

AFRICAN AMERICAN KIDNEY FRIENDLY DIET FOOD AND NUTRITION GUIDE

Learn how to enjoy traditional Black American foods while protecting your kidneys.

Food and Nutrition Guide

Food is an important part of Black American traditions, family life, and celebrations. If you have chronic kidney disease, you may still be able to enjoy many of your favorite foods. Small changes can help lower sodium, manage potassium and phosphorus, and keep meals flavorful.

A kidney dietitian can help you make a meal plan that fits your health needs, lab results, stage of kidney disease, treatment, and food traditions.

How food choices affect kidney health

When your kidneys are not working well, certain nutrients can build up in your body. This may lead to swelling, high blood pressure, bone problems, heart problems, or fluid buildup.

NUTRIENT	LIMIT	CHOOSE INSTEAD	WHY IT MATTERS
Sodium	Seasoning salts, salty meats	Garlic powder, onion powder, paprika, herbs, salt free spices	Helps reduce thirst, swelling, and fluid buildup
Potassium	Oranges, bananas, avocado, potatoes	Apples, grapes, pineapple, berries, cabbage, cucumbers	Helps protect your heart
Phosphorus	Nuts, chocolate, colas, processed foods	Hard candies, mints, water, unsweetened tea, fresh foods	Helps protect your bones
Protein	Processed meats, bacon, sausage, deli meats	Lean beef, chicken, turkey, fish, eggs	Helps lower sodium and phosphorus
Fluids	Colas and large portions of fluids if restricted	Water, unsweetened tea, lemon water, ginger ale if allowed	Helps prevent fluid buildup

Build a kidney friendly plate

Use this simple plate method to plan meals:

Half your plate: lower potassium vegetables

Examples: cabbage, cucumbers, onions, peppers, lettuce, cauliflower, mushrooms

One quarter of your plate: protein

Examples: baked chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, lean beef, tuna packed in water

One quarter of your plate: grains or starches

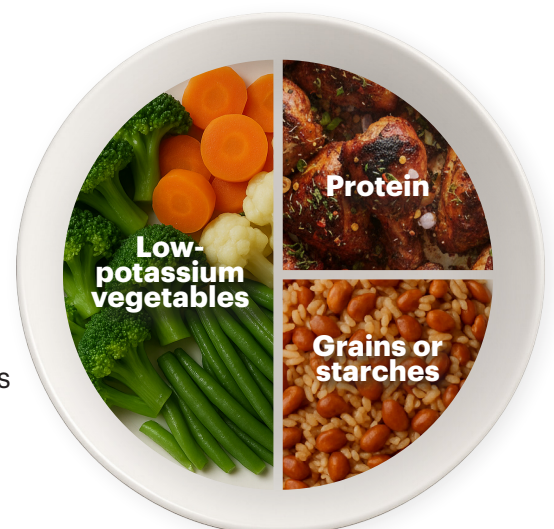
Examples: rice, pasta, grits, white bread, cornbread in small portions

Add fruit if it fits your meal plan

Examples: apples, grapes, pineapple, peaches, berries

Choose a drink that fits your fluid plan

Examples: water, unsweetened tea, herbal tea, or lemon water



Kidney friendly food swaps

TRADITIONAL DISH	CONCERN	KIDNEY FRIENDLY SWAP
Macaroni and cheese	High in phosphorus	Macaroni made with cream cheese or a lower phosphorus option
Cabbage with ham hocks	High in sodium	Cabbage sautéed with onion, smoked paprika, and low sodium broth
Cornbread dressing with liver	High in phosphorus	Cornbread dressing with ground beef, boiled chicken, or baked turkey
Potato salad	High in potassium	Macaroni salad with red onions, peppers, and cucumbers
Fried chicken	High in sodium and fat	Herb baked chicken with cabbage and rice
Salt heavy greens	High in sodium	Greens cooked with herbs, spices, onion, garlic, and low sodium broth

Flavor without the salt

You do not have to give up flavor. Try garlic powder, onion powder, paprika, cayenne, black pepper, herbs, lemon juice, vinegar, or salt free seasoning blends.

Do not use salt substitutes unless your doctor or kidney dietitian says they are safe. Many salt substitutes have potassium.

Tips for favorite foods

GREENS

Collard, turnip, and mustard greens may fit your meal plan in the right portion. To lower potassium, boil greens first, drain the water, then continue cooking with fresh water or low sodium broth.

BEANS AND PEAS

Beans, black eyed peas, and lentils can be higher in potassium and phosphorus. Soaking beans overnight and cooking them in fresh water may help lower potassium.

MEATS

Limit bacon, sausage, deli meats, and other processed meats. Choose fresh meats more often, such as chicken, turkey, fish, lean beef, or pork. Season with herbs and spices instead of salt.

DRINKS

Colas can be high in phosphorus. Choose water, unsweetened tea, lemon water, or other kidney friendly drinks that fit your fluid plan.

Planning for family meals and celebrations

Traditional foods are an important part of celebrations. You do not have to give them up. A few small changes can help:

Choose fresh or home cooked foods more often than packaged foods.

Questions to ask your kidney dietitian

- Which fruits and vegetables are best for my potassium level?
- How much protein should I eat at each meal?
- What seasonings can I use instead of salt?
- Do I need to limit fluids?
- How can I plan for holidays, church meals, family gatherings, or cookouts?

For more information, contact the National Kidney Foundation

Toll-free help line: **855.NKF.CARES** or email: nkfcare@kidney.org

The National Kidney Foundation wishes to thank its Council on Renal Nutrition (CRN) for the development of this fact sheet.



Learn more



KIDNEY.ORG



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