

# Eating out or taking out on a kidney friendly diet



Working together for better patient information

Eating out or having a takeaway are both fun activities, and an important part of many social occasions. Having chronic kidney disease (CKD) does not mean you have to miss out.

Whether you need to be careful with your food choices depends on how often you eat out, and your individual diet needs, which can be affected by your stage of CKD and your blood results.

**If you HAVE NOT been advised to limit any foods**, then healthy eating advice is all you need. See the **Healthy eating section**.

**If you HAVE been advised to limit the amount of salt, phosphate, potassium or fluid in your diet**, you might find the **Menu options section** helpful as well. It gives more information on food you might find in different types of restaurants.

If you are unsure, talk to your kidney healthcare team.



## Healthy eating

Meals out and takeaways tend to have more salt, fat, sugar and larger portions than you would choose at home.

If you only eat out or take out for special occasions (for example less than once a week), enjoy your meal without concerns.

If you eat out more often, you might consider ways to make your choices healthier.

### Watch out for salt

- Take care with savoury nibbles like crisps, olives or nuts.
- Ask for your meal to be cooked without salt.
- Ask for your sauces to be served separately, so you can choose how much to add.
- Choose foods which are already flavoured with herbs and spices.
- Taste your meal before adding any extra salt at the table.

### Watch the fat, sugar and portion sizes

- Look at menus online or call the restaurant, so you have an idea of menu choices.
- Choose a restaurant with a big range on the menu to give you more flexibility.
- Many restaurants provide nutritional information on their menu, either online or at the restaurant. You can look out for salt or calorie information in the menu items.
- You could choose a starter with a side dish for your main course if you know the portions are too big for you.
- You could share a sweet course.



## Menu options

**If you have been advised to limit salt, phosphate, potassium or fluid,** then you may find the information below helpful.

Talk to your kidney team if you are unsure how strict you need to be with your diet when eating out occasionally. It would be a shame to be more restrictive than you need to be, if your individual needs mean that sometimes you can choose your favourite foods and enjoy them without any problems. Your kidney team will know all about your recent blood results and your treatment, so they are the best people to advise you. The information below will help you make safe choices if you do need to be especially careful.

**Remember, your dietary needs are individual to you.** You might not need all the information below. The choices for each type of meal show which foods are high in salt, phosphate, potassium or fluid. Just follow the information for the particular diet you have been recommended.



## Planning tips

- Look at a restaurant's menu online. See if they offer foods which you like that also fit in with your special dietary requirements.
- Remember to take your phosphate binders with you (if you have been prescribed them).
- If you need to limit potassium or fluid, try to be more careful with high potassium foods or fluids throughout the rest of the day. This will mean you can be more flexible with your meal out.

## At the restaurant

The restaurant staff may be able to help you by:

- Telling you what is in the dishes, and swapping ingredients for you
- Cooking your food without salt
- Boiling your vegetables instead of steaming them (if you need to limit potassium).

If you need to eat less potassium, choose rice, pasta, noodles, couscous or bread. Chips, roast potatoes and jacket potatoes are the highest potassium choices.



## Breakfast

Best lower salt options	If advised to eat less phosphate you may wish to limit:	If advised to eat less potassium you may wish to limit:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plain cereals, for example: cornflakes, puffed rice, wheat flakes, Weetabix, Shredded Wheat</li> <li>• porridge</li> <li>• fresh fruit – consider limiting high potassium fruits if needed</li> <li>• plain yogurt</li> <li>• toast, muffins, bagels – wholemeal where possible</li> <li>• egg</li> <li>• pancakes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• crumpets</li> <li>• bacon</li> <li>• sausage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• granola or muesli with dried fruit</li> <li>• tomatoes</li> <li>• mushrooms</li> <li>• hash browns</li> <li>• chipped potatoes/waffles</li> <li>• fruit juice</li> <li>• coffee</li> </ul>

## Afternoon tea/snacks

Best lower salt options	If advised to eat less phosphate you may wish to limit:	If advised to eat less potassium you may wish to limit:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• finger sandwiches</li> <li>• mini quiche or pasties</li> <li>• plain cakes and sponges</li> <li>• scones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hard cheese such as cheddar*</li> <li>• pâté*</li> <li>• shellfish*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dried fruit</li> <li>• chocolate</li> <li>• potato skins</li> <li>• biscuits and cakes containing chocolate or dried fruit</li> </ul>

\*These are high in salt.

