

Living With Chronic Kidney Disease

Managing Stress And Staying Positive

Living with a chronic disease can be challenging, both physically and emotionally. The combination of not feeling well and the worries that go along with a diagnosis of chronic kidney disease (CKD) can affect your emotional well-being and may lead to depression. Taking positive steps to keep your body healthy and trying to maintain a positive attitude are things that you can do that may help you manage CKD.

Tips To Stay Positive

- Try to do the things that once made you happy.
- Know that you are not alone, that your trusted friends and family members probably want to help. Don't isolate yourself; stay involved with others.
- Support groups and religious organizations can be a source of strength for some people. Talking to a member of the clergy may help you.
- If you are experiencing symptoms of depression, talk to your doctor immediately. He or she may recommend counseling.
- Participate in regular daily activities. Go to the movies, read, listen to music — keep yourself busy doing the things that you enjoy.
- Get some exercise. Aerobic exercise and general physical activity will help keep both your body and mind active and focused on something other than your disease. Talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program.



Source: National Institute of Mental Health; National Institutes of Health, 2009

Eat A Well-Balanced Diet

Giving your body the energy, vitamins, and minerals it needs is vital when you have kidney problems. Yet, as simple as it sounds, many people find it challenging to eat a well-balanced diet. If eating three complete meals a day is not appealing, or feels too exhausting, try to eat more frequent, smaller meals. Plan meals around family and friends to make the overall experience more enjoyable. Be sure that meals and snacks include the right amounts of proteins, fruits, and vegetables. Since people with kidney problems usually have specific dietary needs, be sure to ask your doctor or nurse about the foods and supplements that are right for you.

Protein

Protein builds and maintains the muscles, bones, blood, and organs in your body. Most of your body that is not made of water is made of protein, so it is important to replace the protein that your body uses when it is active.

However, if you have CKD, too much protein may make the kidneys work harder; so a careful balance is needed to ensure that your body gets the right amount of protein. Talk to your healthcare professional about how much dietary protein is right for you.

Calories

A calorie is a measurement of the energy contained in a portion of food. We all need a certain amount of calories each day to survive. The amount of calories you need depends on your age, weight, height, and activity level. Calories are found in carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. Your dietitian can help plan your diet to make sure that you are getting the right number of calories.

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates, or “carbs,” are your most common source of food energy. After you eat them, most carbs turn into glucose, or blood sugar. Carbohydrates are found in breads, cereals, rice, potatoes, fruits and vegetables, as well as in sugar, honey, cookies, and sugared drinks. If you are on a low protein diet, you may need more calories from carbohydrates like whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and dry beans.

Fats

Fat has gained a bad reputation over the years. But, some types of fat are actually an essential part of a healthy diet, if eaten in the right amounts. Fat is fuel for the body and also helps to absorb some vitamins that are in the foods we eat.

Unsaturated Fats – *the healthiest fats are found in plant foods — like olive oil, peanut oil, canola oil — and fish, like albacore tuna and salmon.*

Saturated Fats – *should be eaten less frequently and are found in meats and some dairy products, like butter and cheese. It's best to choose lower-fat dairy products and leaner cuts of meat.*

Trans Fats – *should be avoided. These types of fats are found in many processed and fried foods. They are listed as “hydrogenated” or “partially hydrogenated” oils on food ingredients labels.*

Dietary Questions To Ask Your Doctor



- “How much protein should I have in my diet?”
- “How many fruits and vegetables should I eat daily?”
- “What should my daily intake of minerals like sodium, calcium, phosphorus, and potassium be?”

Individual needs may differ, so talk to your doctor or dietitian.



Fat And Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a fatty substance found in the body. Your liver makes some cholesterol and the rest comes from the foods that you eat.

To control your cholesterol:

- Get a cholesterol screening (from a blood test).
- Eat foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Follow all of your healthcare team's suggestions, including those for diet and exercise.

Fluids

Your body is 60% water, so it is easy to see how important it is to “rehydrate,” or replace the water that your body loses throughout the day. Fluids keep your body from overheating and keep your organs in good working order. They also play an important role in making sure that oxygen and other nutrients get where they are needed.

During early CKD, there is usually no limit on the amount of fluids you can consume. Over time, your doctor may want you to reduce the amount of fluids you drink. Talk to your doctor about the amount of fluids that are right for you.

Sodium

Sodium is the main ingredient in table salt. It's a mineral found naturally in almost all foods. Too much sodium can cause high blood pressure.

