

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

Dietary advice following a kidney/kidney-pancreas transplant

One of the benefits of a successful kidney transplant is that you can enjoy a more varied diet.

Potassium

Successful transplants should mean that your previous potassium restriction is relaxed. Your dietitian and doctor can further advise you about how to reintroduce high potassium foods, such as bananas, coffee, nuts and chocolate.

Phosphate

Phosphate binders are stopped after a kidney transplant and you should no longer need to follow a phosphate restriction.

Salt

Continuing to follow a low salt diet is recommended to help prevent high blood pressure.

Calcium

Long term steroid use can weaken your bones and increase the risk of fractures. Sufficient calcium intake may help prevent this. Good sources of calcium include milk, cheese, yoghurts, tofu, calcium-enriched soya products (choose lower fat options if you are conscious of your weight).

Weight gain

Many patients gain weight after their kidney transplant. This can be caused by:

- Steroids, for example Prednisolone, which increase your appetite and make you eat more.
- Relaxation of dietary restrictions enables you to eat more freely, which can cause weight gain.
- Reduced activity immediately after transplant can promote unwanted weight gain.

If you are concerned about your weight, please ask to be referred to the dietitian in the renal transplant clinic.

Body Mass Index (BMI)

Your BMI indicates whether you are a healthy weight for your height.

To work out your BMI, use the following formula: **BMI = weight (kg) / Height² (m)**

BMI (kg/m ²)
Less than 16 severely underweight
16-19 underweight
20-25 normal range
25-30 overweight
More than 30 obese

Healthy balanced lifestyle

A healthy, balanced diet combined with exercise will help prevent unwanted weight gain, helping to keep you fit and healthy.

Fruit and vegetables

As your potassium restrictions are relaxed you will be able to enjoy a wider variety of fruits and vegetables in your diet. They are naturally low in fat and high in fibre so can help fill you up and prevent snacking on other high fat/high sugar foods. Try to include a variety of different coloured fruits and vegetables and aim for five portions per day.

Fat

There are two main types of fat; saturated and unsaturated:

- Saturated: animal fats such as fat in milk, cheese, cream, fat on meat.
- Unsaturated: There are two types of unsaturated:
 - Monounsaturated, for example olive oil.
 - Polyunsaturated fats such as sunflower oil, Omega 3 fish oils.

Saturated and unsaturated fats contain the same amount of calories (energy).

Therefore only use small amounts of fat in your diet. Saturated fats can increase your cholesterol levels, which may increase your risk of heart disease and stroke.

Unsaturated fats will not increase your cholesterol levels and so should be used in place of saturated fats wherever possible.

Tips

- Trim the fat off meat.
- Grill, bake or steam foods and avoid frying.
- Choose unsaturated fat spreads such as olive oil spreads instead of butter.
- Choose semi-skimmed milk or reduced fat dairy produce.

Sugar

Sugar provides energy, which if not used, will be converted into fat and stored in the body. If you are conscious of your weight, choose low calorie and sugar-free drinks and try to avoid sugary snacks. Go for high fibre options instead, for example fruit, teacake or toast.

Food hygiene advice post-transplant

After your kidney transplant you will have to take immunosuppressive medication, for example, Tacrolimus, Cyclosporin, Mycophenolate Mofetil or Azathioprine. These reduce the activity of your immune system to help prevent your new kidney from being rejected. Your immune system protects your body by fighting infections. When the level of your immune function is reduced, you will be more likely to catch infections. There is a risk of catching a food borne infection such as Listeria or Salmonella. You may not realise you have Listeria as some people have no symptoms. Others develop mild flu-like symptoms such as headache, temperature, sore throat and diarrhoea. More serious complications can occur if the Listeria infection develops further within your body. If you follow the advice below, you will reduce the risk of getting a food borne infection.

Some guidelines to help reduce your risk of infection from food and drinks:

Shopping

- Only eat food that is still within its use-by or best-before date.
- Purchase meat and fish from clean counters.
- Once purchased, put fresh foods into the fridge or freezer as soon as possible.

Food Preparation

- Keep pets out of the kitchen
- Wash hands and protect cuts and wounds before handling food.
- Wash and dry utensils, (for example knives) and work surfaces (for example chopping boards) between preparation of raw and cooked food to avoid cross-contamination.
- Wash all fruit and vegetables before preparation.

Cooking

- Thaw meat, fish and poultry in the fridge, not at room temperature.
- Cook meat, fish and poultry thoroughly.
- When reheating food, ensure it is piping hot.
- Never reheat food more than once.
- When using a microwave, follow the cooking and standing times and know the power rating.

Storage

- Regularly check the fridge/freezer temperatures. Ensure the fridge is 5°C or lower and the freezer is minus18°C or lower.
- Never refreeze thawed food.
- Cover all foods in the fridge.
- Store raw and cooked foods separately. Keep cooked food above raw in the fridge.

Eating out and going abroad

- When eating out or having a takeaway, ensure food is fresh and well cooked.
- Take extra care when abroad as food hygiene standards may be poorer. Try to use only reputable restaurants/eateries, avoid food sold on streets or markets.

Specific foods and drinks to avoid to help reduce your risk of food borne infections

The list of foods outlined below should be avoided by all transplant patients to minimize the risk of Listeria or Salmonella infection.

	Types to avoid	Alternative choices
Milk	Unpasteurised milk	Pasteurised milk Tinned milks UHT Dried milk
Yoghurts	Unpasteurised yoghurts Live yoghurts	Pasteurised yoghurts
Cheeses	Blue and soft cheeses, for example Brie, Camembert, Dolcelatte, Roquefort, Feta, Cambozola, Stilton, Danish blue. Soft sheep and goats cheeses.	Hard cheeses, for example Cheddar, Red Leicester (cut off any visible rind) Processed cheese such as Philadelphia, Dairy Lea, cottage cheese.
Eggs	Raw eggs Cracked eggs Dishes containing raw egg, such as homemade mayonnaise, mousse, hollandaise and egg nog.	Well cooked eggs/omelette Shop bought mayonnaise (tin/jar not 'deli' style)
Fruits and vegetables	Unwashed fruit and vegetables Shop bought salads such as coleslaw and potato salad	Washed fresh fruit Tinned, dried and stewed fruit Cooked fresh/frozen/tinned vegetables Washed salad items
Meat and fish	Raw fish, for example raw smoked salmon and sushi Raw shellfish such as steamed prawns/raw oysters Rare meats, for example steak tartar and pate	Well cooked fresh/frozen/tinned fish, shell fish and meat Bottled pate/paste
Ice cream	Soft ice-cream such as 'Mr Whippy' and 'McFlurry'	Ice cream from the freezer - serve and eat as soon as possible
BBQ		Ensure all food is thoroughly cooked and eaten as soon as possible

Contact details

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact your dietitian.

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

- Telephone: 01223 216655



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