



This guide should be read alongside the leaflet **Medications for obesity - A guide to eating and living well.**

Taking medications for obesity with kidney disease

A guide to eating well and staying healthy



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Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for people with kidney disease and taking medications for obesity. It offers extra tips on food, drinks, and side effects for people with kidney conditions.

Use this leaflet along with our leaflet '**Medications for obesity – A guide to eating and living well**' which may be downloaded at:

 bda.uk.com/OMM

Advice for kidney disease varies for each person. Your kidney dietitian or healthcare professional should discuss what is right for you.

Kidney disease and medications for obesity

Medications for obesity are a tool that help people manage their weight. They can also help people with diabetes to manage their blood sugars. Medicines for obesity can help people with kidney conditions. This includes people with all stages of kidney disease. It also includes people having dialysis and those who have had a kidney transplant.



Always talk to your healthcare or kidney team before taking these medications. These medications usually reduce your appetite which means you might feel less hungry. This can be risky for people with kidney disease. It might mean you aren't eating enough, or having the right balance, which can cause muscle loss and weakness.



Food advice for people with kidney disease

Food advice for kidney disease is different for each person. It depends on how well your kidneys work and on your treatment. It also depends on your medications, blood pressure, blood results, and other health issues. This section will cover dietary advice including protein, salt, fluid, potassium and phosphate.

Protein and kidney health

Protein is a key nutrient. It helps your body maintain muscle, heal tissues, and boost your immune system. It also helps you stay strong and recover from illness.

Medications for obesity can help reduce your appetite. For people with kidney disease, this may mean you won't get enough protein. A lack of protein may cause muscle loss and weakness.



Everyone's protein needs are different. Protein should come from a mix of animal and plant based sources. For more detail, see the general resource for people taking obesity medications at www.bda.uk.com/OMM. Plant based protein will also help to increase your fibre. Your health care or kidney team will advise you on the right amount for you.



Salt and kidney disease

Salt can cause your body to hold on to fluid and raise your blood pressure. This puts extra strain on your kidneys and heart. It may also lead to a build-up of fluid in the body, known as oedema, which can cause swelling and breathlessness.



People with kidney disease should aim not to add salt to their food. Also try to limit processed and packaged foods, as they often have hidden salt. Watch out for salt containing flavourings such as soy sauce and all-purpose seasonings. Try to use herbs, spices and non salt containing ingredients to add flavour.



Fluids and drinks

The usual advice to drink 1.5–2 litres per day may not apply if you have kidney disease. **Your kidney team may advise different amounts if:**

- ➔ You have been advised to limit your fluids
- ➔ You are having dialysis, especially if you pass little or no urine
- ➔ You have recently had a kidney transplant, where good hydration may be important



Always follow the advice from your healthcare or kidney team.

Potassium and phosphate

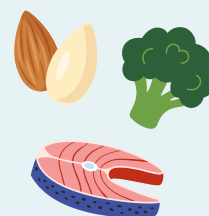
Some people with kidney disease need to watch how much potassium and phosphate they eat.

Your kidneys usually remove these minerals from the body. When kidney function falls, potassium and phosphate levels can sometimes build up in the blood. Medications for obesity may also affect these levels.

Not everyone with kidney disease has to limit these minerals. Your kidney team will tell you if this is something you need to be mindful of.

If healthcare professionals have told you to manage potassium or phosphate in your diet:

- ➔ Try to choose more fresh, whole foods where possible.
- ➔ Many processed and packaged foods have added phosphate or potassium. Be aware of this.
- ➔ Check food labels when you can. Limit foods with many additives.



Your kidney dietitian can show you how to balance these minerals safely.

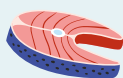
Choosing whole foods

Choose whole or minimally processed foods when you can. These foods are often healthier and generally have fewer additives. These are good for everyone.

Examples of more whole food choices include:



Beans, lentils, tofu, Quorn or pulses



Fresh meat, poultry or fish



Eggs



Fresh or frozen vegetables



Fruit



Home-prepared meals



Foods that may contain more additives include:



- ➔ Processed meats (such as sausages, bacon, and deli meats)
- ➔ Ready meals
- ➔ Processed cheese products
- ➔ Instant or packaged foods

Cooking with basic ingredients can help cut down on these additives.

If you are unsure about which foods are suitable, your kidney dietitian can provide personalised advice. You can also find support at:

 <https://kidneycareuk.org/get-support/healthy-diet-support/kidney-kitchen/>

Vitamins and supplements

- ➔ **Avoid taking high doses of vitamin A** unless advised by your healthcare team.
- ➔ **Vitamin C supplements** may need to be limited in some people with kidney disease.
- ➔ **People having dialysis treatment** often need specific vitamin supplements. Keep taking these unless your kidney team says not to.
- ➔ **Medications for obesity can slow stomach emptying.**
Your kidney team may review the timing of some medicines, such as phosphate binders.
- ➔ **Discuss with your kidney dietitian** if you are taking a general multivitamin supplement.

Managing side effects of medications for obesity

Some side effects may need extra attention if you have kidney disease:

Constipation

- Increasing fibre may help constipation for some people, but this is not always the right approach for everyone with kidney disease. Fibre often works best when taken with enough fluid, which may not be possible if you have been advised to limit the amount of fluid you have.
- Some people may find increasing fibre without enough fluid can worsen symptoms such as bloating, wind, or discomfort.
- Speak to your kidney dietitian or healthcare professional for individual advice on managing constipation, including whether dietary changes, stool softeners, or laxatives may be more appropriate.
- Your kidney dietitian can advise on suitable fibre options if needed.

Diarrhoea

- Diarrhoea can increase the risk of dehydration, especially if you have been advised to limit the amount of fluid you have. Contact your healthcare or kidney team if this persists.

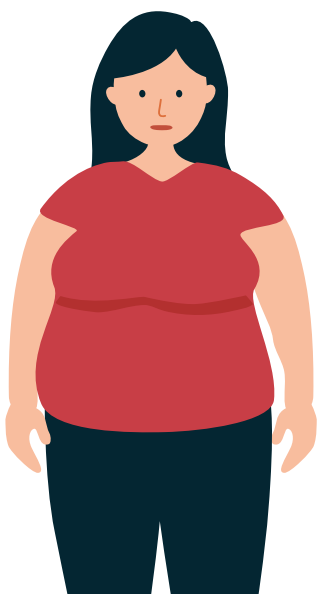
When to seek help



Please speak to a member of your healthcare or kidney team if you have:

- ➔ Eaten poorly for more than three days
- ➔ Notice signs of high potassium levels such as muscle weakness, palpitations or feeling unwell
- ➔ Notice potential signs that may be linked to high phosphate such as severe itchy skin or itchy eyes
- ➔ Experience rapid or unexpected weight loss. More than about 2lb (1kg) each week.

Note: If you are having dialysis treatment your care team may, if needed, check your dry weight often. Be aware that you may have to re-adjust (reduce) your dry weight more frequently. If you have treatment at home, ensure that you speak with your kidney team if this needs adjusting.



If you need to see a dietitian

Visit your GP for a referral or find a private dietitian. To check if your dietitian is registered visit:



About this publication

This leaflet was produced by specialist obesity dietitians from the British Dietetic Association (BDA) Obesity Specialist Group, with help from health professionals and people with their own experience. Created in partnership with specialist renal dietitians from the BDA Kidney Dietitian Specialist Group.

This leaflet does not replace advice from a dietitian or doctor; it is for information only. You can get this leaflet and others like it from the BDA website for free.

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