

Healthy Eating After Kidney Donation

Thank you very much for your donation!

As you know, you can live very well with just one kidney for the rest of your life. You may notice that the following healthy eating advice is good for everyone in the family, not just you!

Here are just a few nutrition tips to help you do as well as possible.

- You need a **moderate** amount of protein—not a high protein diet. Protein in our foods creates some demands on kidneys. Now that you have one kidney, it's best to eat enough protein to meet your needs, but not much more.
 - How much protein is right for you? Healthy adults need 0.8 grams of protein for every kilogram (2.2 pounds) of their weight (adjusted for obesity, if necessary). For you, that means _____ grams of protein per day. For example:
 - _____ ounces of meat, fish, poultry a day (1 egg = 1 oz meat; ¼ cup tuna fish or shredded/diced meat or fish or chicken = 1 oz meat or about 7 grams of protein)
 - _____ cups of milk (1 ounce of cheese or ¼ cup cottage cheese or shredded cheese = 1 cup of milk or about 8 grams of protein)
 - _____ servings of nuts or beans (1 serving = ¼ cup nuts; ¼ cup cooked beans, with about 7 grams of protein)
 - For the first 6 to 8 weeks, as you recover from surgery, you need about 1-1/2 times as much protein as we describe above. This will help the healing process.
 - Plant proteins, such as kidney beans and other dried beans, lentils, nuts and seeds are “gentler” on your kidneys. Enjoy them! Avoid heavily salted nuts (try mixing salted nuts with unsalted nuts if you can't go completely salt-free).
 - Avoid high protein diets. As long as you enjoy a variety of foods, with 1 or 2 protein sources at each meal (milk for cereal at breakfast, 3-bean salad with lowfat cheese at lunch; and a medium serving of chicken or lean meat at supper) you do not need any special high protein shakes or powders.
- Keep your blood pressure under control. You can help by moderating your salt intake. Avoid adding salt when cooking; and avoid adding salt at the table.
- Keep your weight under control. Right now your body mass index (BMI) is _____, which means that you are at a good weight/ overweight/ obese. Try to keep your BMI where it is now or lower.
- A general multivitamin may be a good idea. Check with your primary doctor before using any vitamin or mineral supplements that provide more than 100% of the DRI (Daily Recommended Intake)—read the label for this information.

- Cooking with herbs is fine; this may help you reduce the amount of salt you add in food preparation. Likewise, herbal teas are fine. But be cautious about taking herbal pills, capsules, infusions, or tinctures. There is a short list that are known to be dangerous:
 - kava (toxic to the liver); Chinese herbs (poor quality control, have been linked with kidney and liver failure); and ephedra (identified in some cases of kidney failure; may cause heart palpitations). Talk to your personal doctor before starting any herbal medications.

MORE INFORMATION

If you want more information about healthy eating, we recommend 2 well-known models for **heart healthy eating**: The Mediterranean Diet and the DASH Diet (DASH = Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension). Here are some suggested books and web sites for more information.

The Mediterranean Diet

The Mediterranean Diet by Marissa Cloutier and Eve Adamson. New York: Avon Books—Harper Collins Publishers, 2004.

[The New Mediterranean Diet Cookbook: A Delicious Alternative for Lifelong Health](#) by Nancy Harmon Jenkins and Marion Nestle. New York: A Bantam Book, 2009.

The Mediterranean Diet: Beyond The Myth <http://www.mediterranean-food-recipes.com/> accessed April 2009

DASH (Dietary Approach To Stop Hypertension)

[The DASH Diet Action Plan: Based on the National Institutes of Health Research: Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension](#) by Marla Heller. Deerfield, IL: Amadon Press, 2007.

Your Guide To Lowering Your Blood Pressure With DASH

http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/new_dash.pdf accessed April 2009

- Eat lots of dark green leafy vegetables like spinach, chard, and bok choy.
- Eat a variety of colored vegetables including tomatoes and sweet peppers - they're high in antioxidants.
- Enjoy extra virgin olive oil.
- Try more fish and seafood.
- Be generous with herbs like oregano, rosemary, dill and mint; they make all foods, including vegetables, taste great.
- Snack on nuts and seeds. Traditional snacks include pumpkin seeds, almonds, walnuts, as well as dried and fresh fruit.

If you find yourself gaining weight, try some of these Internet **resources to get control of your weight...**

- www.nutrimaps.com
Calculate your body weight and how many calories you need to maintain and to lose weight.
- www.nhlbi.nih.gov/oei
Click on Aim for a Healthy Weight, then click on Portion Distortion quizzes to find out how much you really know about the food you eat
- www.cnpp.usda.gov
Click on MyPyramid and MyPyramid Tracker to help set goals you can live with
- www.dietfacts.com
Click on Restaurants at the top of the page to look up the calories in your favorite meal before you eat out.
- www.thedailyplate.com

Track what you eat, and make healthy choices for safe weight loss.