



NUTRITION GUIDE

Nutrition Guide for Kidney Disease

A Practical Guide for Older Adults, Carers & Families

*Simple, practical nutrition advice to help support kidney health
with confidence.*

By InHome Nutrition Dietetic Services

Contents

A quick guide to what's inside.

01 Understanding Kidney Disease

02 Why Nutrition Matters

03 Do I Need a Low-Potassium Diet?

04 Understanding Potassium

05 Practical Food Swaps

06 Building a Kidney-Friendly Plate

07 Protein: How Much Do I Need?

08 Reducing Sodium

09 Hydration Tips

10 Questions to Ask Your Healthcare Team

11 When to See a Dietitian

SECTION 1

Understanding Kidney Disease

What do your kidneys do?

Your kidneys help to:

- Remove waste products from your blood
- Balance fluids in your body
- Regulate minerals such as potassium and sodium
- Support healthy blood pressure
- Produce hormones that help make red blood cells and keep bones healthy

When kidney function declines, your nutrition needs may change.

SECTION 2

Why Nutrition Matters

The right nutrition can help you:

- Maintain strength and muscle
- Reduce the risk of malnutrition
- Support blood pressure and blood glucose management
- Manage symptoms such as poor appetite
- Support your overall health and wellbeing

SECTION 3

Do I Need a Low-Potassium Diet?

Not everyone with kidney disease needs to reduce potassium.

A low-potassium diet is usually recommended only if:

- ✓ Your blood potassium is high (hyperkalaemia).
- ✓ Your healthcare team advises you to reduce potassium.

Your dietitian will consider:

- Blood test results
- Kidney function (eGFR)
- Medications
- Other medical conditions
- Your usual eating pattern

SECTION 4

Understanding Potassium

Potassium is important for:

- ♥ Heart function
- Muscle function
- ⚡ Nerve function

Many nutritious foods naturally contain potassium. Examples include:

- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Legumes
- Dairy
- Nuts

These foods should not be restricted unless advised by your healthcare team.

SECTION 5

Practical Food Swaps

Small, practical changes that add up — without giving up the foods you enjoy.

