Diet and kidney disease
A guide for people in the early stages of kidney disease

Enjoying a healthy diet is important for everybody. It is especially important for people with kidney disease. Your diet can help slow the progression of your kidney disease. What you eat plays an important role in:

- Maintaining/achieving a healthy weight
- Keeping blood pressure down
- Managing blood glucose levels if you have diabetes
- Managing cholesterol levels

Following a healthy diet and lifestyle is important for people in the early stages of kidney disease. Helpful hints for following a healthy diet are listed below:

- Eat regular meals
- Eat a variety of foods from all of the food groups
- Avoid adding salt and eating high salt foods

What is recommended?
There is no standard ‘kidney diet’. Your Dietitian will help design a healthy eating plan to meet your specific needs. These are some general guidelines.

1. Aim for moderate protein

Protein is found in:

- Meat, chicken, fish
- Eggs
- Dairy products
- Nuts, seeds and legumes

Protein is needed to build, repair and maintain body tissue such as muscle. As the body breaks down foods containing protein, it produces a waste product called urea which is excreted by the kidneys. Too much protein causes your kidneys to work harder and can decrease kidney function, and low protein diets can cause muscle loss and increase your risk of infection. Low protein diets are no longer recommended.

A person with chronic kidney disease needs a **moderate amount of protein from food each day**. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Light Meal</th>
<th>30g of protein food (eg slice of cold meat on your sandwich)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Meal</td>
<td>100-120g (such as a palm size piece of meat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks</td>
<td>1 cup of Milk + some cheese OR yoghurt</td>
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Discussing your protein needs with your renal Dietitian can help ensure you are having the right amount.

2. Sodium
Too much sodium, or salt, can lead to high blood pressure. It can also cause swollen feet and ankles. Sodium is only needed in small amounts and there is plenty in natural foods. You should aim to reduce your salt intake:

- Limit takeaways and processed foods – these all contain a lot of added salt
- Fresh is best - cook from fresh foods
- Choose low salt, reduced salt and no added salt alternatives instead of regular salted products
- Avoid using the salt shaker. Herbs and spices are a great way to add flavour.

Your taste buds will adapt to a low salt diet, so give it time.

3. Fluid
Fluid includes all liquids and anything that becomes liquid at room temperature e.g. water, ice, tea, coffee, milk, ice cream, custard, juice, soft drinks, cordial, soups, gravy, jelly, etc. The recommended amount of fluid for kidney disease is different for different people. It is important to check with your Doctor regularly about your fluid allowance.

You may need to cut down on how much you drink if you have:

- Swollen ankles, feet, hands or face,
- Shortness of breath,
- Or notice a drop in how much urine you pass.

4. Exercise
Regular exercise is important. It helps with:

- Blood pressure control
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Diabetes management
- Strength and fitness

It is recommended that all Australians exercise for 30 minutes most days of the week.

If you are unable to exercise for 30 minutes continuously then several shorter sessions a day is also beneficial. Good exercise includes walking at a pace at which you can talk comfortably. This could include mowing the grass, dancing, medium pace swimming or cycling.

Consult with doctor before starting any exercise.
Things I can do to improve my diet for early kidney disease:

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

For further information contact your Dietitian or Nutritionist: _____________________