

Make the Kidney Connection

Food Tips and Healthy Eating Ideas

Fact Sheet

Diabetes and high blood pressure are the two leading causes of kidney disease. Other risk factors include heart disease and a family history of kidney failure. Eating healthy is one way to maintain good health. Small changes to your diet can help you manage your diabetes and high blood pressure and possibly protect your kidneys.

The National Kidney Disease Education Program (NKDEP) and National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP), both of the National Institutes of Health, have a few tips to get you on your way to healthier eating!

Tips on How to Eat Less

1. Make sure you eat breakfast everyday.
2. Share a single dessert.
3. When eating out, have a big vegetable salad, then split an entrée with a friend or have the other half wrapped to go.
4. Drink a glass of water 10 minutes before your meal to take the edge off your hunger.
5. Listen to music while you eat instead of watching TV (people tend to eat more while watching TV).
6. Eat slowly. It takes 20 minutes for your stomach to send a signal to your brain that you're full.
7. Teaspoons, salad forks, or child-size utensils may help you take smaller bites and eat less.
8. Make less food look like more by serving your meal on a salad or breakfast plate.
9. Make a list before you go to the store. Don't grocery shop on an empty stomach.
10. Try not to snack while cooking or cleaning the kitchen.

Tips on Making Healthy Food Choices

1. Try getting one new fruit or vegetable every time you grocery shop.
2. Cook with a mix of spices instead of salt.
3. Choose veggie toppings like spinach, broccoli, and peppers for your pizza.
4. Try different recipes for baking or broiling meat, chicken, and fish.
5. Try to choose foods with little or no added sugar.
6. Gradually work your way down from whole milk to 2% milk until you're drinking and cooking with fat-free (skim) or low-fat milk and milk products.

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Food Tips and Healthy Eating Ideas (continued)

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7. Eat foods made from whole grains such as—whole wheat, brown rice, oats, and whole-grain corn—every day. Use whole-grain bread for toast and sandwiches; substitute brown rice for white rice for home-cooked meals and when dining out.
8. Read food labels. Choose foods low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.
9. Slow down at snack time. Eating a bag of low-fat popcorn takes longer than eating a slice of cake. Peel and eat an orange instead of drinking orange juice.
10. Try keeping a written record of what you eat for a week. It can help you see when you tend to overeat or eat foods high in fat or calories.

Healthy Recipes and Food Substitutions

NKDEP wants to help you help your family maintain its kidney health by providing you information about healthier food options. Visit the following websites for more information on recipes and food substitution tips that may help you adapt meals for your family.

- Down Home Healthy Cooking: www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/down-home-healthy-cooking
- More Matters Recipe Substitution Ideas: <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dnparecipe/recipesearch.aspx>
- Recipe and Meal Planner Guide: http://ndep.nih.gov/media/MQC_recipebook_english.pdf
- Top 10 Substitution Tips: www.kidneyfund.org/livingwell/top-10.html

For more information on healthy food substitutions and healthy recipes, visit these links of the American Kidney Fund:

- www.kidneyfund.org/livingwell/recipes/
- www.kidney.org/atoz/atozItem.cfm?id=110
- www.kidney.org/atoz/atozItem.cfm?id=59

