Patient Information

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

Nutrition and Dietetics

Kidney disease - Eating well after a kidney transplant (long-term)

This leaflet is for patients who have had a kidney transplant. Please follow it only under the guidance of your dietitian.

Once you have recovered from kidney transplant surgery and your immune suppressing medicines have been reduced to a maintenance dose, the most important advice is to eat a healthy diet and maintain a healthy weight. This will help reduce your risk of developing diabetes or heart and blood vessel problems after your transplant.

You should have been reviewed by a kidney dietitian within 5 days of your kidney transplant for advice on eating well and food safety (see “Kidney disease - Eating well after a kidney transplant (short-term)” in your information pack). If you were not seen, please contact the kidney dietitians on 024 7696 6151.

Key points:

1. Healthy lifestyle: diet, exercise and no smoking
2. Bone health
3. Supplementation
4. Further dietetic review

Patient Information

1. Healthy lifestyle

- Diet
- Exercise
- No smoking

Diet
Mediterranean diet

The Mediterranean diet can help reduce the risk of heart disease and improve gut health, which is often affected after a kidney transplant.

Tips:

- Aim for at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day.
- Eat 3 portions of wholegrains daily, e.g., wholemeal bread and pasta, wholegrain breakfast cereals, brown rice, oats, pearl barley.
- Have at least 2 portions of fish or seafood per week, including one oily fish (e.g., pilchards, sardines, mackerel, kippers, salmon, and herring).
- Eat nuts and seeds every day.
- Include pulses (beans, peas, lentils) at least twice a week.
- Use small amounts of olive, rapeseed and sunflower oils.
- Cook most of your meals from fresh or frozen unprocessed ingredients.

For more information on plant-based diets after kidney transplant, see:

Heart UK – Mediterranean diet:www.heartuk.org.uk/healthy-diets/the-mediterranean-diet

UK Kidney – Kidney transplant diet sheet:
www.ukkidney.org/sites/default/files/KidneyTransplantFSRNG04.07.23%20%281%29_0.pdf

Other dietary considerations:

- Follow a no added salt diet.

- Choose low-fat dairy, e.g., semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, margarine, cheese, yoghurt.
- Choose lean cuts of meat and remove skin from chicken.
- Choose fruit as a snack rather than sweets, chocolate, biscuits, crisps or nuts.
- Limit alcohol to 2 drinks per day.

Foods to avoid after kidney transplant (due to medication interactions):

- Grapefruit and grapefruit juice
- Pomelo and pomegranate
- Seville oranges
- Star fruit
- Herbal teas such as green tea, chamomile, peppermint or dandelion.

Exercise

Before starting exercise, check with a member of your transplant team.

A combination of cardio and resistance exercise can help transplant patients by:

- Increasing strength
- Improving wellbeing
- Helping maintain a healthy weight.

Aim for 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per week (for example, 30 mins, 5 times a week).

Safety advice:

- Avoid contact sports, e.g., rugby, martial arts, ice hockey and boxing.
- Take care with prolonged exercise, e.g., marathons, Ironman or Triathlons.
- Build up exercise slowly, for example, start with no more than half a mile of walking at a time.
- Stop and rest if you experience chest or leg pain, shortness of breath, or feel unwell**.**

For more detailed advice, see your patient information pack.

Smoking cessation

After a kidney transplant, it is recommended that you do not smoke or use recreational drugs. If you need support to make these changes, the following resources may be useful:

Healthy Lifestyles Coventry:

- Referrals can be made by a by healthcare professional or by the patient themselves.
- Service based in Renal offices, 5th floor. Tel: 0800 122 3780.
- For patients with a Coventry GP (postcodes CV1-CV6).
- Referrals via EPR (New order entry - Healthy lifestyles).
- A lifestyle coach will arrange a 1:1 telephone call or face-to-face appointment.

Other resources:

- Everyone Health (Warwickshire)
- Fitter Futures (Warwickshire)
- Kidney Beam - kidney specialist exercise programme beamfeelgood.com/kidney-disease

2. Bone health

Some patients may already have bone problems before a kidney transplant, due to uncontrolled levels of calcium, phosphorus, parathyroid hormone, or vitamin D. Certain transplant treatments, especially steroids, can also affect bone health.

After a kidney transplant, your risk of a bone fracture is around 4 times higher than the general public.

To protect your bones and reduce the risk of osteoporosis, make sure you get enough calcium in your diet. We recommend 4 portions of calcium-rich foods per day.

1 calcium portion (200-250mg) =

- 30g cheese
- 200ml glass of milk
- 150g/ml pot of yogurt
- 1/4 tin sardines, pilchards and salmon (50g), including bones
- 200ml serving of milk pudding (e.g., rice or tapioca)
- 125g raw spring greens or spinach (300g if boiled)
- 100g slice of pizza
- 400g tin baked beans

Vitamin D is needed to absorb calcium. It is found in oily fish and fortified breakfast cereals. The main source of Vitamin D is made by the body when the skin is exposed to sunlight.

The NHS recommends a vitamin D supplement of 10mcg (400IU) per day for everyone in the UK between the end of September and early April.

Your dietitian can advise on additional calcium sources if required.

3. Supplementation

If you eat a well-balanced diet, you usually do not need supplements unless your dietitian or doctor advises.

Do not take supplements containing vitamin A or E unless monitored, as these can be harmful for people with kidney disease.

Most multivitamins contain vitamins A and E. If you want to take a multivitamin or mineral supplement, choose types made for pregnancy or for patients with kidney disease, and **check with your dietitian first.**

Unless prescribed by your renal team, sport-enhancing supplements (e.g., protein shakes or powders are not recommended.

Listeriosis

- Avoid ready-to-eat smoked or cured fish products, such as smoked salmon or gravlax, due to the risk of listeriosis.
- Listeriosis is an infection caused by bacteria called Listeria. People with kidney disease are at higher risk of serious illness from this infection.
- More information on how to reduce the risk of Listeriosis is available at: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/listeriosis/ and www.food.gov.uk/listeria.

4. Further reviews by the kidney dietitian

Please contact us directly, or through a member of the transplant team, if you have any questions about your diet after your transplant. We can provide support with:

- Eating well in the first 0-3 months after your transplant, or advice on gaining weight.
- Information and support for people diagnosed with diabetes.
- Longer-term advice on a weight-reducing diet and help with achieving weight loss goals.
- Advice on a cholesterol lowering diet.

You can contact us on 024 7696 6151 or via X (previously known as Twitter) @UHCW_KidneyDiet.

Produced by Coventry Kidney Dietitians, University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire.

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

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

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