

# DIET AFTER TRANSPLANT

Your diet will change after your transplant. If your new kidney is slow to start functioning you may need to remain on your dialysis diet of low sodium, low potassium, low phosphorus, and limited fluid. However, as kidney function improves, you will be able to enjoy much more variety.

With normal kidney and pancreas function, you will need to drink 8 glasses of fluid, preferably water, daily. Other changes with improved kidney function include:

## 1. You can increase the variety of foods in your diet by enjoying foods from all major food groups.

In the first 3 months, you continue to need the same amount of **protein** that you needed during dialysis. After your incision has healed, your protein needs go down to about 2/3 of what you needed on dialysis, about \_\_\_ grams of protein a day. The best sources of protein are:

- Meats, fish, poultry
- Dairy products
- Eggs
- Nuts
- Dried beans, lentils, and peas
- Soybeans, soy milk, tofu

You will need to increase the **phosphorus** foods in your diet. The best sources of phosphorus are:

- Dairy products
- Nuts and nut butters
- Dried beans, lentils, and peas
- Seeds

You will be able to have normal amounts of potassium foods. The best sources of **potassium** are:

- Dark green leafy vegetables
- Tomatoes
- Oranges
- Milk
- Bananas
- Dried beans, lentils, and peas
- Potatoes
- Nuts and nut butters



It is also important to take in adequate **calcium** to protect your bones. The best food sources of calcium are:

- Dairy products (milk, yogurt, cheeses, puddings, ice cream)
- Dark green vegetables

**2. You should continue to limit your intake of sodium.** One of your medications, prednisone, can cause fluid retention. Limiting salt intake can help control bloating. Remember the words 'NO ADDED SALT' and let them guide you when you are at the stove and at the table. The following foods are high in sodium and should be limited or avoided as much as possible:

- Salt
- Cured meats (bacon, ham)
- Luncheon meats
- Canned or dried soups
- Ethnic foods: Chinese, Japanese, Mexican, Italian
- Sauces: Worcestershire, chili, soy, teriyaki
- Prepackaged casseroles
- Macaroni & cheese

**3. Heart healthy eating** is very important for anyone living with an organ transplant. We will give you some information about the Mediterranean Diet; this is just one approach to enjoyable low fat, low cholesterol meals.

**4. A common problem with transplant patients is weight gain.** It is not uncommon for someone to gain up to 10-15% of their weight. There are several reasons for this:

- You can eat your favorite foods again
- You have a much improved appetite
- You feel better, so eating is once again a pleasure

Achieving and maintaining a desirable weight is a major goal of your post-transplant nutrition care plan. *Obesity affects your self-image, contributes to high blood pressure and diabetes, and may lead to heart attacks and strokes.*

Weight management is achievable through exercise and diet. Exercise should be a planned program that is done on a regular basis, 4-5 times per week. Walking is an excellent way to exercise, is inexpensive and easy to do (unless you have a physical condition preventing you from walking).

**5. Finally, because of your medications, you have a lower than normal immune system. It is very important to avoid food-borne illnesses. *Safe food handling is a must!***

- Wash hands frequently in warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds at a time; always wash after using the bathroom and before handling your food
- Wash ALL fruits and vegetables under running water
- Separate raw produce from uncooked meats; use separate cutting boards if possible; clean cutting utensils between use on fresh produce and animal products
- Sanitize sinks and chopping boards with 1/2 teaspoon bleach in 2 cups water
- Use a fast check thermometer to check the temperature of meats; hamburger should be 160° F; Chicken 180° F
- Do not share utensils or food
- Do **not** eat the following foods **raw**:
  - Eggs
    - Avoid raw eggs in any form, including home-made eggnog, ice cream, cookie dough or cake batter; if you **MUST** have raw cookie dough, buy liquid pasteurized eggs in the grocery store.
  - Milk
    - Avoid unpasteurized milk and other unpasteurized dairy products.
  - Seafood
    - Such as some sushi and raw oysters
  - Sprouts
    - Such as alfalfa and clover sprouts
- You may purchase whole eggs at the grocery store but they must be cooked before you consume them
- Hot dogs, hamburger and sausage must be well cooked (160° F)
- Be careful of foods, such as yogurt, made with live cultures; check with the dietitian about when it is safe to enjoy yogurt with live cultures.