

## Healthy eating for peritoneal dialysis

Peritoneal Dialysis (PD) removes water and waste products via the abdomen. It only partially replaces the functions of the kidneys, but compared with Haemodialysis, it allows you to enjoy a relatively unrestricted diet. There are a number of issues relating to the food and drinks you eat that are important to consider.

The following information is the overall important messages for diet when on PD but at different times your Dietitian or Doctor may ask you reduce or limit certain foods. This can be conflicting and confusing at times. The reason for this is based on your monthly bloods results and how you are going on PD. Your Dietitian can answer questions you have about your diet.

### Key nutrition messages:

#### 1. Eat a nutritious and varied diet

A nutritious diet is one which provides enough of the nutrients you need without causing weight gain or weight loss. To achieve this:

- Limit takeaway or processed foods. These are high in calories, salt, saturated fats and minerals such as

potassium and phosphate which can be hard to manage when on PD

- Eat wholegrain foods or starchy vegetables at each main meal e.g. breakfast cereal, wholemeal/wholegrain bread, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous or oats
- Eat at least 2 pieces of fruit daily
- Eat at least 5 portions of vegetables daily
- Try to have a protein food at each main meal
- Aim to have 1-2 portions of low fat dairy or non-dairy source per day
- Limit high calorie foods that do not provide healthy nutrients e.g. chocolates, lollies, soft drinks, cordial, sweet cakes, pastries, fried foods, potato chips and corn chips. These foods are high in saturated fats, salt, added sugar and minerals such as potassium and phosphate. Avoiding foods that have large amounts of added sugars is especially important if you have diabetes.

#### 2. Monitor your weight

The PD fluid contains dextrose (sugar); your body will absorb some of this sugar which will provide extra calories. This



can cause unwanted weight gain, or can cause a decrease in appetite. It is important to continue to do some daily exercise to help unwanted weight gain and monitor what you eat.

Current Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Ideal Body Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Ensure you eat enough protein

Protein is an important building block of our immune system, helping us to heal and fight off infection. It also helps us to maintain or build lean muscle mass. Eating the right amount is important. The best sources of protein are:

- Meat, fish and eggs
- Milk and milk products
- Meat alternatives like legumes, lentils, nuts and tofu

Your Dietitian can advise you how much protein you need each day and if you need to increase how much you eat.

### 4. Limit salt (sodium) in your diet

Salt makes you thirsty and can give you a very dry mouth, which will make it difficult for you to keep to your fluid allowance. Try to limit salt in the cooking and at the table. Be mindful that foods labelled "reduced salt" can still contain high levels of sodium. Check the nutrition panel.

**Sodium (Na) content less than 150 mg per serve** is desirable.

Limit takeaway and processed foods, as they are traditionally high in salt. Choose fresh, home cooked meals to reduce the salt intake.

Avoid salty foods like:

- Processed meat (bacon, sausages), smoked fish or smoked meats
- Salted biscuits, nuts and crisps
- Packet and tinned soups, sauces

### 5. Monitor fluid intake from foods and drinks

It is important to cut back your fluid intake so that excess fluid does not build up in your body. If you drink too much you may need to use stronger bags to pull off the fluid. Having to use stronger bags means you absorb more calories (from the dextrose in the fluid) and makes weight gain more likely.

**Fluid includes all liquids and anything that becomes liquid at room temperature.** For example: water, ice, tea, coffee, milk, ice cream, iceblocks, custard, juices, soft-drinks, cordials, soups, gravy, and jelly.



Some solid foods, such as porridge, rice, pasta and fruit, contain large amounts of fluid. If you eat **large** serves of these foods, count these as part of your allowance.

Changes in your weight that occur over a couple of days are usually due to your fluid intake. Changes in your weight that occur slowly over longer periods of time

(weeks to months) are more likely to be changes in your actual dry body weight.

