



# How can a renal dietitian help me?

Patient Information



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## What does a dietitian do?

A dietitian is a health care professional who promotes well-being and reduces the risk of nutrition-related problems by giving practical and individual advice on food choices. Dietitians have a science-based degree in dietetics and are highly trained to assess, treat and give guidance to people, using the most up-to-date scientific research.

Food, drink and lifestyle choices are very important for people with kidney disease, and dietitians can help support you to make the best choice to support your health.

**Dietitians that help support people with kidney disease are called renal dietitians**

## How can a renal dietitian help me?

**Changes to your diet can often help the treatment and complications of kidney disease.** A renal dietitian can give you food-related advice that suits your individual lifestyle and medical condition. Individualised information will be provided to you. This may vary, depending on the cause and stage of your kidney disease, the treatment that you are receiving and your blood test results.

## What will happen if I see a renal dietitian?

**If you see a renal dietitian, they will ask you about the types and amounts of food and drinks you eat.** They will ask you questions about your current medical conditions (for example if you have diabetes) and what medicines you are taking. They will look at blood test results to help develop a plan which is best for you. Together, you can discuss any changes which would reduce the impact of your condition on your health.

## Do I need to change what I eat because of my kidney disease?

If you are already eating a healthy, balanced diet there is no need to make any changes to what you eat or drink unless this has been discussed with a renal dietitian, nurse, pharmacist or doctor.

Dietary advice will be different for everyone. It is important that you do not change your diet just because someone else has or you have read something on the internet. Everyone has different needs, even if they have the same medical problem, so it is important that you only follow advice which has been given to you personally.

If you are advised to change your food or drinks this will be monitored over time to make sure it is still right for you.

## What kind of dietary advice may be helpful for people with kidney disease?

A renal dietitian will discuss many different aspects of food and drink with you. This could include advice on how to regulate the amount of salty foods you eat and how to control your potassium and phosphate levels. They can support you in working out the amount of fluid you drink, which is particularly important with advanced kidney disease. Your renal dietitian can also help if you would like to lose weight, have diabetes, a poor appetite or have specific dietary requirements (such as being a vegetarian or vegan).

**You can still enjoy a healthy and varied diet with kidney disease.**



## How can I see a renal dietitian?

You can ask your doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional to refer you to a renal dietitian. Not every hospital has specialist renal dietitians but they will have a dietitian who will be able to give you initial dietary advice.

## Where can I find out more information?



- NHS Choices: Living with Kidney Disease  
[www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Kidney-disease-chronic](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Kidney-disease-chronic)
- NHS Choices: Live Well  
[www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Pages/Livewellhub.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Pages/Livewellhub.aspx)
- Patient View: [www.patientview.org](http://www.patientview.org) - online access to your health records. Ask your renal unit for details about how to join
- Food with Thought:  
[www.kidney.org.uk/documentlibrary/food\\_with\\_thought.pdf](http://www.kidney.org.uk/documentlibrary/food_with_thought.pdf)
- Kidney Care UK: Living with Kidney Disease  
[kidneycareuk.org/about-kidney-health/living-kidney-disease/lifestyle](http://kidneycareuk.org/about-kidney-health/living-kidney-disease/lifestyle)



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

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3 The Windmills,  
St Mary's Close,  
Turk Street,  
Alton GU34 1EF

 [kidneycareuk.org](https://www.facebook.com/kidneycareuk)

 [@kidneycareuk](https://twitter.com/kidneycareuk)



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

 0117 4148152

 The Renal Association  
C/O UK Renal Registry,  
Learning and Research Building,  
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