

Preventing kidney stones

This guide explains what to eat and drink to prevent kidney stones. Kidney stones are hard crystals that form from minerals in your urine. They can develop when there is too little urine and too much mineral waste.

What can I do to prevent kidney stones?

Follow a healthy eating pattern

Following a healthy eating pattern lowers the chances of kidney stones. Eat a colourful mix of fresh wholefoods. Eat less processed and packaged foods. These foods often contain long lists of ingredients you wouldn't find in your kitchen at home.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Base your meals on fresh fruits and vegetables, wholegrains, beans, nuts, and seeds. Use the plate guide below.



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

Fruits and vegetables



Aim to fill at least $\frac{1}{2}$ the plate.

Include a mix of different types and colours.

Wholegrains



Aim for $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plate.

Couscous, polenta, quinoa, rolled oats, pasta, multigrain bread, muesli, rice.

Proteins



Aim for $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plate.

- 100-120g** or **palm size** cooked fish, poultry, or lean red meat.
- 1.5 cups** or **150-200g** of legumes, pulses, tofu, or falafel.

- Plan meals and snacks ahead of time. Create a weekly menu focusing on fresh ingredients. Choosing foods in season and from local markets can be a cheaper choice. Try including one new food each week.
- Cook in bulk and freeze for busy days.
- Make fruit and vegetables easy to grab. Wash, peel, and cut them up ahead of time.
- Aim for 2-3 serves of milk, yoghurt, cheese or alternatives per day.

Stay hydrated!

Drinking more fluids dilutes urine, reducing the risk of kidney stones forming. Aim for more than 3L or 12 cups of fluid each day. Water is best.

WHAT CAN I DO?



Spread out your fluids across the day.
Try having one glass each hour.



Carry a reusable water bottle with you when you leave the house.



Make it a habit to drink water with every meal and snack.



Swap sugary drinks like soft drinks and juices for water or sparkling water.
Add cucumber, mint, or berries for a different flavour.



Use apps and smart bottles to track and motivate you to drink.
Try setting reminders on your phone or smart watch if you have one.

Eat more fruits, vegetables, and plant-based proteins

Eating more fruits and vegetables reduces acid in urine, making it less likely for kidney stones to form. Large amounts of meat and eggs make urine more acidic, increasing kidney stone risk. Aim for a range of fruit (2 serves a day) and vegetables (5 serves a day).

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Fill half your plate with a colourful mix of your favourite fruits and vegetables.
- Aim to include fruits or vegetables with most meals.



Top cereal, porridge, yoghurt, or pancakes with fruit.
Snack on savoury muffins, fruit, baby carrots or cucumbers with hummus.

- Include **more** plant-based proteins. This includes tofu, tempeh, chickpeas, lentils, split peas, black beans, and kidney beans.



Enjoy at least one 'meat free' meal a week.
Try a Mexican dish with beans or a hearty lentil soup.



Try the *half and half* approach. Replace half your mince with lentils when making lasagne or bolognese. Replace half your chicken with black beans in Mexican dishes like tacos or burritos.

- Aim for 100-120g (palm sized) piece of fish, poultry, or lean red meat.
- Limit red meat to 1-2 times per week.

Reduce salt

Eating less sodium (salt) reduces calcium in your urine, making it less likely for kidney stones to form. Choosing **more** fresh wholefoods is part of a healthy eating pattern. Aim for less than 2300mg of sodium (1 teaspoon of salt) each day. Your taste buds will adapt in time!

WHAT CAN I DO?



Fresh is best. Many processed and packaged foods contain hidden salt. Eat fresh foods when you can. Eat fewer packet, canned, and takeaway foods. Swap chips, biscuits or crackers for fresh fruit, yoghurt, unsalted nuts or popcorn.



Cook with fresh ingredients. Swap pre-cooked rotisserie chicken for plain chicken breast. Swap sausages and deli meats for fish, eggs or lean mince.



Flavour foods with herbs and spices. Try lemon or lime juice, chili, pepper, garlic, and parsley. Check seasoning blends don't have added salt.



Choose low salt, reduced salt, and no added salt products when you can.

FAQ

Your questions, answered

Where can I learn more about eating less salt?



Scan the QR code or follow the link below for more information about reducing salt for kidney health.

https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0025/1370734/renal-reducing-salt.pdf

Should I drink lemon juice to help reduce stones?

