

Nutrition Immediately after a Kidney Transplant

This information applies to people in the early stage after a kidney transplant. It describes the role of nutrition to keep your new kidney healthy and recover from surgery. What you eat and drink will help you maintain hydration and reduce your risk of food poisoning.

Eating well for recovery

In the first six weeks after your transplant, it is important to eat enough protein to promote wound healing and prevent muscle loss. Eat regularly and include protein rich foods at each meal, for example:



- Legumes or pulses (beans, chickpeas, lentils, split peas, & soybeans)
- Nuts and seeds
- Fish, eggs, chicken, turkey, and lean meats
- Dairy and soy products

Steroid medications can increase your appetite and make it more challenging to maintain a healthy weight. Monitor your weight regularly and if you notice any significant changes, or if you are finding it difficult to eat well, let your Doctor, Nurse or Dietitian know.

Embrace dietary freedom!

After your transplant your new kidney will improve waste removal, so there is usually no need to continue any previous dietary restrictions. Your doctor will monitor your blood mineral results and let you know if any dietary changes or supplementation is required.



Phosphate is found in protein rich foods such as milk, cheese, yogurt, dairy alternatives, meat, chicken fish, beans and legumes, nuts & seeds.



Magnesium is found in green leafy vegetables, nuts & seeds & wholegrain breads, and cereals.



Potassium is found in meat, milk, processed foods, fruits and vegetables.



Your **fluid** needs after transplant increase to keep your kidney well hydrated. Drink plenty of water and check with your Doctor or Nurse about your daily fluid target.

What about my medications?

Avoid grapefruit/grapefruit juice as this can interact with immunosuppressant medicine. Check with your Doctor, Dietitian or Pharmacist before starting any vitamin, mineral, herbal or protein supplements.

Steroid medication (i.e. prednisolone) can increase your **blood sugar levels**. This may increase your risk of developing diabetes after transplantation. Eat regularly, choose healthy carbohydrate foods and limit foods high in added sugar. Scan the QR code to learn more about carbohydrate foods and the Glycaemic Index (*Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute*).



- ✓ Choose: wholegrain breads and cereals, fruit, yoghurt, legumes (chickpeas or lentils) and starchy vegetables.
- ✗ Have less: sugary drinks (soft drinks, cordial, juice, energy drinks), potato chips, cakes, biscuits, chocolates, and ice-cream.






Meal and snack suggestions

BREAKFAST	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Porridge: rolled oats made with milk, with fruit, honey, and nuts• Natural Greek style yoghurt with fruit, nuts or untoasted muesli, and honey• Wholegrain cereal (Weet-Bix, Vita Brits, All Bran) with milk/yoghurt and fruit• Wholegrain toast with hard boiled eggs OR baked beans OR peanut butter	
LUNCH and DINNER	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homemade salad with canned beans or legumes OR tinned fish• Sandwiches/wraps – wholegrain bread, roll, wrap or pita with homemade salad. Use canned fish, cheese, hummus, cooked/reheated chicken breast as fillings.• Vegetable soup, including chickpeas/lentils with vegetables, canned tomatoes.• Chicken breast: stir-fry, baked or grilled in extra virgin olive oil and mixed herbs with homemade salad or cooked vegetables and wholegrain bread or rice.	
SNACKS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Handful of unsalted nuts/seeds, muesli bar with nuts• Fruit (fresh and washed, canned, or dried)• Fresh and washed vegetable sticks with hummus• Natural Greek style yoghurt, glass of dairy or soy milk• Hard cheese OR tinned fish on wholegrain crackers• Roasted chickpeas/fava beans OR unsalted popcorn	A collection of images showing various snack options: a handful of mixed nuts and seeds, a muesli bar, a can of tinned fish, a stack of wholegrain crackers, a bowl of hummus with carrot sticks, and a bowl of popcorn.

Food safety after your transplant

While on immunosuppressant medication, you may be at an increased risk of food poisoning. The risk is highest in the early phase after a transplant, and with increased immunosuppression, or illness. Avoid high risk foods, cook foods well and practice good food hygiene. Scan the QR code for more details about Listeria and food (*Food Standards Australia New Zealand*).



	<p>High risk foods to avoid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raw or undercooked meats, eggs and seafood • Unpasteurised milk and unpasteurised milk products
	<p>Clean</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash hands, utensils, and surfaces before and after preparing food • Rinse all fresh fruits and vegetables before eating • Do not eat foods from damaged or faulty containers
	<p>Separate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use separate chopping boards and utensils for raw and cooked foods • Store raw foods at the bottom of the fridge
	<p>Cook</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep hot foods hot (above 60°C) and cold food cold (at or below 5°C) • Ensure cooked or reheated foods are piping hot throughout
	<p>Chill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defrost meals in the refrigerator or microwave • Refrigerate left over foods once the steam is gone

Take home messages

- Eating protein is important to help you recover after transplantation.
- Monitor your weight and contact your dietitian if there are significant changes.
- Enjoy more dietary freedom!
- For food safety: avoid high risk foods and practise good food hygiene.

For further information contact your Dietitian or Nutritionist: _____