



Healthy Eating for Home Hemodialysis

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Introduction

Your diet will depend on the amount of dialysis that you do. As you dialyze more you may be able to eat some foods that you have been limiting in your diet. Your dietitian can help you plan a diet specific to your health needs and your frequency of dialysis.



Tips For Success

Maintain good nutrition

- You may notice an improvement in your appetite with more dialysis.
- Enjoy a variety of foods at each meal.
- Eat at least three balanced meals daily. A well balanced meal includes protein, starch, fruit and vegetables.
- Include healthy snacks if needed.

Eat enough protein to meet your needs

- Increased dialysis causes more protein to be removed from your blood.
- Protein foods include dairy products, beef, chicken, turkey, fish, seafood, eggs, tofu and soy products.
- You will be given guidelines on how much protein to eat each day.



Healthy Eating for Home Hemodialysis

Understand how your blood tests relate to your diet and dialysis

- Know your **potassium** and **phosphorus** levels. It is important to keep your blood levels within a good range.
- Your dietitian can provide you with potassium and phosphorus food lists.

Phosphorus:

- Depending on your blood phosphorus level you may need to continue to limit phosphorus in your diet.
- Take your phosphate binders as prescribed. If you are doing more dialysis your binders may be decreased or even discontinued.
- If your phosphorus levels are low you will be encouraged to eat some higher phosphorus foods including dairy products, nuts, seeds, bran, dried peas and beans.
- If your phosphorus levels remain low you may be asked to add a phosphate supplement to your dialysate solution.

Potassium:

- Depending on your blood potassium levels you may still need to limit your intake of higher potassium foods.
- If your blood potassium levels are low you will be able to eat a wider variety of fruits, vegetables and other high potassium foods.

Important: If you cannot dialyze for more than two days in a row, you must **limit high potassium foods** until you return to your regular dialysis schedule. Remember that many high phosphorus foods are also high in potassium



Eat more fresh foods and less canned or processed foods

- Processed foods contain more salt. Limit your intake of salty foods such as canned soups, ham, bacon, fast foods, soy sauce, pickles and salty snacks such as potato chips and pretzels.
- Avoid using the salt shaker at the table and use less salt in cooking.
- Use unsalted spices, herbs and seasoning blends. Use vinegar and lemon juice instead of salt.



Healthy Eating for Home Hemodialysis

Monitor your fluid intake to control fluid build-up between your dialysis treatments

- The amount of fluid you can drink is based on your weight, blood pressure and fluid removal during dialysis.
- With more dialysis you may be able to increase your fluid intake.

Choose healthy fats and limit your intake of saturated and trans fats

- Eat fish 2–3 times a week.
- Choose non-hydrogenated margarine (soft tub) in place of butter.
- Use healthier fats such as canola or olive oils.
- Eat less packaged foods such as crackers and cookies.
- Bake, barbeque, broil, poach or steam your foods instead of frying.
- Ask your dietitian for more information on “heart healthy” eating.

Take your vitamins as prescribed

- There is an increased loss of vitamins as you dialyze more.
- You may be advised to increase your dose of vitamins.
- Tell your dietitian or doctor of any other vitamin, mineral or herbal supplement you are using.

Maintain a healthy weight

- Monitor your weight and try to keep it within a healthy range.
- If you are concerned about weight gain or loss, talk to your dietitian.

Choose a physical activity you enjoy and keep moving

- Maintaining an active lifestyle can help improve your energy level.
- Start slowly and work towards 20–30 minutes of physical activity such as walking, swimming, or bike riding, 5–7 times a week.

If you have diabetes, aim for good blood sugar control

- Do glucometer testing on a regular schedule as recommended by your doctor and record your blood sugar readings.
- Aim for an HgbA1c level of less than 7%.
- Eat meals and snacks at regular times.