

KIDNEY DIET

A kidney diet, or renal diet, is designed to reduce the workload on your kidneys by managing the intake of specific minerals and waste products. Because the kidneys filter waste from food and liquids, a specialized diet helps prevent the buildup of harmful substances like sodium, potassium, and phosphorus in the blood.

Core Principles of a Kidney Diet

- **Limit Sodium:** Reducing salt helps control blood pressure and prevents fluid buildup. Aim for less than 2,300 mg daily; many patients are restricted to 1,500 mg.
- **Manage Protein:** High protein intake forces kidneys to work harder to filter nitrogen waste.
 - **Pre-dialysis:** A low-protein diet may slow disease progression.
 - **On Dialysis:** Protein needs *increase* because dialysis removes protein from the blood.
- **Monitor Potassium and Phosphorus:** Damaged kidneys struggle to filter these minerals. High potassium can lead to heart rhythm issues, while high phosphorus can weaken bones.
- **Control Fluids:** In advanced stages or on dialysis, you may need to limit all liquids, including foods that are liquid at room temperature like soup or gelatin.

Kidney-Friendly Food Choices

Food Category	Choose (Lower in K, Phos, Na)	Limit/Avoid (Higher in K, Phos, Na)
Proteins	Egg whites, skinless chicken, fresh fish (salmon, tuna), tofu.	Red meat, processed meats (bacon, deli cuts), egg yolks.
Fruits	Apples, berries, grapes, pineapple, cherries.	Bananas, oranges, dried fruits (raisins, prunes), avocados.

Vegetables	Cauliflower, onions, bell peppers, cabbage, green beans.	Potatoes, tomatoes, spinach, winter squash.
Grains	White bread, white rice, pasta, couscous.	Whole-wheat bread, brown rice, bran cereal.
Fats/Drinks	Olive oil, canola oil, water, herbal tea.	Butter, dark-colored colas, coconut milk.

Tips for Success

- 1. Read Labels:** Avoid products with "PHOS" in the ingredients, which indicates highly absorbable phosphorus additives.
- 2. Rinse Canned Foods:** Draining and rinsing canned beans or vegetables can significantly reduce sodium.
- 3. Use Herb Blends:** Use salt-free seasonings like garlic powder, lemon juice, or fresh herbs instead of salt or salt substitutes (which often contain potassium).
- 4. Consult a Professional:** A renal dietitian is essential for tailoring a plan to your specific lab results and disease stage. Resources like the National Kidney Foundation and DaVita offer specialized kidney-friendly recipes.

This is for informational purposes only. For medical advice or diagnosis, consult a professional.