



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Nutrition and Dialysis

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

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# **Nutrition and dialysis**

Everybody's nutrition is important, but there may be a few additional points to consider whilst caring for a person requiring dialysis.

The type of diet that the person requiring dialysis may need to follow will depend on their individual needs. Their diet may change according to their appetite, blood results or how well they are feeling. The renal dietitians will keep you informed about any changes that may be needed to the person's menu or fluid intake.

## Salt and fluid

The kidneys normally maintain the right amount of water in the body. They do this by controlling salt balance. People requiring dialysis will gain fluid weight between dialysis treatments and most of this gain is linked with salt intake. People with a low salt intake gain less water than people with a high salt intake.

The best way to try and reduce any unpleasant symptoms during dialysis is to gain as little salt and water as possible between each treatment. Therefore, it is important to consider the salt content of foods offered.

The following tips may be of help:

Where possible, avoid using salt in cooking, this includes rock salt, sea salt and flavoured salts e.g. garlic salt.

Use different flavourings instead, e.g. pepper, herbs and spices or garlic

Salt substitutes, e.g. Lo-Salt or SoLo are not recommended

<b>Foods higher in salt</b>	<b>Lower salt alternatives</b>
Oxo, Bovril, Marmite, gravy granules, stock cubes	Offer as little gravy as is acceptable with meals
Some brands of Cornflakes, Rice Krispies, All Bran, Branflakes	Weetabix, Oatibix, porridge, Shredded Wheat, Sugar Puffs, Puffed Wheat, Muesli
Soup – canned, packet and instant	Homemade soups using low salt stock cubes
Foods tinned in brine, e.g. vegetables and pulses	Foods tinned in water
Bacon, ham, corned beef and other processed meats	Plain roast meat, e.g. beef, pork, chicken, lamb. Eggs
Smoked fish	Fresh, frozen, tinned fish, e.g. cod, haddock, salmon, tuna
Salted snacks such as crisps and nuts	Unsalted popcorn
Cheese – cheddar and cheese spreads	Maximum of 125g (4oz) hard cheese per week. Cream cheese, cottage cheese

# Fluid intake

Limiting salt intake should help people to control their intake of fluid, as they will not feel too thirsty. People on dialysis may have been advised to limit their fluid intake to a specific amount. This is usually calculated as 500mls plus the amount of urine passed in 24 hours.

Many people need to limit to less than 1000mls daily. This includes all hot and cold drinks, milk on cereal and wet foods such as soup and jelly. You will be given information on this if it is necessary but here are some general helpful hints:

Offer drinks in a small cup rather than a mug

Space out drinks throughout the day

Cold drinks quench thirst better than hot drinks

In hot weather ice cubes can be a refreshing alternative to a drink. Try making these with fruit squash (sugar free if needed)

Citrus flavours help to stimulate saliva production – fruit, lemon sweets or chilled slices of orange or lemon can help

Add salad to sandwiches to add moisture

**Please note:** If a person requiring dialysis is prescribed nutritional supplement drinks, it is important that these are offered as prescribed and taken within their fluid allowance.

# Practical aspects of caring for people requiring dialysis

The dialysis day can be very long and tiring, which can disrupt eating patterns. During dialysis people will be offered biscuits with a drink but meals may be missed so it can be more difficult to maintain good nutrition. Below are some tips to help people eat as well as possible on these days.

If an early start is required, breakfast may be missed.	Offer a small, easy to eat breakfast, e.g. bread and jam, cereal and milk, breakfast bars or biscuits.
If a later start is required, lunch and evening meal may be missed.	Offer a larger breakfast, perhaps include eggs as well as cereals and toast.
The length and timing of the dialysis session may mean that up to two meals are missed on dialysis days.	Unless it has been advised not to eat on dialysis, a small pack up would be helpful, e.g. sandwich, fruit, plain sponge cake, unsalted crispbreads, crackers or popcorn.
Missing meals can be a problem due to timing of dialysis.	Swapping main meals and snacks around may help, or people may find it easier to manage small, frequent meals and snacks throughout the day with

	the 'little and often' approach.
On returning from dialysis, appetites may be reduced due to tiredness.	Offer a snack meal in the evening if this is preferred, e.g. omelette, egg on toast, sandwich, and offer nourishing puddings. Softer foods are sometimes managed better, e.g. fish in sauce, cottage pie.

# Poor appetite

If people have a poor appetite, the following ideas may help to ensure they maintain good nutrition:

Softer foods may be easier to manage e.g. cottage pie, fish in sauce, casserole, and omelette.

Small, frequent meals and snacks throughout the day may be more manageable than large meals.

Small servings may help to prevent meals being too daunting. You can always offer second helpings.

You may find it is useful to fortify food with high calorie options, such as:

- Butter or margarine
- Vegetable/olive/sunflower oil
- Full cream milk
- Cream
- Jam
- Honey
- Yoghurt

These foods can be added easily to sandwiches, mashed potato, vegetables, sauces, meat and fish dishes and puddings.

Taking the little and often approach, snacks can be useful. Ideas include:

- Sponge cake
- Croissant
- Scone
- Biscuits
- Pancakes
- Teacake with butter/margarine
- Cereal/cereal bar
- Fresh or tinned fruit (drain off juice) with cream
- Crackers, crisp breads, bread sticks with cream cheese/cottage cheese
- Thick and creamy yoghurt
- Plain popcorn (unsalted)

Nourishing puddings can be useful as they are often high in calories. These can be offered as a snack if not managed straight after a meal. Ideas include:

- A slice of cake
- Rice pudding
- Sponge and custard
- Mousse
- Ice cream
- Crumble/pie
- Crème caramel
- Individual trifle

These foods are suitable for most people, including those with diabetes. If you have queries about any other dietary considerations, please contact the renal dietetic team.

# Potassium and phosphate

Some people on dialysis may need to restrict their intake of potassium and/or phosphate. You will be given further information on each of these nutrients if it is necessary for your resident.

In general the following foods which are high in potassium should be avoided or taken occasionally only:

- Soup
  - Salt substitutes such as Lo Salt and Solo
  - Fruit juice and smoothies
    - diluted squash can be offered instead
  - Coffee
  - Dried fruit such as raisins and sultanas and foods that contain dried fruit e.g. fruit cake, mince pies.
  - Potato crisps
  - Unboiled potatoes such as jacket potatoes and chips
    - boiled or mashed potato, pasta, rice, noodles, or couscous are good alternatives.
  - Unboiled vegetables such as steamed/roasted
    - boil and drain away water instead
  - High potassium vegetables for example raw spinach, celery, mushrooms, raw cabbage, tomatoes and tomato puree
  - High potassium fruits for example bananas, apricots, prunes, melon, rhubarb.
  - apples, pears, berries (strawberries, raspberries, blueberries) can be taken instead.
- Drain off the fruit juice from tinned fruit.

## **Phosphate binders**

Some people may be prescribed tablets called phosphate binders to help control the level of phosphate in the blood. It is important that these tablets are taken with food. The type, dose and timing will be provided on the prescription.

## **Further information**

If you require further information about your diet, please speak with your kidney doctor who can refer you to a kidney specialist dietitian.

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

The Nutrition and Dietetics Department, Tel: 01904 725269, Email: [yhs-tr.yorkdietitians@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.yorkdietitians@nhs.net).

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net).

An answer phone is available out of hours.



# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

[www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/)

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