## Pub meals and American restaurants

Ask for your meal to be cooked with less salt

Best lower salt options	If advised to eat less phosphate you may wish to limit:	If advised to eat less potassium you may wish to limit:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chicken with rice, mash or boiled potatoes, salad or boiled vegetables</li> <li>• pasta dishes</li> <li>• salads</li> <li>• burgers (meat, lentil, bean or soy)</li> <li>• meat balls and pasta</li> <li>• risotto</li> <li>• shepherd's pie and meat free versions</li> <li>• toad in the hole and meat free versions</li> <li>• sausage and mash and meat free versions</li> <li>• Yorkshire pudding</li> <li>• fish pie, battered fish with mashed or boiled potatoes or a small portion of chips</li> <li>• sandwich or baguette</li> <li>• soup</li> <li>• bread sticks</li> <li>• onion rings</li> <li>• sponge cakes</li> <li>• ice cream or gelato</li> <li>• small amounts of condiments such as ketchup, mayonnaise, BBQ sauce, garlic dips</li> <li>• fruit pie or crumble</li> <li>• popcorn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pork pie*</li> <li>• sausage roll*</li> <li>• gammon*</li> <li>• panini or sandwiches with both cheese and meat such as bacon and Brie*</li> <li>• shellfish*</li> <li>• macaroni cheese*</li> <li>• milkshake</li> <li>• chocolate cakes and hot chocolate</li> <li>• cola-style drinks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tomato, mushroom or leek and potato soup</li> <li>• potato snacks such as crisps*</li> <li>• chips</li> <li>• jacket potatoes</li> <li>• milkshake</li> <li>• chocolate cakes and hot chocolate</li> <li>• fruit juices or fruit juice-based drinks, such as smoothies</li> </ul>

\*These are high in salt.

## Middle Eastern, Greek and Lebanese

Ask for your meal to be cooked with less salt

Best lower salt options	If advised to eat less phosphate you may wish to limit:	If advised to eat less potassium you may wish to limit:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• falafel</li><li>• hummus</li><li>• seeds (for example, tahini)</li><li>• olive oil</li><li>• pitta and breads</li><li>• honey</li><li>• mint</li><li>• parsley</li><li>• rice</li><li>• couscous</li><li>• meat, poultry, fish and vegetable dishes</li><li>• carrots</li><li>• onion</li><li>• cabbage</li><li>• fava beans (broad beans)</li><li>• pastry</li><li>• dolma (stuffed vine leaves)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• donor kebab*</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• okra</li><li>• tomato</li><li>• beetroot</li><li>• spinach</li><li>• chard</li><li>• coconut</li><li>• dried fruit</li><li>• aubergine for example, baba ganoush</li></ul>





## Indian

Ask for your meal to be cooked with less salt

Best lower salt options	If advised to eat less phosphate you may wish to limit:	If advised to eat less potassium you may wish to limit:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• rice cooked with less salt</li><li>• meat or fish curries cooked with less salt</li><li>• vegetarian curries containing lentils or chickpeas cooked with less salt</li><li>• chapati</li><li>• naan breads</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• milky sweets</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• spinach</li><li>• tomatoes</li><li>• karela</li><li>• okra</li><li>• potato</li><li>• foods containing chickpea flour</li><li>• coconut (for example, coconut cream)</li></ul>

\*These are high in salt.



## Chinese and Thai

Ask for your meal to be cooked with less salt

Best lower salt options	If advised to eat less phosphate you may wish to limit:	If advised to eat less potassium you may wish to limit:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• rice or noodles</li><li>• meat, poultry, fish and vegetable dishes cooked with less salt</li><li>• seitan</li><li>• tofu</li><li>• beansprouts</li><li>• pak choi or bok choy</li><li>• mangetout</li><li>• spring onion</li><li>• cabbage</li><li>• carrot</li><li>• spring rolls</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• shellfish*</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• chips</li></ul>

\*These are high in salt.



## Italian

Ask for your meal to be cooked with less salt

Best lower salt options	If advised to eat less phosphate you may wish to limit:	If advised to eat less potassium you may wish to limit:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• bread and dough balls</li><li>• gnocchi, rice or pasta dishes</li><li>• meat, poultry, fish and eggs</li><li>• vegetables and salads</li><li>• pizza</li><li>• ice cream or gelato</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• breaded mozzarella sticks*</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• mushrooms</li><li>• tomatoes</li><li>• chips, fried or roasted potatoes</li><li>• desserts containing coffee or chocolate such as tiramisu</li></ul>

\*These are high in salt.



