

Moderate Kidney Damage

Few symptoms may be present from this degree of kidney failure, despite progressive damage which could lead to dialysis and often kidney transplantation. People with moderate kidney damage usually need 0.6 - 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of ideal body weight each day. So for a person whose ideal body weight is 70 kilograms, the daily protein intake needs to be around 50 grams.



Severe Kidney Damage

By this stage many people restrict their own protein intake because they have a reduced appetite for protein foods. It is possible to reduce some of the symptoms of severe kidney damage by restricting the daily protein intake to around 0.6 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight – or 40 grams for a person of 70 kilograms. This usually means eating smaller quantities of foods containing protein and larger amounts of “free foods”. As kidney failure worsens, there may be further restrictions in the diet. Once dialysis is started, your protein intake can return to normal.



WHY GOOD NUTRITION IS IMPORTANT

Good nutrition is vital in people with kidney damage. Your health will worsen if you do not receive the right amounts of energy foods and protein in your diet.

The risk of malnutrition is highest in those people getting close to needing dialysis, when symptoms of nausea and loss of appetite are common. A poor diet can increase the likelihood of developing infection. Following your diet long term can be difficult but will help in your overall treatment.

The renal dietitian has an important role in the management of your kidney disease. It is best to contact your dietitian whenever a change in your dietary treatment is required and then to maintain regular visits for assessment of your nutrition. The dietitian can help you plan your meals incorporating your preferred foods.

A renal cookbook, available from your dietitian or the Renal Resource Centre will help keep your diet enjoyable.



Other Pamphlets available:

- Diabetes and Your Kidneys
- So You Have Kidney Disease
- From Me to You: So Your Relative Needs a Kidney
- IgA Nephropathy
- Nephrotic Syndrome in Children
- Glomerulonephritis
- Polycystic Kidney Disease
- Rehabilitation and Exercise

for Renal Patients

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Telephone: (02) 9362 3995 or (02) 9362 3121
Facsimile: (02) 9362 4354
Toll Free: 1800 257 189
www.kidney.org.au/renalresources

Supported by the Australian Kidney Foundation

A large, stylized illustration in blue ink. It shows a hand holding a bowl filled with various food items: a piece of meat, a fish, a carton of milk labeled 'MILK', and several eggs. Below the bowl, the words 'LOW PROTEIN DIETS' are written in large, bold, red capital letters. Underneath that, the words 'Renal & Disease' are written in a similar red font, with an ampersand between 'Renal' and 'Disease'. The background of the illustration consists of diagonal hatching lines.

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INTRODUCTION

As part of the medical treatment for your kidneys, you may have been advised to follow a low protein diet. Protein in the food we eat is converted by the liver into urea and other toxins which are normally removed from the body in the urine. These substances accumulate if the kidneys are damaged.

In the early stages of kidney damage, a high protein intake may cause the kidneys to overwork - hyperfiltration - leading to damage of the kidney filters. In the later stages, the build up of toxins can contribute to symptoms of kidney failure such as nausea, tiredness, easy bruising and bleeding. A reduction in dietary protein can help to reduce early kidney damage in some cases and the symptoms associated with more severe kidney failure. There are other very important factors which can speed up kidney damage. High blood pressure, smoking, high blood cholesterol and high blood sugar levels in people with diabetes, are amongst these.

Many Australians eat more protein than they need. The amount of protein in your diet will now be reduced to a level to meet your body's needs, but a level not too high for your kidney function.

PROTEIN

Protein is required for building muscles and repairing body tissues, so a certain amount of protein will need to be included in your diet. Most foods contain protein and some are high in protein. These high protein foods are - meat, chicken, fish, seafood, eggs, milk, cheese and yoghurt. These foods come from



animal sources. It is still important to eat some of these foods every day because they contain high quality protein which is efficiently used by the body. However you will be asked to eat only small quantities of these high protein foods.

Breads, cereals, rice, pasta and some vegetables contain smaller amounts of protein and will be restricted to a certain degree. This protein is used less efficiently by the body.

Your low protein diet will be worked out individually to include the right combination of these foods.

To understand the amount of protein in food, these are a few examples:

Food	Grams of Protein (approx)
30g cooked meat e.g. one cutlet	8
1/2 cup milk	4
1 slice white bread	2



"FREE FOODS"

It is vital to avoid becoming undernourished and underweight! To compensate for the reduction in protein in your diet you will need to have high energy (high calorie) foods. Since there is little restriction on these, they are called "free foods".

Examples of "Free Foods"

Sugar/Glucose
Jam/Honey/Marmalade
Syrups/Toppings/Icings
Iceblocks
Soft drinks/Cordials
Boiled lollies/Jelly beans/Similar lollies



"you'll be the only person on the block on a jelly bean diet!"

Cornflower/Sago/Tapioca/Arrowroot
Polyunsaturated and Monounsaturated
Margarines, Oils and Salad Dressings
"Low protein products" (consult your dietitian)
A dietitian can give you more ideas to help you maintain a healthy weight.



STAGES OF KIDNEY DAMAGE



The degree of kidney damage can be measured from blood tests and can be classed as mild, moderate or severe.

Your diet will depend on:

- your degree of kidney damage
 - your weight
 - your physical activity
 - and other health problems such as diabetes
- CHILDREN in particular NEED PROTEIN FOR GROWTH and should not have significant protein restriction. The information in this pamphlet is therefore (AO) - Adults Only advice.



Mild Kidney Damage

People with mild kidney damage may be commenced on a mild protein restriction of around 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of ideal body weight per day. For a person whose ideal weight is 70 kilograms, this would mean 55-60 grams of protein. Many people have no symptoms at this stage. Good blood pressure control and diet may help prevent or delay progression to the next stage.

