



THE KIDNEY FRIENDLY PLATE

A VISUAL GUIDE TO HELP YOU BUILD BALANCED KIDNEY FRIENDLY MEALS

1/2 Vegetables:

Fill half your plate with vegetables

- Beans
- Lentils
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Cucumbers

TIP:

Add a variety of colors and textures



1/4 Protein:

Choose kidney friendly proteins in moderate portions

Fill a quarter of your plate with proteins:

- Chicken
- Fish
- Eggs or egg whites
- Tofu
- Lean turkey

1/4 Grains and Starches:

Choose lower sodium and lower phosphorus grain options

- Rice
- Pasta
- Bread
- Tortillas
- Rice noodles



Fruit on the Side:

- Choose fresh fruits

Examples: apples, grapes, berries, pineapple, and peaches



Add Flavor

Enhance your meals with kidney friendly options

- Olive oil
- Herbs and spices
- Garlic and onion
- Lemon juice
- Vinegar
- Pepper



Fluids

Fluids follow your kidney dietitian's advice about the right amount of fluid for you

Key Reminders:

- Choose fresh foods most often
- Limit sodium
- Read labels and watch portion sizes
- Work with a kidney dietitian for plan that works for you

Your needs may change based on your stage of CKD, lab results, medicines, and whether you are on dialysis. Always check with your kidney dietitian for help

Kidney friendly eating is not the same for everyone. The nutrients below can affect your kidneys, heart, bones, and muscles, so ask your doctor or dietitian which ones matter most for you.

Nutrient	What It Does	Why It Matters in CKD	Food Sources to Limit	Food Sources to Include
SODIUM (Salt)	Helps maintain fluid balance and support nerve and muscle function.	Too much sodium can cause fluid retention, swelling, and high blood pressure.	Processed foods, canned soups, deli meats, salty snacks	Fresh foods, home cooked meals, herbs and spices
POTASSIUM	Helps nerves, muscles and heart work properly.	High potassium can cause dangerous heart rhythms (hyperkalemia).	Bananas, oranges, potatoes, tomatoes, dried fruit	Apples, berries, grapes, green beans, cabbage
PHOSPHORUS	Important for strong bones and cells.	Too much phosphorus can weaken bones, cause itching, and damage blood vessels.	Dark colas, processed cheese, packaged foods with phosphate additives	Fresh foods, rice milk not enriched, fresh fruits and vegetables
PROTEIN	Builds and repairs tissues and supports immune function.	Too much protein can increase waste buildup. Too little can cause muscle loss and weakness.	Large portions of meat, organ meats	The right portion of eggs, fish, chicken, beans, or tofu based on your care plan
FLUIDS	Helps maintain blood pressure, supports digestion, and removes waste.	Too much fluid can cause swelling, high blood pressure, and shortness of breath.	Large amounts of beverages, soups, ice cream if fluid restricted	The amounts of fluid recommended by your care team

Questions to Ask:

- What stage of CKD do I have?
- Can you refer me for Medical Nutrition Therapy?
- How much protein should I eat each day?
- What is my daily sodium goal?
- Are my potassium and phosphorus levels in range?
- Do I need a fluid limit?
- How should I change my plate if I start dialysis or receive a transplant?

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.



Nutrition Hub



Kidney Dietitian Directory

KIDNEY.ORG



This content is provided for informational use only and is not intended as medical advice or as a substitute for the medical advice of a healthcare professional.