

Nutrition and Dietetics

Kidney disease - meal and snack suggestions for a small appetite

This information should only be used by patients with kidney disease who have a poor appetite. This information should only be followed with supervision from a dietitian.

There may be times when your appetite is poor, particularly if you have been in hospital or unwell. For the body to work at its best it is important to eat a nutritious diet. A nutritious diet can:

- Help prevent weight loss.
- Help regain weight you may have already lost.
- Help you to feel stronger.
- Prevent the body from breaking down its own stores of fat and muscle.
- Help your body to fight infections more effectively.

In this leaflet you will find suggestions to make your diet as nutritious as possible, even with a small appetite.

Note: while your appetite is poor you may be able to have some foods that you usually limit or avoid. For example, if you have diabetes or are following a low potassium or low phosphate diet. Your dietitian can advise you about this.

If you are prescribed phosphate binders (Phosex, Renacet, Calcichew, Renagel, Lanthanum, Renvela or Velphoro) it is important to keep taking these with meals/snacks unless told otherwise.



Useful Tips

Try to have smaller meals or snacks more often rather than trying to have 3 larger meals per day (see later for snack ideas).

- Aim to have protein foods (such as eggs, tofu, beans, pulses, meat, poultry, fish, dairy or soya alternatives,) at least twice a day.
- Try to have drinks between meals so they don't fill you up.
- Make larger quantities when you don't feel as tired and freeze individual portions.
- Try frozen ready meals from your supermarket (choose reduced salt options where possible).
- If you cannot manage a pudding immediately after a meal, save it and eat it about an hour later.
- If possible, try to get some fresh air or exercise before mealtimes.
- If agreed by your doctor, a small alcoholic drink before meals may help your appetite.

How to make every mouthful count

Fortify your food by adding high calorie (kcal) ingredients to really boost the energy levels:

- Use plenty of butter or margarine on toast, bread, or in sandwiches.
- Add full fat mayonnaise, salad cream, thousand island or ceasar dressing to sandwich fillings to add extra energy and moisture. A small amount of pickle, mustard or cranberry sauce may add flavour.
- Add double cream to mashed potatoes, soup or pasta sauce.
- Melt extra butter, margarine or drizzle olive oil over your vegetables, pasta or potatoes.
- Generously grate cheese over mashed potatoes, vegetables or salad.
- Use full cream milk instead of skimmed or semi skimmed milk.
- Sprinkle sugar* over breakfast cereals, or stir sugar*, jam*, lemon curd* or honey* through your porridge.
- Spread honey*, lemon curd*, marmalade or jam* thickly on bread, toast or crackers. If you are not following a low potassium diet, try nut butters (such as peanut, cashew or almond butter), biscoff or chocolate spreads.
- Use fortified milk, please see recipes on the next page.

* If you have diabetes be cautious of these foods as they are high in sugar.

Fortified milk

Use these recipes as you would normally use any milk. Use them on cereals, in tea and coffee and for milk-based sauces.

Recipe 1. If you are not following a low potassium diet

- 3 to 4 tablespoons of dried milk powder
- 1 pint of full fat milk

Mix milk powder into a paste with a little full fat milk

Continue to add the rest of the milk slowly, stirring to keep it smooth.

Nutritional Content: 540 kcal + 40g protein per 1 pint

Recipe 2. If following a low potassium diet or need a lower protein intake

- Mix 200ml of double cream with 200ml of water

Nutritional Content: 992 kcal 3g protein per 1 pint.

Here are some suggestions for suitable meals and snacks

Breakfasts:

Porridge Power

- Make porridge with full fat (or even fortified) milk for extra calories and protein.
- Add 1 tablespoon of double cream and some frozen fruit such as berries (defrosted overnight).
- Swirl in plenty of honey or syrup, or dollop in jam, lemon curd or marmalade*.
- If you are not on a potassium restriction, try a tablespoon of dried fruit and a small handful of nuts or stir in a tablespoon of nut butter (such as peanut, cashew) and add a sliced banana.

*If you have diabetes be cautious of these foods in this section as they are high in sugar.

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Tasty Toast

- Spread with plenty of butter or margarine, then top with jam, lemon curd, marmalade, caramelised biscuit spread such as biscoff spread or honey.
- Top with butter, scrambled egg and grated cheese, sausage or bacon.
- Spread with plenty of butter or margarine then top with baked beans and grated cheese.
- If you are not following a potassium restriction top each slice with a heaped tbsp. of peanut butter, or Nutella, and sliced banana.
- Full fat cream cheese and fruit or jam

Try our tasty cinnamon toast recipe	
Ingredients	Instructions:
50g butter	Mix the butter, sugar and cinnamon together.
1 and half tablespoon of ground cinnamon	Toast one side of the bread under the grill until golden brown.
1 and half tablespoons of sugar	Spread the butter mixture onto the non-toasted side of the bread and put under the grill until sugar crystallises and bread becomes crisp.
Bread	

Other ideas

- Toast a bagel and fill generously with smoked salmon and full fat cream cheese.
- Pick up a Danish pastry or croissant and warm in the oven. Serve with plenty of butter, margarine or your favourite conserves and some full fat Greek yogurt on the side. You could even add some honey and fruit to the yogurt for extra flavour and nutrition.
- **If you are not following a potassium restriction** top two halves of a bagel with plenty of smashed avocado, cream cheese and a sprinkle of pumpkin seeds.