## Mexican

Ask for your meal to be cooked with less salt

Best lower salt options	If advised to eat less phosphate you may wish to limit:	If advised to eat less potassium you may wish to limit:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• tortillas</li><li>• jalapeno poppers</li><li>• chicken quesadilla with dips such as sour cream or onion</li><li>• fajitas or tacos</li><li>• tortillas</li><li>• burrito</li><li>• tamale</li><li>• dishes based on meat or fish</li><li>• bean wrap</li><li>• bean chilli</li><li>• churros or doughnuts</li><li>• ice cream or gelato</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• cheese*</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• guacamole</li><li>• tomato salsa dips</li><li>• chips</li></ul>

\*These are high in salt.



## Spanish

Ask for your meal to be cooked with less salt

Best lower salt options	If advised to eat less phosphate you may wish to limit:	If advised to eat less potassium you may wish to limit:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• meat, fish, poultry and egg dishes</li><li>• Spanish omelette</li><li>• paella</li><li>• churros</li><li>• cheesecake</li><li>• ice cream or sorbet</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• shellfish*</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• patatas bravas</li><li>• chips</li><li>• potato croquettes</li><li>• tomatoes</li><li>• chocolate</li><li>• caramel</li></ul>

\*These are high in salt.

## Caribbean

Ask for your meal to be cooked with less salt

Best lower salt options	If advised to eat less phosphate you may wish to limit:	If advised to eat less potassium you may wish to limit:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• peas</li><li>• rice</li><li>• patties</li><li>• marinated meats and fish</li><li>• boiled vegetables (Jamaican Hard Food)</li><li>• biscuits and wafers</li><li>• sugar dumplings</li><li>• plain or cream cakes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• shellfish*</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• baked, fried or steamed vegetables</li><li>• plantain</li><li>• yam</li><li>• potatoes</li><li>• okra</li><li>• coconut</li><li>• banana</li><li>• dried fruit</li></ul>

\*These are high in salt.



## What about alcohol and soft drinks?

There is no safe limit of alcohol. To reduce your risk of harm, it is best to drink fewer than 14 units a week. Units are a way of representing a drink's alcohol content. For example, a small glass (125ml) of wine is 1.5 units and a bottle (330ml) of lager/beer/cider is 1.7 units.

**([www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/calculating-alcohol-units](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/calculating-alcohol-units)).**

Always check with your healthcare team to make sure it is safe for you to drink alcohol.

If you have been advised to limit your fluid intake, alcohol counts as part of your fluid allowance.

If you have diabetes and CKD, talk to your diabetes healthcare team about alcohol.

If you have been advised to have less potassium in your diet, the following table is a guide on the potassium content of popular drinks.



### Drink options lower in potassium

#### **Alcoholic:**

- spirits, for example: gin, vodka, whisky, brandy
- mixers including lemonade and tonic water
- specialist spirits, for example saki, SangSom, tequila, ouzo, limoncello, Cointreau and schnapps
- one small (125ml) glass of dry white wine, white wine spritzer, sparkling white wine or rosé wine
- half pint of lager, beer or low alcohol lager or shandy
- fortified wines including sherry, port or vermouth
- cream liqueurs, including Baileys

#### **Soft drinks:**

- lemonade, orangeade, cherryade, ginger beer or ginger ale
- fruit squash or cordial
- tonic or sparkling water
- soda water

### Drink options higher in potassium

#### **Alcoholic:**

- stout, ale, bitter, and cider
- red wine

#### **Soft drinks:**

- Fresh fruit juice or fruit juice-based drinks, for example J20, smoothies
- Cola drinks including Coca Cola and Pepsi (and diet versions)
- Soda water
- Sports drinks, for example Lucozade Sport or Powerade

Cola drinks including Coca-Cola and Pepsi (and diet versions) are high in phosphate.

# Where can I find out more information?

- **Kidney Kitchen from Kidney Care UK** - [www.kidneykitchen.org](http://www.kidneykitchen.org)  
Healthy, delicious multicultural food for every stage of kidney disease. Approved by kidney dietitians and suitable for (and enjoyed by!) everyone.
- **Kidney Care UK** - [www.kidneycareuk.org](http://www.kidneycareuk.org)

For specific advice about eating out with kidney disease, please talk to your doctor or dietitian.

## Contact us to see how we can support you

Call free on  
**0808 801 00 00**

*(Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm)*

[support@kidneycareuk.org](mailto:support@kidneycareuk.org)

[www.kidneycareuk.org](http://www.kidneycareuk.org)



If you have feedback about this leaflet, please let us know at: [feedback@kidneycareuk.org](mailto:feedback@kidneycareuk.org)

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