There is not enough evidence to encourage drinking lemon juice to prevent kidney stones.

Should I take any vitamin or mineral supplements?

- Taking vitamin or mineral supplements may increase stone risk.
- Always talk to your kidney doctor, GP, or pharmacist before taking supplements.

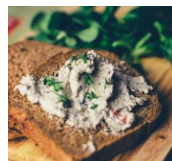
Can I drink a protein or whey supplement?

Current research has not shown that protein supplements are safe for people with kidney stones. This includes whey and creatine products. More research is still needed.

Putting it all together: meal and snack suggestions

These meal ideas include lots of fruits, vegetables, plant proteins, and calcium. Tick the ones you might like to try. Include a range of different foods!

Breakfast



- ☐ Porridge or wholegrain cereal with fortified soy or almond milk. Top with fruit and nuts.
- ☐ Omelette with spinach, feta, and mushrooms or Japanese-style okonomiyaki with low salt sauces.
- ☐ Unsalted baked beans or sardines on multigrain toast.
- ☐ Small tub of Greek yoghurt with fruit and muesli.
- ☐ Congee with dried shrimps and scallops, mushrooms, and herbs. Top with eggs.

Lunch



- ☐ Salmon sandwich and a glass of milk
- ☐ Salad vegetables with canned beans, legumes, or tuna. Use extra virgin olive oil.
- ☐ Quinoa and chickpea salad with kale. Add feta. Use a tahini dressing.
- ☐ Broccoli, white bean, and cheese soup.
- ☐ Vietnamese tofu noodle salad or tofu rice paper rolls.
- ☐ Roast vegetables in olive oil with cannellini beans and fresh herbs. Drizzle with hummus.
- ☐ Vegetable fritters made with broccoli. Serve with salad.
- ☐ Minestrone soup with beans or dahl.

Dinner



- ☐ Stuffed capsicums with beans, quinoa, spinach, and lean mince.
- ☐ Stir fry with tofu or tempeh, broccoli, and dark leafy greens. Top with sesame seeds. Use low salt soy sauce. Serve with rice or noodles.
- ☐ Chickpea curry with no added salt canned tomatoes, spinach, and basmati rice.
- ☐ Spinach and ricotta lasagne.
- ☐ Tacos/burritos. Replace half the chicken/beef mince with black/red beans or lentils.
- ☐ Fish stew with mussels, shrimp, coconut milk and yams. Use low salt broth and fresh herbs.

Snacks



- ☐ Trail mix with almonds, Brazil nuts and dried figs.
- ☐ Roasted chickpeas or fava beans.
- ☐ Smoothie with high calcium milk or yoghurt. Add spinach and almonds.
- ☐ Calcium-rich yoghurt with fruit and chia seeds.
- ☐ Wholegrain crackers with avocado and dukkah, hummus, or sliced cheese and cucumber. For a sweet option try cottage cheese and fruit. Use *Rice cakes, Corn thins, Vita Wheat, Ryvita*.
- ☐ Fresh vegetable sticks with hummus.

Disclaimer: The brands listed above are only some of the available products on the market. Information is true and accurate at the time of publication. Recipes and ingredients may have changed. Look at product nutrition labels for the most up to date information or ask your dietitian. NEMO has no sponsorship or affiliation with any of the above brands and/or products.

Take Home Messages:

- Stay Hydrated! Aim for more than 3L or 12 cups of fluid each day.
- Eat a range of fresh wholefoods. Base your meals on fresh fruits and vegetables, wholegrains, beans, nuts, and seeds. Reducing salt is part of a healthy eating pattern.
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, and plant-based proteins. Start with one meat free meal per week.

Further Information and Recipes

Scan the QR code to explore kidney friendly recipes.

Useful Websites, Recipes, and Apps for Kidney Health



https://www.health.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0016/1402360/resources-kidney.pdf

For more information, contact your dietitian or nutritionist _____



Got a moment? We would love to hear your thoughts. Email us or scan the QR code below.

NEMO

E nemo@health.qld.gov.au
W www.health.qld.gov.au/nutrition/patients



© The State of Queensland (Queensland Health) 2026.
creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/
Review date: March 2029

Disclaimer

This document was created by dietitians and nutritionists from NEMO. AI was used to simplify wording, edit images, and suggest improvements. All content was checked and approved by clinical experts. Visit: www.health.qld.gov.au/global/disclaimer



Feedback



Want more info?