Fruit

Instead of	Reduce to	Try
Large banana	½ banana	Apple, pear, grapes

Starchy foods

Instead of	Reduce to	Try
Large potato	Small potato	Rice, pasta, noodles

Healthy fats

Instead of	Reduce to	Try
Whole avocado	¼ avocado	Cucumber or salad

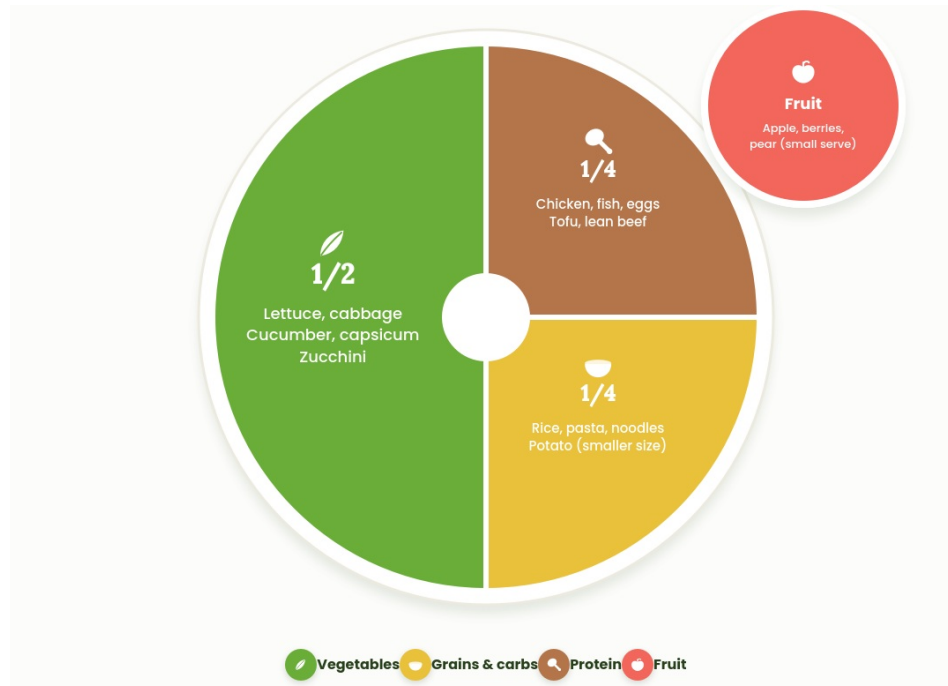
Sauces

Instead of	Reduce to	Try
Tomato paste	Smaller amount	Garlic, herbs, lemon juice

SECTION 6

Build a Kidney-Friendly Plate

A simple way to picture a balanced meal is to split your plate into quarters and halves, like this:



Fill **half your plate** with lower-potassium vegetables such as lettuce, cabbage, cucumber, capsicum and zucchini. Use **one quarter** for a protein source like chicken, fish, eggs, tofu or lean beef, and the remaining **quarter** for a grain or carbohydrate food such as rice, pasta or noodles – or a smaller serve of potato. Round out the meal with a small side of fruit, such as an apple, berries or a pear.

This is a general guide. Your dietitian can tailor the portions and food choices to your kidney function, blood test results and personal preferences.

SECTION 7

Protein: How Much Do I Need?

Protein is an important nutrient that helps to:

- Maintain muscle strength
- Support recovery and wound healing
- Keep your immune system healthy

Good sources of protein include:

- Fish
- Chicken
- Eggs
- Tofu
- Lean meat
- Milk, yoghurt and cheese
- Legumes (if suitable for your individual needs)

Your protein needs are unique

The amount of protein you need depends on:

- Your stage of kidney disease
- Whether you are on dialysis
- Your age and nutritional status
- Your overall health and medical conditions

Don't reduce protein without speaking to your healthcare team. Eating too little protein may increase the risk of muscle loss, frailty and malnutrition — especially in older adults.

General nutrition focus at different stages of kidney disease

Situation	General nutrition focus
Early CKD (Stages 1–3)	Enjoy a balanced diet with an appropriate amount of protein while managing blood pressure, blood glucose (if applicable) and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
Advanced CKD (Stages 4–5, not on dialysis)	Protein intake may need to be adjusted to help reduce the workload on the kidneys while still meeting your nutritional needs. This should be guided by an Accredited Practising Dietitian.
Dialysis (Haemodialysis or Peritoneal Dialysis)	Protein needs are usually higher to replace protein lost during dialysis and help maintain muscle strength and overall health.

Remember: Two people with the same stage of kidney disease may have different protein needs. Your dietitian will consider your blood test results, kidney function, weight, appetite, muscle mass, medications and overall health to develop a nutrition plan that's right for you.

SECTION 8

Reducing Sodium

Too much salt can increase blood pressure and put extra strain on your kidneys.

Try to:

- ✓ Flavour meals with herbs and spices.
- ✓ Choose fresh foods more often.
- ✓ Limit processed and packaged foods.
- ✓ Read food labels and compare sodium content.

SECTION 9

Hydration

Most people should aim to drink enough fluid to stay well hydrated.

However, some people with kidney disease may need to limit fluids.

Always follow the advice of your healthcare team.

SECTION 10

Questions to Ask Your Healthcare Team

- ✓ What stage is my kidney disease?
- ✓ Do I need to reduce potassium?
- ✓ How much protein should I eat?
- ✓ Should I limit sodium?
- ✓ How often should my blood tests be checked?
- ✓ Should I see a dietitian?

SECTION 11

When to See a Dietitian

A dietitian can help if you:

- Have recently been diagnosed with kidney disease.
- Have high potassium.
- Have diabetes and kidney disease.
- Are eating less than usual.
- Are losing weight without trying.
- Feel unsure about what foods are right for you.

♥ Final Message

Every kidney is different.

The best nutrition plan is one that is personalised to you.

Don't remove healthy foods or make major dietary changes without first speaking to your healthcare team.

About InHome Nutrition Dietetic Services

At InHome Nutrition Dietetic Services, we provide evidence-based nutrition care for older adults through:

 Home Visits  Telehealth Consultations

We support clients, carers and families to make practical nutrition changes that fit their health needs, lifestyle and food preferences.

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