
NUTRITION EDUCATION

Kidney-Friendly (Renal) Eating Guide

A renal diet protects your kidneys by limiting sodium, potassium, phosphorus, and (in some stages) protein. The right targets depend on your stage of kidney disease and your lab values — always confirm with your nephrologist or renal dietitian before making major changes. This handout is a general overview.

Sodium — Aim for Less Than 2,000 mg/Day

- Do not add salt at the table or while cooking — season with herbs, garlic, lemon, vinegar, and salt-free blends
- Avoid canned soups, frozen dinners, deli meats, bacon, sausage, and fast food
- Read labels: choose items with <140 mg sodium per serving
- Rinse canned beans and vegetables to remove ■ of the sodium
- Limit cheese, pickles, olives, soy sauce, and salad dressings

Potassium — Follow Your Doctor's Target

Many people with kidney disease need to **limit** potassium. Others need more. Check your most recent lab value before changing intake.

- **Lower-potassium choices:** apples, berries, grapes, cabbage, cauliflower, green beans, white rice, white bread, pasta
- **Limit if high:** bananas, oranges, melon, avocado, tomatoes, potatoes, sweet potatoes, spinach, beans, nuts
- Soaking and double-boiling potatoes and other high-potassium vegetables reduces their potassium content
- Avoid salt substitutes (NoSalt, Morton Lite) — most contain potassium chloride

Phosphorus — Watch Hidden Sources

- Limit dairy: milk, yogurt, cheese, ice cream (½ cup milk or 1 oz cheese per day if allowed)
- Avoid dark sodas (cola), processed cheese, and packaged baked goods
- Read labels for ingredients with 'PHOS' — these are absorbed nearly 100%
- Choose: rice milk (unenriched), almond milk (unenriched), white bread, white rice, fresh meats
- Take prescribed phosphate binders **WITH** meals and snacks — not after

Protein

- If you are **NOT** on dialysis: your doctor may recommend a **lower** protein intake (0.6–0.8 g/kg/day)
- If you **ARE** on dialysis: you typically need **more** protein (1.0–1.2 g/kg/day)

- Best sources: fresh chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, lean pork — unsalted and unprocessed
- Limit large steaks, pork chops, and protein shakes unless prescribed

Fluids

- Follow the daily fluid limit set by your nephrologist
- Count all liquids: water, coffee, tea, soup, ice, gelatin, popsicles, ice cream
- Manage thirst with ice chips, lemon wedges, sugar-free hard candy, or rinsing the mouth

Sample Day (General Renal Pattern)

- **Breakfast:** 1 egg, 1 slice white toast with unsalted butter, ½ cup applesauce
- **Lunch:** Turkey sandwich on white bread with lettuce and cucumber, ½ cup grapes, water
- **Snack:** Rice cakes with a thin layer of unsalted nut butter
- **Dinner:** 3 oz baked chicken, ½ cup white rice, steamed green beans, side salad with oil and vinegar
- **Evening:** Small bowl of berries

Call your nephrologist or our office if you notice:

- New or worsening swelling in the feet, ankles, or hands
- Sudden weight gain of more than 2–3 pounds in a day
- Shortness of breath, muscle cramps, or irregular heartbeat
- A foot wound or ulcer — renal patients heal slowly and need prompt care

Foot care matters even more with kidney disease

- Reduced circulation and slow healing make daily foot checks essential
- Call 662-449-3663 for a comprehensive foot exam if it has been more than a year