Kidney disease: high energy eating

Poor nutrition is a common problem when you have kidney disease, especially if you are on dialysis. If you do not eat enough energy and protein from food, your body will break down energy stored in fat and muscle that cause muscle loss and weakness. If you are underweight or losing weight without trying the following high energy eating tips may help to boost your nutrition.

Ways to boost nutrition

1. Increase your energy intake

- Eat regularly - have three meals and three snacks every day.
- Eat foods high in protein and energy first - eat meat, chicken or fish before filling up on vegetables.
- Have fluids away from meals as they can fill you up. Include nourishing drinks such as a glass of milk or a berry smoothie.
- Add yoghurt or cream to cereal and stewed fruit.
- Eat dessert – try creamed rice or custard.
- Dress salads with olive oil, lemon juice, garlic and herbs.
- Fry boiled white rice in plenty of oil to make fried rice. Choose unsaturated oils that are listed below.
- Add olive oil or margarine to boiled pasta and vegetables.
- Spread extra margarine on your bread.
- Fry meat, fish or chicken in plenty of oil. Coat in breadcrumbs before frying to further increase energy. Choose unsaturated oils that are listed below.

2. Eat enough protein

Protein is used for growth and repair of body tissues. Protein is found in:

- Meat (beef, lamb, veal, pork)
- Poultry (chicken, turkey, duck)
- Eggs
- Seafood (fish, prawns, mussels, calamari)
- Legumes (lentils, soyabean, chickpeas). These may need to be limited as they are high in potassium (K+).
- Dairy products: milk, custard, yoghurt and custard. Choose salt reduced cheese.
Include at least:

- 100g (3oz) of meat, chicken or fish at your main meal
- 60g (2oz) at another meal each day
- If desired, replace 60g meat, chicken or fish with 2 eggs, 2 slices cheese or 1 cup legumes.

Note: Although protein is a good source of energy, excessive amounts of protein can speed up the progression of kidney disease in some patients who are not yet on dialysis. Check with your Dietitian about your individual daily protein needs.

3. Eat more unsaturated fat

Fats are a good source of energy. To help manage blood fats (cholesterol and triglycerides), choose unsaturated fats as listed below.

- Margarines based on canola, olive oil or seeds eg Flora, Sundew, Meadow Lea, Olive Grove. Choose salt free or reduced salt margarines.
- Monounsaturated oils eg olive, canola, peanut, macadamia oils.
- Polyunsaturated oils eg soyabean, sunflower, linseed, cottonseed, grapeseed, safflower oils.

4. Saturated fats (hard, white fats found in meat and chicken fat, cream, butter, palm and coconut) should be limited as they can increase blood fat levels.

5. Supplements

If you are finding it difficult to eat your usual meals, a range of supplements are available to help boost your intake. Please ask to speak to the Dietitian if you would like more information, or would like to try some supplements.