

## HEMODIALYSIS DIET



## WHY DO I NEED TO HAVE A SPECIAL DIET NOW I AM ON DIALYSIS?

Although dialysis removes many of the waste products from your blood, you still need to be careful with your food to avoid being ill.

The aim of the diet for hemodialysis is to maintain optimal nutrition while limiting the build-up of waste products.

Once you have started on dialysis you will be seen by a dietitian who will go through the changes you need to make in your diet, and fluid intake. On the whole we try to keep your diet restrictions to a minimum.

The recommendations will be specific to you, and your requirements. These will have been decided by looking at the blood results and weight. Bloods are usually taken monthly. Your fluid allowance will be decided once we can establish your urine output and weight gains between treatments.

How to manage your fluid intake will be cover in another booklet.

## PROTEIN

Protein restriction is no longer required now you are on regular hemodialysis and you are encouraged to eat a normal protein intake.

Protein is important for growth, tissue repair and fighting infection. Eating good quality proteins, such as lean red meat, poultry, fish, eggs and a limited amount of dairy products are the best for you. If you are vegetarian you can obtain your protein from foods such as legumes, grains and vegetables.

If you are short of protein your dietitian may advise you to take nutritional supplements.

## WHAT IS SODIUM AND WHY DO I NEED TO BE CAREFUL?

You are usually advised to keep to a “No Added Salt” diet, which means not adding salt to your food at the table and using only small amounts in cooking. Fresh foods are lower in salt, as salt is added to many processed foods for flavoring. Limit the amount of processed foods you eat and look at the labels for salt and sodium on the ingredients list. The lower down the ingredients list that „salt” or „sodium” is, the better. Do not use salt substitutes e.g. „low salt” without checking with your dietitian.

Sodium controls fluid balance; too much can contribute to high blood pressure and cause you to feel thirsty and drink more.

## IRON

As well as needing EPO to make red blood cells, you also need a good supply of iron to supply the red blood cells with haemoglobin. Diet is a good supply of iron, but when you are on dialysis this is often not enough, as you lose red blood cells through the dialysis process itself.

Iron tablets can be used, but these often given people stomach pains and constipation. Because of this many people receive intravenous iron during dialysis.

The amount of iron you are given will depend on your haemoglobin levels. These are checked on a regular basis. The iron is given during dialysis by a slow infusion and so you will not need to have any injections.

## KEEPING SODIUM UNDER CONTROL?

To limit the amount of sodium in your diet and help prevent too much fluid build-up, try the following:

- Cook with herbs and spices instead of salt
- Read food labels and choose foods that are low in sodium
- When eating out, order meat or fish without salt. Ask for sauce or gravy on the side because these may contain large amounts of salt and should be eaten in small amounts
- Limit the use of canned, processed and frozen foods
- Avoid salt substitutes and specially low-sodium foods made with salt-substitutes because these are high in potassium
- Stet Speak to your dietician if you have any specific questions

## POTASSIUM

This is a mineral and is found in many foods, such as fruits and vegetables (like bananas and mushrooms) and coffee and crisps. When your kidneys aren't working properly potassium may not be removed and your blood levels may get high. If your potassium levels are too high or too low it may affect your heart.

Every patient's body is different, so the dietitian will advise you on the right foods to eat to keep your potassium at safe levels.

## I AM ON PHOSPHATE BINDERS, SO WHY DO I NEED TO BE CAREFUL WITH PHOSPHATE?

**Phosphate** is a mineral found in many foods. The kidney usually keeps the balance right by removing it when there is too much in the body. It is needed for the maintenance of healthy bones. High phosphate levels may cause itching and sore eyes. Continuously high phosphate levels can cause a rise in PTH (parathyroid hormone), which will cause long-term damage to the bones.

If your phosphate level is high you need to keep to a low phosphate diet, you may be prescribed tablets to bind the phosphate in your food. These are called phosphate binders e.g. Calcichew, Phosex, Fosrenol and Renagel.

Your dietitian will advise you on your diet e.g. limiting dairy foods and the correct time to take your phosphate binders.



## CALCIUM?

Calcium is found in most dairy products. It is needed for healthy muscles and bones. Your calcium levels are not normally affected by your diet but please avoid taking medications containing calcium e.g. Rennies or Remegel.

Also if you are prescribed Calcichew or Adcal or Phosex never take more than the prescribed dose and never take without food.

## SO WHAT NEXT?

Now you have read through this a nurse or doctor will come back to answer any other questions you might have. Remember, you can ask questions at any time.

There will be other booklets for you to read later that will include the following topics:

- Hemodialysis – a brief introduction
- How does hemodialysis work?
- Looking after your vascular access
- Managing your fluid intake
- The dialysis diet
- Increasing your independence
- Transplantation

We hope that this will help you to adapt to dialysis, helping you to feel better.

**Remember, you can ask questions about your treatment at any time.**

B. Braun Avitum AG | Schwarzenberger Weg 73-79 | 34212 Melsungen |  
Germany

Phone +49 5661 71-2624 | Fax +49 5661 75-2624 | [dialysis@bbraun.com](mailto:dialysis@bbraun.com) |  
[www.bbraun-dialysis.com](http://www.bbraun-dialysis.com)