

## Healthy eating during dialysis

To keep you well during each dialysis session, it is important to be careful with when, how much and what you drink and eat.

### Preventing low blood pressure (hypotension)

Eating large meals and drinking extra fluid immediately before and during dialysis may cause problems with hypotension. When you eat, blood goes to the intestines to help digestion, and the blood pressure can fall suddenly – especially during dialysis.

- Some people may need to wait until after dialysis before having a snack, meal or even extra fluids
- Avoiding large fluid gains between dialysis sessions may also help
- Check with your Renal Nurse if you are unsure how much you can drink during dialysis

### Avoiding high potassium

Keeping potassium levels safe in your blood is important to prevent complications.

- If you tend to have high blood potassium levels, you may need to limit potassium rich foods like dried

fruit, milk & yoghurt, chocolate, nuts and potato crisps

- It may be helpful to speak with your Dietitian if you need more information on managing your potassium levels

### Avoiding cramps during and after dialysis

Did you know that eating lots of salt can make you thirsty and cause large fluid gains in between dialysis sessions?

- You can reduce the risk of cramps by eating less salty foods and avoiding excessive fluid gains between dialysis sessions
- Your Dietitian can help you manage your salt and fluid intake

### Food, fluids & dialysis: did you know?

It is not advisable to eat foods high in potassium or drink extra fluid during dialysis because:

- It takes 10 hours for fluid to be absorbed from the intestine into your blood
- It takes at least 5 hours for potassium to be absorbed into your blood – even longer for high fat foods (e.g. chocolate, crisps)



- An average dialysis session lasts 3-5 hours, so excess fluid and potassium consumed during dialysis will **not** be dialysed off instantly, but absorbed into your blood **after dialysis** has finished
- You cannot **always** be confident that a good flow rate and effective dialysis will be achieved

### What can I eat on dialysis?

Everyone is different and some people will be more affected from hypotension and high blood potassium levels than others. Good nutrition is very important for haemodialysis. Some people find they can only eat very small amounts during dialysis. Suitable snacks include:

- Sandwiches with meat, fish, chicken, egg or cheese (Remember to take phosphate binders as these foods are high in phosphate)
- Plain butter or sponge cake
- Scones, pikelets
- A serve of lower potassium fruit (e.g. an apple, a mandarin or small tub tinned fruit)
- Crackers e.g. *Saos*, *Premium*, rice cakes, rice crackers, cracker bread with margarine, jam or cheese
- Sweet, jam or cream-filled biscuits

**For further information contact your Dietitian or Nutritionist:**

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