You may be able to drink up to approximately 1000ml (or 1 Litre) per day; however, this will be different for each person. Your Doctor or Dietitian can tell you how much fluid to cut back on.

### Hints for fluid control

Use jugs and measuring cups to accurately measure your fluid intake	Keep a moist face washer in the fridge or freezer and use it as a rub down to keep cool.
Spread your fluid allowance over the day - don't drink it all at once	Brush your teeth to freshen your mouth.
Drink from small rather than large cups	Suck on lollies or a slice of lemon instead of drinking. Try mints, peppermints or chewing gum.
Stay out of the heat. If you need to go outside, choose the cooler part of the day.	Keep lips from getting dry by using lip balm.
<b>Choose</b> foods low in salt - fruit, fresh vegetables, fresh meats, chicken, fish, eggs, porridge, rice, pasta and "low salt" or "no added salt" foods. Look for sodium content <b>less than 150 mg per serve</b> on the nutrition panel.	Freeze some of your fluid allowance. Ice or iceblocks, sucked slowly, last longer than a drink, and are better at quenching thirst. You can freeze water, lemon juice and soft drinks.  Remember that ice is fluid and should be measured e.g. 1 cup of ice equals ½ cup water.

## 6. Prevent constipation

This is important for your PD to work.

- Constipation can affect the positioning of the Tenkhoff tube and therefore how well you dialyse. By eating adequate fibre you can maintain good bowel habits. Fibre is found in wholegrain cereals and bread, fruit and vegetables.
- Ensure you have adequate fluid during the day as it helps soften the stool. This can be difficult if you are on a fluid restriction.
- Regular exercise also helps keep bowels regular. Just 30 minutes a day can help.
- Remember, when you are on PD your bowels need to open daily and need to be soft. **If you are experiencing regular constipation let your Doctor, Nurse or Dietitian know as some medications cause constipation.**

### **Other information that you may need to know:**

During your PD journey your Doctor or Dietitian may need to restrict minerals called potassium and phosphate. These minerals are in different foods we eat and drink.

## **Potassium in food**

Too much potassium is not usually a problem for people on PD, however it is important that you monitor your monthly blood results. Everyone is different and you may need to increase or decrease the amount of potassium you eat depending on your blood results.

High *and* low levels of potassium are **very dangerous**, and may cause your heart to beat irregularly and even stop beating.

High potassium foods are located in processed and takeaways foods or drinks as well as some fruit and vegetables. Your Dietitian can advise the best ways to reduce potassium.

## **Phosphate in food**

Phosphate is a mineral that combines with calcium to form the hard structure of bones and teeth. Normally the kidneys control the levels of phosphate in your blood, when your kidneys are not working the level of phosphate in your blood can build up. High levels of phosphate can cause severe itchiness, red eyes, brittle bones and painful joints.



The main way to control blood phosphate levels in kidney disease is with medication. Medications work by binding the phosphate in food so that less is absorbed from your intestine and it passes out in your bowel motions. Your Doctor will prescribe this medication. It is important to **take your phosphate binders** (Caltrate, Calsup, Alutabs, Renagel, Fosrenol) with food - especially foods high in protein. If you have snacks during the day, ask your Dietitian if you need to take extra tablets.

Fresh food is known to have less phosphate. Processed and packaged foods contain hidden phosphate additives that are easily absorbed. Your Dietitian can advise what foods to limit or provide recipes to try.

### **If you are losing weight**

Some people find that they feel too full to eat with the PD fluid on board. If you have

this problem, try eating smaller meals more often, rather than the traditional three large meals per day. Alternatively, you may find that draining the fluid out just before meals will help with improving your appetite.

If you are struggling with your appetite, feeling full or losing weight without trying speak with your Dietitian for further information.

Remember, what you can eat may change over time depending on your blood test results. This can be very confusing, so if you have questions or queries please contact your Dietitian.

Your Dietitian is:

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Contact Phone Number:

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