Some high sodium foods: bacon, ham, fast food, sausages, pickles, lunch meats, some cheeses.

Calcium And Vitamin D

Your kidneys are where vitamin D needed for healthy bones is activated. When your kidneys do not function properly, calcium-rich foods, such as milk, cheese, and other dairy products, may not be properly absorbed by the body. Talk to your doctor or nurse about how to avoid bone disease and how to get the right amounts of calcium and vitamin D.

Phosphorus

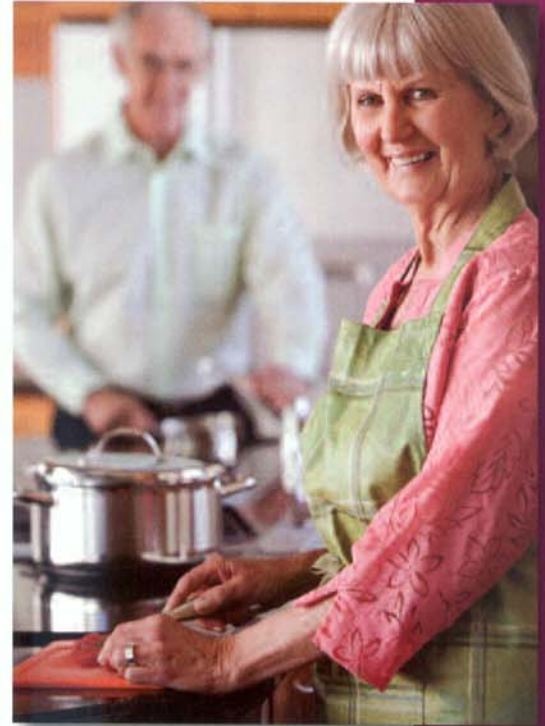
Phosphorus is another mineral found naturally in many foods. If you have CKD, phosphorus can start to build up in your blood, which can begin to weaken your bones. Your doctor may recommend that you limit your intake of phosphorus. Kidneys that are damaged cannot process phosphorus as efficiently as healthy kidneys.

Some foods high in phosphorus: dairy products, cola, chocolate, liver, beans, sardines, nuts.

Potassium

Potassium is a mineral found naturally in foods. It helps the body maintain water balance, blood pressure, and helps regulate the heartbeat. Both high and low levels of potassium are dangerous to patients with kidney disease. One way to control potassium is through your diet. Talk to your doctor or nurse about maintaining the correct potassium levels.

Some foods high in potassium: bananas, tomatoes, oranges, beans, nectarines, prunes, nuts, milk, potatoes, raisins, chocolate.



Stay Active

Besides diet, another key element to living with CKD is physical activity. Your heart, lungs, blood pressure, blood glucose, cholesterol, bowels — all of their functions may be improved by exercise.

If you have diabetes, you may need to adjust your medication and your carbohydrate intake to balance the effects of exercise.

Talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program to make sure that the level of activity is right for you.

Planning For Activity

There are a wide variety of ways to be active — walking, swimming, bowling, golfing, gardening. Focus on activities that you enjoy doing.

As long as it gets you moving, it will do you a world of good. The secret to a successful exercise program is to find something that you already enjoy doing and then do more of it. Being active for 5-10 minutes daily is a good way to get started.

Aerobics For Heart Health

Aerobic activity can be almost any activity, such as walking your dog, jogging, climbing stairs, biking, swimming, gardening, and even housework, as long as it increases your heart rate. Aerobic exercise is good for your health because it burns both glucose and fat. You should aim for 30 minutes of light aerobic activity each day, provided that your doctor approves.

Strength Training For Muscles

Strength training means using resistance, like weights, stretch bands, your own body weight, or water, to train and strengthen your muscles and build muscle mass. Strength training can easily be done in your own home.

Stretching For Flexibility

As you age, your muscles can get stiffer and may restrict what you are able to do. Simple stretching or activities such as dancing, yoga, tai chi, and Pilates can increase your flexibility and sense of well-being. When stretching, remember to include all of your muscle groups and to do the stretches smoothly, holding them for 10 to 30 seconds.

This guide does not replace advice from your doctor. Talk to your doctor about your symptoms and any health or treatment questions that you may have.

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Exercise Is Important— Some Reasons Why

- It helps you feel better, mentally and physically.
- It helps with weight loss and keeping weight off.
- It helps prevent diseases, including CKD, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis and arthritis.
- It helps prevent high blood cholesterol.
- It helps build strength and endurance and prevents injuries.

Source: National Kidney Foundation



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