



Kidney Q&A

0-3 months

Life Options Rehabilitation Program

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Q: What can we cook that everyone in my family can eat?

A: No one wants to cook separate meals for each family member. Many foods the whole family can eat are on a kidney diet, like:

- Eggs
- Chicken and turkey
- Fresh pork (not cured or processed)
- Beef
- Fish
- Many fresh fruits and vegetables
- Breads and pasta

Most people on dialysis need to limit foods that are high in sodium (salt), potassium, and phosphorus. It takes time to learn what to eat more of and what to avoid, but the more you learn, the easier it will be to make meals you can all share.

To start out, try to serve foods that can be customized for each family member without a lot of extra work:

- Let others salt their food at the table; skip the salt when cooking.
- Serve meats with sauces on the side, so people can help themselves.
- Try a salad bar, taco bar, pasta bar, or pizza bar meal where each person can choose toppings they like and can eat (e.g., pizza with white sauce, fresh mushrooms, and a sprinkle of cheese).

Your dietitian can help you learn what foods are okay to eat. She/he can also suggest some books and websites that will help you with meal planning and food choices.

What I can do to learn more about what to cook:

- Meet with my dietitian and ask for lists of foods I can eat.
- Ask my dietitian to help me read food labels.
- Ask my dietitian how to soak potatoes to remove potassium so I can mash them or use them in stews.
- Ask my dietitian to suggest a good food guide I can buy.
- Talk to other patients about how they cook for their families.
- Ask my dietitian and other patients to suggest kidney cookbooks that have recipes for foods my whole family can eat.
- Visit module 9 of Kidney School™: *Nutrition and Fluids* at www.kidneyschool.org to learn more.