

Intensive Dialysis and Your Diet

Intensive hemodialysis means longer dialysis times, more dialysis times in a week, or both. Intensive hemodialysis is different for each person. Many people dialyze more than 16 hours a week. For example:

- Each time you dialyze, it may last longer than 4 hours.
- You may need to dialyze more often (more than 3 sessions a week).
- You may dialyze every day, but for shorter times.

Intensive dialysis may happen during the day or at night. When it happens at night, it's called nocturnal dialysis. Nocturnal dialysis may be done at home or at a dialysis unit.

If you dialyze longer and more often, then more waste products are removed from your blood. Because of this, you may be able to enjoy a wider variety of foods. This handout is about what you can eat and drink when you get more dialysis.

Sodium (salt)

Continue to limit your sodium intake. A diet high in sodium can cause swelling, shortness of breath, and high blood pressure. To decrease the sodium you eat:

- Cook and eat food without adding salt.
- Choose fresh, unprocessed, and homemade foods.
- Flavour your food with herbs, spices, garlic, onion, ginger, lemon juice, vinegar, and salt-free seasonings.
- Read the Nutrition Facts table on food labels. Choose foods with less than 15% Daily Value for sodium.



Fluids

Water is the best choice. Many people are asked to keep to a limit of 2–4 cups (500–1000 mL) of fluid plus the amount of urine their kidneys make each day. Talk to your healthcare team about the right amount of fluid for you.

Signs that you have too much fluid in your body:

- shortness of breath
- high blood pressure
- swelling in your face, arms, legs, and ankles



Protein

If you dialyze longer and more often, then more protein is removed from your blood. To make sure you don't lose muscle tissue, work with your dietitian to find the amount and type of protein foods that are right for you.

Sources of protein your body needs to make muscles are animal foods such as fish, poultry, eggs, pork, beef, and wild game.



Other foods high in protein are milk products, beans and lentils, nuts and nut butters, and tofu. If you need to limit potassium and/or phosphorus, you might need to limit some of these foods.



Potassium

If you dialyze longer and more often, then more potassium is removed from your blood.

You may be able to eat a wider variety of vegetables and fruits, more whole grains, and milk products. Talk to your dietitian about how much potassium is right for you.



Phosphorus

If you dialyze longer and more often, then more phosphorus is removed from your blood.

You may be able to eat more high phosphorus foods such as whole grain breads, bran cereal, nuts, beans or lentils, and milk products. Talk to your dietitian about how many servings of these foods to have each day.



Keep taking phosphorus binders with food if they have been prescribed for you. Examples are calcium carbonate (Tums®) and sevelamer hydrochloride (Renagel®). You may be asked to lower or stop your phosphorus binders.

Vitamins

If you dialyze longer and more often, then more of certain vitamins are removed from your blood. It may be harder to get all the vitamins you need every day from food.

You may be asked to take **two Replavite® tablets** after each dialysis treatment.

More support

Talk to your dietitian if you have any questions about this handout.

Notes