



# Kidney Q&A

4-12 months

Life Options Rehabilitation Program

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Why does it matter when I take my phosphate binders?

## Q: Why does it matter when I take my phosphate binders?

**A:** Phosphate binders work in your gut like magnets to pull phosphorus out of the food you eat and then pass it out through your stool. Take them when the phosphorus is present—*while you eat or as soon as you finish your meal or snack*. If you wait too long, the food you eat will move out of your gut and your binders won't be able to bind the phosphorus from your food.

Phosphate binders can also bind other drugs and make them less effective. Follow your doctor's advice about whether certain other medicines can be taken at the same time as the phosphate binder or whether they must be taken separately.

Below is a list of FDA-approved phosphate binders and how to take them:

**How many binders to take.** Your doctor or dietitian can tell you how many pills or

capsules to take, depending on how much you eat at a meal or snack. In general, the more food you eat at a meal, the more binders you will need. In time, you will learn to adjust your phosphate binder dose for the meal you are eating.

### How I can take my binders correctly:

- Ask my dietitian how I can decide how many binders to take with meals and snacks.
- Tell my care team about any over-the-counter drugs I take, including antacids and herbal products. Some antacids are good phosphate binders; others have ingredients that could harm me.
- Visit module 9 of Kidney School™: *Nutrition and Fluids* at [www.kidneyschool.org](http://www.kidneyschool.org) to learn about binders.

Phosphate Binder	How to Take
Calcium acetate (PhosLo®)	Swallow capsule whole during your meal
Calcium carbonate (Tums®, Os-Cal®, Caltrate®, etc.)	Chew them up and take them during your meal
Sevelamer hydrochloride (Renagel®)	Swallow capsule whole during your meal
Lanthanum carbonate (Fosrenol®)	Take one or more tablets with each meal