

## Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

# Renal Disease - Eating well when starting haemodialysis

You have started haemodialysis, so you'll need to be seen by a renal dietitian within 4 weeks. We'll discuss your diet, appetite, and blood results in detail at this appointment.

If you haven't seen a dietitian within 4 weeks of starting haemodialysis, please ask the nurses to refer you.

In the meantime:

- continue your current diet and any dietary changes previously 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 aim to include a snack once or twice a day.

If your appetite remains poor after a month on dialysis, please discuss this with the dietitian.

You should also consider the following:

### Fluid

As your kidneys aren't working properly, you may not be able to get rid of all the fluid you drink. Drinking too little fluid will make you dehydrated. Drinking too much fluid will lead to water retention. This will put extra strain on your heart and lungs.



## Patient Information

The weight you gain between dialysis sessions tells us whether you're drinking too much fluid. The effect of excess fluid gain will vary between individuals. But regularly putting on more than 2kg between dialysis sessions is harmful.

The doctors or nurses will give you a 'dry weight' or 'target weight'. This is the weight we estimate you'd be when 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 lose or gain body weight (muscle or fat).

**You must tell the nurses on the Dialysis Unit if you're eating poorly or especially well. Your 'dry' or 'target weight' may need to be adjusted.**

The nurses in the Renal Unit will talk to you about fluid and advise if you need to restrict your fluid intake. The dietitian will discuss this with you and give you some hints and tips to help if needed.

## Protein

Some protein is lost from your body during the dialysis process, so it's important to have a good protein intake.

Good sources of protein include meat, fish, eggs, cheese, and milk, as well as plant-based protein such as soya products, beans, and lentils. Try to include a protein source at every meal.

Once you're established on dialysis, the renal dietitians will meet with you regularly to discuss your diet and diet-related blood results. You'll also be offered advice about potassium, phosphate and salt in food to keep your blood results within safe limits if needed.

## Patient Information

You can contact the renal dietitians at University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire base (024 7696 6151) or ask the Dialysis Unit nurses to inform us that you've started dialysis. We'll see you in 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

Twitter: UHCW\_RenalDiet

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### Document History

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