

Phosphorus

Tips for People with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)

What Is Phosphorus?

Phosphorus is a mineral that helps keep your bones healthy. It also helps keep blood vessels and muscles working. Phosphorus is found naturally in foods rich in protein, such as meat, poultry, fish, nuts, beans, and dairy products. Phosphorus is also added to many processed foods.



Why Is Phosphorus Important for People with CKD?

When you have CKD, phosphorus can build up in your blood, making your bones thin, weak, and more likely to break. It can cause itchy skin, and bone and joint pain. Most people with CKD need to eat foods with less phosphorus than they are used to eating.

Your health care provider may talk to you about taking a phosphate binder with meals to lower the amount of phosphorus in your blood.

Foods Lower in Phosphorus

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Rice milk (not enriched)
- Breads, pasta, rice



- Corn and rice cereals
- Light-colored sodas/pop
- Home-brewed iced tea



Foods Higher in Phosphorus

- Meat, poultry, fish
- Dairy foods
- Beans, lentils, nuts



- Bran cereals and oatmeal
- Colas
- Some bottled iced tea

How Do I Lower Phosphorus in My Diet?

- Know what foods are lower in phosphorus (see page 1).
- Eat smaller portions of foods high in protein at meals and for snacks.
 - **Meat, poultry, and fish:** A cooked portion should be about 2 to 3 ounces or about the size of a deck of cards. 
 - **Dairy foods:** Keep your portions to ½ cup of milk or yogurt, or one slice of cheese. 
 - **Beans and lentils:** Portions should be about ½ cup of cooked beans or lentils.
 - **Nuts:** Keep your portions to about ¼ cup of nuts.
- Eat fresh fruits and vegetables—if you have not been told to watch your potassium
- Many packaged foods have added phosphorus. Look for phosphorus, or for word with PHOS, on ingredient labels, like the one below. Choose a different food when the ingredient list has PHOS on the label.

Ingredients: Potatoes, Vegetable Oil (Partially Hydrogenated Soybean Oil), Salt, Dextrose, Disodium Dihydrogen Pyro**phosphate**...

Examples of Foods that May Have Added Phosphorus

- Fresh* and frozen uncooked meats and poultry
- Chicken nuggets
- Baking mixes
- Frozen baked goods
- Cereals, cereal bars
- Instant puddings and sauces

*Ask the butcher to show you which fresh meats do not have added phosphorus.

For more information, visit www.niddk.nih.gov or call 1-800-860-8747.

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