

## Eating Well after a Kidney Transplant

This information is for people who have had a kidney transplant. What you eat after your transplant is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle in the long term.

### Maintaining a healthy lifestyle long term

Steroid medications can increase your appetite and make it more challenging to maintain a healthy weight. Many people struggle with unwanted weight gain after transplant. It is important to establish healthy eating habits and include regular physical activity. This can keep your kidney healthy and improve your wellbeing.

### Eat a variety of healthy foods each day

Following a Mediterranean style eating pattern may reduce the risk of developing diabetes and protect your new kidney. Include a wide variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, and pulses and reduce the amount of meat and processed foods you eat. These foods provide a broad range of antioxidants and are high in fibre.

Have plenty of  
vegetables and fruits

Eat protein foods

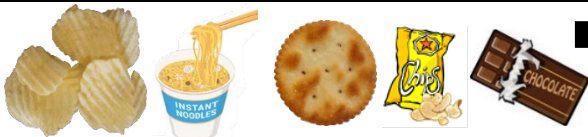
Make water  
your drink  
of choice

Choose  
whole grain  
foods

Image: Canada's Food Guide (Government of Canada) copied from version available at: <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>



## Eat plenty of vegetables, fruits, and wholegrain breads and cereals



- Limit intake of processed foods which contain long lists of ingredients you wouldn't commonly find in your kitchen.
- Limit takeaway foods.

**Avoid grapefruit/grapefruit juice as this can interact with immunosuppressant medicine.**



- Aim for 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables each day.
- Aim for a large variety including diversity of colours and types of foods within these food groups.
- Choose wholegrain breads and cereals, such as oats, barley and quinoa as well as wholemeal bread, pasta, rice and couscous.



## To avoid overworking your new kidney, eat moderate portions of protein-rich foods. This includes pulses, fish, eggs and lean chicken.



- Limit red meat to 1 to 3 meals per week (kangaroo, beef, lamb).
- Limit processed/deli meats, including bacon, ham, salami and sausages.



- Include legumes and pulses (chickpeas, kidney beans), 2 to 3 meals per week.
- Include fish and seafood 2 to 3 times per week.



## Include healthy fats and oils



Limit butter, cream and coconut products due to saturated fats. These may increase cholesterol in your blood and increase risk of heart disease.



- Include nuts, seeds, avocados, oily fish, olives and their oils for cooking.
- Extra virgin olive oil is recommended, and can be used for cooking, as a salad dressing, and drizzled over bread.



## Use herbs and spices to flavour foods instead of salt



- Most salt comes from packaged and processed foods.
- Limit adding salt to meals when cooking or at the dinner table.



- **Fresh** is best.
- Add flavour through herbs, spices, chili, garlic, ginger, lemon and vinegar.



## Fluids



- Reduce sugary drinks such as soft drinks, cordial and fruit juice.
- Limit alcohol intake.



- Make **water** your main drink of choice.
- Ensure you drink plenty of fluid, as advised by your kidney specialist.

## Protect your bones

Long term use of some immunosuppressant medications can make your bones weaker and more likely to fracture or break. It is important to include sources of calcium daily and be physically active. Aim for 2-3 serves of dairy or dairy alternatives daily, see the serving sizes pictured below.



Foods that contain calcium include:

- Dairy products (unflavoured milk, yoghurt, cheese). If you have high blood cholesterol, choose reduced fat dairy.
- Calcium fortified products (soy milk/yoghurt/cheese or cereals)
- Fish with bones (tinned salmon, sardines, mackerel)
- Nuts and seeds (unsalted Brazil nuts, almonds, sesame seeds)
- Vegetables (broccoli, spinach, Asian greens)

## Physical Activity is Vital!

Physical activity is important for maintaining good health, strength, and quality of life. Regular exercise can improve bone health and muscle mass. The more active you are, the more you will benefit.

- Aim for 30 minutes each day. **Start slowly.**
- Include muscle-strengthening activities twice a week.
- Reduce the time you spend sitting or lying down.
- Scan the QR code to view Australia's physical activity guidelines.

SCAN ME



## Some ideas to get started:

- Body weight exercises like push-ups, squats, or lunges at home.
- Gardening or housework that involves lifting, carrying, or digging.
- Join a social sporting team or walking group.
- For more specific advice, ask your doctor about a referral to an exercise physiologist.

## Sample meal and snack ideas for long-term health

### BREAKFAST

- Porridge: rolled oats made with milk, with fruit, honey and/or nuts.
- Natural Greek style yoghurt with fruit, nuts or untoasted muesli, and honey.
- Wholegrain breakfast cereal (Weet-Bix, All Bran, Sultana Bran) with milk/yoghurt
- Wholegrain toast with extra virgin olive oil and ricotta/cottage/feta cheese OR poached/boiled/scrambled egg OR grilled tomato and herbs OR baked beans.

### LUNCH

- Salad, including tomato and a dark leafy green such as spinach and canned beans or legumes, with extra virgin olive oil.
- Sandwiches/wraps – wholegrain bread, wrap or pita with salad. Use canned fish, beans, hummus, or chicken breast as a filling. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil.
- Wholemeal pasta with vegetables and extra virgin olive oil or tomato-based sauce. Try replacing meat with canned lentils or beans.

### DINNER

- Vegetable soup, including chickpeas/lentils with vegetables.
- Grilled salmon or tuna with steamed vegetables or salad and basmati rice.
- Homemade pizzas, with a wholemeal bread base and drizzled with extra virgin olive oil. Try vegetable toppings such as onion, eggplant, and zucchini.
- Chicken breast: stir-fry, baked or grilled in extra virgin olive oil and mixed herbs with salad or vegetables and wholemeal bread or rice.
- Small portion of lean beef, lamb, or kangaroo: stir-fry, baked or grilled in extra virgin olive oil with salad or vegetables and canned beans/lentils.

### SNACKS

- Small handful of nuts and/or seeds
- Fruit (fresh, canned, or dried)
- Fresh vegetable sticks with hummus or tzatziki
- Natural Greek style yoghurt
- Wholegrain crusty bread dipped in extra virgin olive oil or pesto.
- Avocado, boiled egg, hummus, or feta/ricotta cheese with wholegrain crackers
- Roasted chickpeas/fava beans or unsalted popcorn

*Acknowledgement: the included food, meal and snack recommendations were adapted based on materials developed for the LIFE, MedLey, AUSMED and MEDINA Mediterranean diet research studies in Australia*