

Getting ready for your first dietitian visit when you have chronic kidney disease (CKD)



What is a dietitian?

Registered dietitians (RD) or registered dietitian nutritionists (RDN) are trained experts on diet and nutrition who can help you make healthy changes. They can help you make a **kidney-friendly eating plan** to meet your specific needs.



Scan the QR code to learn more about making a kidney-friendly eating plan

Your eating plan may limit certain foods to prevent things such as fluids, potassium, salt (sodium) or phosphorus from building up in your body.

Meeting with a dietitian will help you to:

- Better manage your CKD
- Learn how to enjoy your favorite foods
- Have more energy to do all the things you enjoy

Some people may call themselves a “nutritionist,” but may not have any training or certifications in nutrition. Make sure you find someone with “RD” or “RDN” in their title.

How can I find a dietitian?

Ask your doctor for a referral or use the **Find a Nutrition Expert** tool. To use this tool:

- 1 Go to: eatright.org/find-a-nutrition-expert
- 2 Select “**In-Person**” or “**Telehealth**”
- 3 Enter your zip code or city and state
- 4 Check the box to agree to the terms and conditions
- 5 Click “**Find Now**”
- 6 Filter for “**Specialty**”
- 7 Select the box “**Kidney Disease and Renal**”

Your health insurance may cover the cost of your dietitian visit, especially if you have Medicare. Insurance coverage is different depending on your plan, so contact your insurance company and ask about your specific plan.

Get ready for your first dietitian visit

Prepare ahead of time:

- Write down what you eat for 2-3 days before the visit
- Look up some **Kidney Kitchen recipes** that you are interested in making



Scan the QR code to find recipes, cooking demonstrations, guides and more at Kitchen.KidneyFund.org

Bring these items:

- Your most recent lab report
- Something to take notes with to write down helpful tips your dietitian gives you
- A list of medicines and supplements you are taking (for example, vitamin A 3,000 IU per day)
- A list of all your doctors with contact information
- A list of your health conditions, including any food allergies and dietary restrictions

Write down your questions – here are some sample questions to get you started:

- My favorite food is potatoes, can I still eat them?
- What is phosphorus?
- Why is phosphorus important in my eating plan?
- How much fluid should I drink per day?

• **Question:** _____

• **Question:** _____

• **Question:** _____

What to expect when you meet your dietitian

- **Your dietitian will ask questions to learn about you.** This information helps them give recommendations that are just for you.
- **Your dietitian will help you come up with personalized goals to protect your kidneys.** Change can be hard! Work with your dietitian to make sure your goals are realistic. Small and steady changes can lead to long-term success.

Example goals for your kidney-friendly eating plan:

- I will swap my potato chips for unsalted nuts once per day
- I will eat fruit as a snack at least once per day
- I will buy a large water bottle to help track my fluid intake each day

After the visit

Start working at the goals you discussed and make sure to schedule a follow-up visit with your dietitian.

Following a kidney-friendly eating plan can be hard!

Do not feel discouraged if you do not meet a goal. Talk to your dietitian about it and explore why it was hard to meet that goal. Keep working together to get past the challenges.

Before you know it, you will be on your way to healthier kidneys and a healthier you!