

Weight Control

Renal diet information from Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, www.edren.org

Following a healthy eating pattern, alongside daily activity can aid weight loss, help control blood pressure, and reduce blood fats including Cholesterol. This can often be difficult with renal disease due to the varying diets you might be on. Here is some general advice, which should be safe for everyone to follow to assist with weight control.

Follow a regular meal pattern

- Aim to have three meals a day. Missing meals, especially breakfast can lead to heavy snacking later.
- Avoid high fat snack foods such as crisps, pastries, pies and chocolate.

Base meals on starchy carbohydrates

- Include starchy foods at each meal, such as bread, potatoes, pasta, rice and breakfast cereals.
- Try to choose those that are higher fibre by having wholegrain pasta / rice / bread or porridge / weetabix/ bran flakes. Fibre varieties are lower in calories, better for gut health, blood sugar control and keeps you feeling fuller for longer.
- Avoid add too much butter, spreads, cheese etc to these foods.

Eat less sugary foods and drinks

Sugar is just “empty calories” which provides no nutritional value. High amounts of sugar in your diet can lead to weight gain and raise blood glucose levels.

- Try to replace fizzy drinks, sweets, chocolate, cakes, biscuits, puddings and jam with low sugar alternatives like, diet or low calorie drinks and squashes, plain cereals such as porridge / weetabix / bran flakes, plain biscuits such as rich teas/crackers/rice cakes, and yoghurts labelled-no added sugar / diet/ light and reduced sugar jam / marmalade.
- Remember to cut out adding sugar in your tea/coffee/cereal and use artificial sweeteners instead such as Candarel /Splenda/ Sweetex / Hermasetas.

Eat less fatty foods and snacks

Saturated fats are animal fats, found in foods such as butter, lard, pastry, cheese, cream or creamy sauces, fatty meats, pies and sausages have a clear association with weight gain and heart disease.

- Try and avoid the above foods or only have them very occasionally.
- Polyunsaturated or Monounsaturated fats are vegetable based and found in olive oil, sunflower spreads, plain nuts, avocados and fish oils. These types of fat are better for your health, however shouldn't be eaten to excess.

- When cooking try and bake/grill/steam foods instead of frying or roasting.
- Choose lean meats, fish, chicken and remove fat and skin.
- Use low fat dairy produce such as semi skimmed milk, low fat spreads, smaller amount or reduced fat cheeses and yoghurts.

Alcohol

Healthy eating involves having a sensible alcohol intake, sticking to the recommended set limits for men = 21 units and women = 14 units per week. A unit is half pint of lager/25ml pub measure of spirit.

Try to limit alcohol intake and have 2 or 3 alcohol free days a week as alcohol is high in calories and contributes to weight gain.

Try low calorie mixers with drinks to make them last longer!