

Kidney Disease and Your Changing Diet

When kidney disease becomes a life challenge, eating well can be problematic as well. Knowledge about kidney disease and diet is essential to prolonged overall health and well-being. Working closely with your physician and dietitian will be vital to the detailed learning process. The following information will offer some initial guidelines:

CALORIES

You need adequate calories for energy and maintaining a healthy weight. Without adequate calories your body will start to breakdown muscle to use for fuel.

MINERALS

You will need to put limits on your intake of many minerals to best help your kidneys functions.

Sodium, kidney disease, and high blood pressure are often connected. Limiting sodium can help reduce related symptoms. Sodium is found in foods high in salt (*sodium* chloride). Cured meats, cheeses, canned foods, seasonings, snack foods (pretzels, crackers, chips, etc.) and fast foods are all high in sodium.

Potassium keeps your muscles, including your heart, functioning. Keeping potassium in balance is essential. Often there needs to be limits placed on the amount of potassium eaten. This mineral is found in many fruits and vegetables including bananas, oranges, apricots, berries, tomatoes, broccoli, spinach, pumpkin, and potatoes.

Phosphorus can also build up in the blood because the kidneys cannot remove it. Consequently foods high in this mineral have to be limited. Dairy products (milk, cheese, pudding, yogurt), dried beans, nuts, peanut butter, colas, and beer are all high in phosphorus.

PROTEIN

You need the right amount of protein to be used for building and maintaining muscles and tissues. Protein is also needed for fighting infections. But since the kidneys are responsible for filtering out the waste products from protein the right intake becomes a balancing act between benefits and drawbacks. Protein foods are milk, meats, dairy products, fish, eggs, dry beans

FLUIDS

In later stages of the disease the amount of fluid you take in may need to be limited.

HELP

Contact your physician for a referral to a registered dietitian for help making it all work for you.

