned meats such as corned beef and Spam
- Sausages
- Beef burgers
- Smoked fish, smoked cheese and smoked or cured meats
- Ready meals
- Salted biscuits

Avoid salt substitutes like Lo Salt or Pan Salt, as they contain potassium, which can be harmful for people on haemodialysis

5. Fluid

As your kidneys are not working properly, you may not be able to remove all the fluid you drink. Drinking too little can cause dehydration, while drinking too much can overload your body, putting extra strain on your heart and lungs.

You should limit your fluid intake to …..... daily.

Remember to include the fluids from foods such as soups, gravy, sauces, curry, milk puddings, ice cream, ice lollies, custard, jelly, and yogurt, along with all hot and cold drinks, they all count.

Solid foods, such as fruit and vegetables, do not count as fluids.

The weight you gain in between dialysis sessions helps you know if you are drinking too much fluid.

The impact of excess fluid gain can vary from person to person but regularly gaining more than 2kg between dialysis sessions can be harmful.

Signs of fluid overload include a rapid weight gain between dialysis sessions, increased blood pressure, swollen ankles and shortness of breath.

Include fibre to prevent or manage constipation

Constipation can cause your blood potassium levels to rise. To help prevent constipation over time, try to include more fibre in your diet. Here are some helpful tips:

- Choose high-fibre breakfast cereals like Weetabix, shredded wheat, or porridge.
- Choose wholemeal or granary bread.
- Pick whole grains such as whole wheat pasta or brown rice.
- Add pulses, beans, lentils, or chickpeas to your stews, curries, and salads.

- Aim to eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day.

Increase the amount of fibre in your diet slowly. This helps your body adjust and reduces the chance of gas or bloating.

Physical activity and exercise

Patients having haemodialysis are encouraged and supported to engage in regular exercise. Staying physically active can help lower the risk of heart-related problems and improve overall health. Exercise may also help control blood pressure.

We recommend aiming for about 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week (or 75 minutes of more intense exercise), or a mix of both. This can include activities done outside of dialysis sessions.

Before starting any new exercise program, please consult your renal consultant for personalised advice.

6. What can you eat?

Meat (not processed)	Beef, lamb, pork, chicken, turkey
Fish (not processed)	White fish (cod, plaice, coley, haddock) Oily fish (salmon, trout, tuna, boneless mackerel)
Vegetarian protein	Tofu, soya, peas, green beans, lentils (for portion sizes, see the Protein section)
Bread	Have a variety - wholemeal, granary, white, pitta bread, rolls, chapatti, croissant
Rice	White, brown, basmati, risotto
Pasta and noodles	White or wholemeal
Breakfast cereals	Any sort without nuts, dried fruit or chocolate, such as porridge, Weetabix, Shreddies or Rice Krispies (milk should be from your allowance)
Preserves	Jam, marmalade, honey

Fats and Oils	Mono or polyunsaturated oils such as olive, rapeseed, corn or sunflower oil. Mono or polyunsaturated margarine such as Flora, Vitalite, supermarket own brands. Butter in moderation
Bakery*	Digestive, shortbread, rich tea, custard cream, cream crackers, rice crackers, water biscuits, jam and cream biscuits. Croissant, English muffins, bagels.
Sweets**	Boiled sweets, fruit pastilles, gums and jellies, mints, chewing gum, plain Turkish delight and Sherbet
Savoury snacks*	(These are salty – only have them occasionally) Skips, Wotsits, tortilla chips, rice crackers, wheat crunchies, popcorn, rice cakes

Drinks	Count all drinks in the fluid allowance Tea, fizzy drinks (except Coke or Pepsi), ordinary or diet squash, fruit and herbal teas, water, sparkling and flavoured water, Barley Cup
Condiments	Pepper, vinegar, mustard, herbs and spices, mint sauce, tartar sauce, horseradish sauce, salad cream, mayonnaise, Worcester sauce, chutney and pickle, cranberry sauce

* If you are trying to lose weight, reduce your intake of cake and biscuits.

** Be careful with these choices if you are diabetic.

7. Blood Results

After your dialysis and diet plan helps manage your blood results and control fluid buildup between sessions.

If you'd like a chart to track your blood levels, ask your dietitian. You can also check your levels monthly at the renal unit or by signing up for **'Patient Knows Best'** to keep track of your results on your own.

8. Summary

- Eating well is important now that you're on dialysis.
- If you're not eating well, your dietitian can offer advice and/or suggest nutritional supplements, which your GP can prescribe.
- Make sure to eat enough protein-rich foods.
- Limit salty foods and avoid adding salt at the table.
- Know your fluid allowance.
- Limit foods high in phosphate if advised by your dietitian and take binders if prescribed.
- Reduce your potassium intake if your renal team recommends it.
- Include fibre in your diet and maintain regular exercise.
- Your diet plan may change as time goes on.

Warning: Starfruit contains a chemical that can be extremely dangerous for people with kidney problems and should be avoided.

For more information :

Kidney Beam

Kidney Beam is a free online service that helps people living with kidney disease feel better through movement, education and wellbeing support. All classes have a fitness rating, so you can choose the right one for you:

Visit: https://www.kidney.org.uk/kidney-beam

If it’s been some time since you last exercised, please check with your renal doctor before starting a new exercise program.

For information on all aspects of renal failure, visit the National Kidney Foundation at www.kidney.org.uk

Produced by Coventry Renal Dietitians, University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust.

Contact us: 024 7696 6151.

Follow us on X: @UHCW_RenalDiet.

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