Lunches and Evening meals

Sandwiches

You can use a variety of breads including white, wholemeal and granary, pittas, rolls, bagels and wraps.

- Use plenty of butter or margarine on each slice of bread and add full fat mayonnaise or salad cream to sandwich fillings to add extra energy and moisture.
- Use different pickles, mustard, other savoury chutneys or cranberry sauce to add variety and extra flavour. Try two fillings for an extra boost for example cream cheese and ham, cheddar and coleslaw.

Suitable fillings could include:

- *Salmon, tuna, ham, turkey, chicken, or any cold meat including leftovers.
- Cheese, for example full fat cheddar, red leicester, cream cheese, sliced or grated is fine.
- Prawns with thousand island dressing or egg with mayonnaise and salad such as lettuce, cucumber or a small amount of tomato.
- Tuna or salmon mixed with plenty of mayonnaise or blended to a pate with sour cream and a tbsp of double cream for extra energy.
- Full fat hummus with falafel and salad items such as pepper, lettuce or grated carrot.
- Fish finger (or vegan fish finger) sandwich with plenty of mayonnaise, tartar sauce and lettuce, or alternatively with cheese (or vegan cheese) and tomato ketchup.
- Toast your sandwiches. Add butter or margarine to both sides of the bread and fill generously with cheese, onion and another filling such as beans, tuna or ham.

***Avoid ready-to-eat smoked or cured fish products such as smoked salmon or gravlax due to an increased risk from Listeriosis.**

Listeriosis is an infection caused by bacteria called listeria. People with kidney disease are at higher risk of serious illness from listeriosis. Further information on how to reduce the risk of Listeriosis can be found at: [Listeriosis - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk) and Listeria | Food Standards Agency

Light Meals

- Fish from a chip shop with bread, butter and peas.
- Omelette with a small, dressed salad, bread and butter or boiled/ fried potatoes - see ideas for fillings below.
- Sardines on buttered toast.
- Burger in a bun (add mayonnaise or butter to the bread for extra energy) with cheese and a small dressed side salad.
- Macaroni cheese (homemade or shop bought) with toast or pitta bread.
- Pasta or potatoes with creamy 'boil in the bag' fish and sprinkled with cheese. Add some vegetables on the side.
- Pasta with a fresh, creamy sauce such as cheese or carbonara with peas or other vegetables.
- Ready meals such as shepherd's pie, fish pie and creamy pasta dishes.
- Any breakfast ideas in this diet sheet could also be eaten at other mealtime.

Omelette ideas:

- Spinach, goats' cheese and spring onion.
- Grated cheddar or red Leicester, red onion, and ham with chopped peppers.
- Sliced cooled potatoes with onion and cheese (Spanish omelette).
- Chorizo, chopped red peppers and spinach/rocket.
- Cheese and mushroom.

Snacks - for between meals or at supper

- Crackers with margarine or butter and full fat cream cheese, sliced cheddar or hummus.
- Scones or scotch pancakes with clotted cream and jam.
- Crumpets, toast, or teacakes with your favourite toppings.
- Danish apple pastries, croissants, cream horns, doughnuts, jam tarts or apple pies with a tbsp. of double cream.
- Biscuits such as custard creams, hob nobs, jam cream biscuits, shortbread fingers.

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- Full fat greek yogurt with fruit (frozen, tinned and drained, fresh) and a drizzle of honey.
- Bread sticks and full fat cream cheese, plain or flavoured, full fat hummus or sour cream dip.
- Corn snacks, for example, skips, dorritos, wheat crunchies, wotsits, quavers, and cheddars (in moderation as these are salty).

If you are not following a potassium restriction the following high energy and protein snack options are also suitable

- Apple slices with 1 tablespoon nut butter (for example peanut, hazelnut, cashew).
- Small (30g) handful of whole (unsalted) nuts.
- 2 - 4 squares of dark chocolate.

Desserts

- Tinned fruit (discard juice) and double cream.
- Jam sponge, fruit crumble, sponge pudding or fruit pie with custard or double cream.
- Rice pudding with jam and a swirl of double cream, honey or fruit (tinned and drained, fresh or frozen and defrosted).
- Fruit puree with double cream and sponge fingers.
- Thick and creamy yoghurts or full fat greek yogurt with your favourite toppings.
- Jelly and double cream (try adding double cream to the jelly whilst making to create a higher energy milk jelly).

Fortified lemon cream pudding recipe - makes 2x 80g portions	
Ingredients	Instructions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100ml double cream• 1 heaped tablespoon dried skimmed milk powder (12g)• 2 level tablespoon caster sugar (24g)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mix the cream and milk powder in a saucepan.• Once combined gently heat the mixture.• Add the sugar and stir until dissolved.• Bring to boil for 3 minutes.• Add the lemon curd to taste.• Pour the mixture into a bowl and chill when cooled.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 heaped tablespoon lemon curd (30g)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep the mixture covered in the refrigerator for a maximum of three days.
Nutritional content (per portion) energy 350 kcal, protein 4g	

Note: include jelly, custard and yoghurts in fluid allowance.

Warning – Starfruit contains a chemical which can be extremely dangerous to people with kidney problems. They should be avoided.

Further Information

This leaflet was produced by Coventry Renal Dietitians, University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire. To contact them, please use telephone number: 024 7696 6151.

You can also follow us on X (formerly known as Twitter) @UHCW_RenalDiet.

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