



# Kidney Q&A

0-3 months

Life Options Rehabilitation Program

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[www.lifeoptions.org](http://www.lifeoptions.org)

## Q: When will I get my appetite back?

**A:** When wastes build up in your body, it can change how food tastes and how hungry you get. You may notice that you don't want to eat meat. This is a common problem.

As you get more dialysis, you will start to feel hungry again and food will taste better. This should take just a few weeks, depending on how much waste needs to be removed from your body and how well your dialysis works. Some days, you may need to force yourself to eat to regain your health.

Eating enough of the right foods is one thing you can do to have a better chance of living long and living well. Your *serum albumin* level (a blood test that measures protein) should be higher than 4.0 g/dL to be sure you are not malnourished.

One way to be sure you are getting adequate dialysis is that you have a healthy appetite and want to eat. If you don't feel hungry and able to eat after a few weeks of treatment, you may need more dialysis.

### What *I* can do to get my appetite back:

- Talk with my dietitian about how well I'm eating and what tastes funny.
- Make sure I get all of the dialysis I am prescribed.
- Talk with my nurse about how I can help my dialysis work best.

- Try eating six small meals a day instead of three larger ones.
- Eat meat or eggs cold, like egg salad or chicken salad.
- Avoid foods with strong smells. Leave the room when food is made if the smells bother me.
- Talk to my doctor about medicines that might improve my appetite.
- Exercise to increase my appetite, with my doctor's okay.
- Visit module 9 of Kidney School™: *Nutrition and Fluids* at [www.kidneyschool.org](http://www.kidneyschool.org) to learn more.