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# **MONTANA KIDNEY NEWSLETTER**

## **How do I know how much protein to eat?**

Protein needs change throughout the course of chronic kidney disease (CKD). If you recently learned that you have kidney disease, your doctor may have told you to start following a low-protein diet. You may be wondering how you will be able to adjust this new diet to your usual cooking or meal planning habits. Here are some tips.

| CKD (not on dialysis) | Dialysis       | Transplant       |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|
| lower protein         | higher protein | moderate protein |

## **Why is a low protein diet necessary?**

Protein is needed for growth, upkeep and repair of all parts of your body. Protein comes from the food you eat. When your body digests it, a waste product called urea is produced. If the kidneys are not working well, urea can build up in the bloodstream and may cause loss of appetite and fatigue. Eating a low-protein diet will reduce the workload on the kidneys so that the remaining healthy part of the kidney does not have to work so hard.

### **There are two main sources of protein:**

#### **1. Plant protein** such as whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes (beans, peas, lentils)

- A diet with more fruits and vegetables and less or no animal protein may lower acid in the body to promote kidney health.
- You will need to eat a variety of plant protein every day as part of a balanced diet to get the complete protein you need.

#### **2. Animal protein** such as fish, poultry, eggs, meat, and dairy products.

- A diet high in animal proteins like red meat and low in fruits and vegetables increases acid in the body. Acid buildup in the blood due to kidney disease is called [metabolic acidosis](#).
- You may need to limit dairy products because they are high in phosphorus and they may cause your blood phosphorus level to be too high.

## How can I stretch the protein I eat?

You can "extend" protein in recipes so that a small amount seems more satisfying.

### Sandwiches:

- Use thinly sliced meats - it looks like more.
- Fill out sandwiches with lettuce, alfalfa sprouts, cucumber, chopped celery, apple, parsley or water chestnuts.

### Soups:

- Use lower protein foods such as milk substitutes for cream soups, or rice or pasta to make soups more filling without using too much protein.

### Main Dishes:

- Think of vegetables and grains as the "main dish" and meat as the "side dish" or complement to your meal.
- Try kebabs, using small pieces of meat and more vegetables.
- Make fried rice with vegetables and less meat or shrimp.
- Toss together a chef's salad using crisp vegetables and small strips of meat and egg.
- When making casseroles, decrease the amount of meat; increase the starch, pasta or rice and use low sodium soups when the recipe calls for soup.
- Add low-protein pastas and breads to keep protein within limits.
- Use stronger-tasting cheeses such as sharp cheddar, parmesan or romano - you'll need much less to get the same amount of flavor.

### Calorie Boosters

When you lower the amount of protein in your diet, you may also find the calories are lower. It is especially important to get enough calories to maintain a healthy weight at this time. In order to make up those extra calories, try some of these suggestions:

- Increase heart-healthy fats: polyunsaturated vegetable oils (made with corn, cottonseed, safflower, soybean or sunflower oils), olive oil, mayonnaise-type salad dressings.
- Use candy and sweeteners: hard candy, gum drops, jelly beans, marshmallows, honey, jam and jelly, and sugar (if you are diabetic, consult your dietitian).
- Use canned or frozen fruits in heavy syrup.



## Modifying Recipes to Lower Protein

Here are some examples of how you can take a typical recipe and modify it to lower the protein content:

| <b>Festive Turkey Salad</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| (Original Recipe)  | (Modified Recipe)  |
| 3 cups chopped cooked turkey breast without skin<br>1/4 cup diced celery<br>1 cup raw red delicious apples with skin<br>1/4 cup coarsely chopped pecans<br>3 tbs. low calorie mayonnaise<br><br>(Cranberry French Dressing)<br>1/4 cup jellied cranberry sauce<br>1/8 tsp. salt<br>1/8 tsp. paprika<br>1/8 tsp. dry mustard<br>1/8 tsp. pepper<br>1 tbs. vinegar<br>2 tbs. vegetable oil<br><br>Yield: 4 one-cup servings with 2 tbs. dressing on each serving | 1 1/2 cups chopped cooked turkey breast without skin<br>1 cup diced celery<br>3 cups raw red delicious apples with skin<br>1/4 cup coarsely chopped pecans<br>3 tbs. regular mayonnaise<br><br>(Cranberry French Dressing)<br>1/2 cup jellied cranberry sauce<br>1/8 tsp. paprika<br>1/8 tsp. dry mustard<br>1/8 tsp. pepper<br>1 tbs. vinegar<br>2 tbs. vegetable oil<br><br>Yield: 6 one-cup servings with 2 tbs. dressing on each serving |
| Combine first five ingredients in large bowl. Stir well. Cover and chill thoroughly. Serve with Cranberry French Dressing. Dressing: Combine first four dressing ingredients in small bowl, stirring with a wire whisk until smooth. Gradually add vinegar to cranberry mixture, alternately with oil, beginning and ending with vinegar. Stir well with each addition.  |  |

**Source: Kidney Health, National Kidney Foundation**



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