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PHOSPHORUS AND YOUR CKD DIET

What is phosphorus?

Phosphorus is a mineral found in your bones. Along with calcium, phosphorus is needed for building healthy strong bones, as well as keeping other parts of your body healthy.

Why is phosphorus important to you?

Normal working kidneys can remove extra phosphorus in your blood. When you have Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) your kidneys cannot remove phosphorus very well. High phosphorus levels can cause damage to your body. Extra phosphorus causes body changes that pull calcium out of your bones, making them weak. High phosphorus and calcium levels also lead to dangerous calcium deposits in blood vessels, lungs, eyes, and heart. Phosphorus and calcium control is very important for your overall health.

What is a safe blood level of phosphorus?

A normal phosphorus level is 3.5 to 5.5 mg/dL. Ask your doctor or dietitian what your last phosphorus level was and write it here _____ .

Will dialysis help with phosphorus control?

Yes. Dialysis can remove some phosphorus from your blood. It is important for you to understand how to limit build up of phosphorus between your dialysis treatments.

How can I control my phosphorus level?

You can keep you phosphorus level normal by understanding your diet and medications for phosphorus control. Your dietitian and doctor will help you with this. Below is a list of foods high in phosphorus.

HIGH PHOSPHORUS FOOD TO LIMIT OR AVOID

Beverages

ale	beer
chocolate drinks	cocoa
drinks made with milk	dark colas
canned iced teas	

Dairy Products

cheese	cottage cheese
custard	ice cream
milk	pudding
cream soups	yogurt

Protein

carp	crayfish
beef liver	chicken liver
fish roe	organ meats
oysters	sardines

Vegetables

dried beans and peas:

baked beans	black beans
chick peas	garbanzo beans
kidney beans	lentils
limas	northern beans
pork ' n beans	split peas
soy beans	

Other foods

bran cereals	brewer's yeast
caramels	nuts
seeds	wheat germ

whole grain products

What are medications for phosphorus control?

Your doctor may order a medicine called a phosphate binder for you to take with meals and snacks. This medicine will help control the amount of phosphorus your body absorbs from the foods you eat. There are many different kinds of phosphate binders. Pills, chewable tablets, and powders are available. Some types also contain calcium, while others do not. You should only take the phosphate binder that is ordered by your doctor or dietitian.

Write your phosphate binder here: _____ .

Directions: _____ .

What do I do if my phosphorus level is too high?

When your phosphorus level is too high, think about your diet and substitute lower phosphorus foods for a while. Talk to your dietitian and doctor about making changes in your diet and ask about your phosphate binder prescription.

HIGH PHOSPHORUS FOODS INSTEAD OF

Phosphorus (mg)

8 ounce milk	230
8 ounce cream soup made with milk	275
1 ounce hard cheese	145
½ cup ice cream	80
12-ounce can cola	55
½ cup lima or pinto beans	100
½ cup custard or pudding made with milk	150

LOW PHOSPHORUS FOODS TRY

Phosphorus (mg)

8 ounce nondairy creamer or 4 ounce milk	100 115
8 ounce cream soup made with water	90
1 ounce cream cheese	30
½ cup sherbet or 1 popsicle	0
12 ounce can of Ginger Ale or lemon soda	3
½ cup mixed vegetables or green beans	35
½ cup pudding or custard made with nondairy creamer	50

2 ounce peanuts	200	1 ½ cup light salt/low fat popcorn	35
1 ½ ounce chocolate bar	125	1 ½ ounce hard candy, fruit flavors or jelly beans	3
2/3 cup oatmeal	130	2/3 cup cream of wheat or grits	40
½ cup bran cereal	140-260	½ cup nonbran cereal, shredded wheat, rice cereals, or corn flakes	50-100

More than 20 million Americans—one in nine adults—have chronic kidney disease and most don't even know it. More than 20 million others are at increased risk. The National Kidney Foundation, a major voluntary health organization, seeks to prevent kidney and urinary tract diseases, improve the health and well-being of individuals and families affected by these diseases and increase the availability of all organs for transplantation. Through its 50 affiliates nationwide, the foundation conducts programs in research, professional education, patient and community services, public education and organ donation. The work of the National Kidney Foundation is funded by public donations.

The National Kidney Foundation would like to thank the
Council on Renal Nutrition for the development of this fact sheet.

See also in this A-Z guide:

- [Phosphorus and Your CKD Diet](#)

All health information in this A-Z Guide has been approved for medical accuracy by the Scientific Advisory Board of the National Kidney Foundation. This information was current as of the date listed at the top of the page. [Our Scientific Advisory Board members.](#)

If you would like to become a volunteer and find out more about what's happening where you live.

If you would like more information, please call 1-800-622-9010 or write us at the National Kidney Foundation, 30 East 33rd Street, New York, NY 10016.

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