

WHAT IS A LOW PHOSPHATE DIET?

You may have been told by your medical team that you need to follow a low phosphate diet. **But, what is a low phosphate diet? Let's start with the basics!**

What is phosphorus?

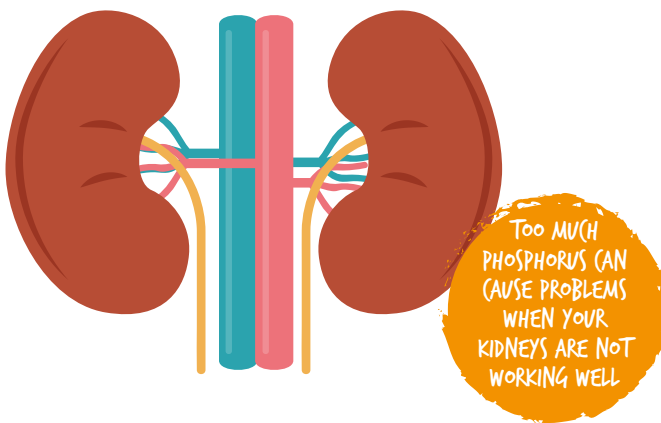
Phosphorus is a mineral and makes up parts of the cells in our bodies. It is found in almost all foods – sometimes in small amounts, sometimes in big amounts.

Phosphorus helps:

1. Our bodies use energy.
2. Make lots of parts of the body work.

It also forms part of our bones and teeth.

What happens when the kidneys are not working well?



Most children get much more phosphorus than they need as it is in so many foods. That's usually ok because the kidneys just get rid of the extra phosphate that we don't need. But, when the kidneys are not working well, it is hard to get rid of the extra phosphorus.

Too much phosphorus in the body can cause problems with the bones, skin, heart and other muscles, and it can even make you itch!

How do I get the right amount of phosphorus?

There are 2 types of phosphorus :

1. Naturally occurring phosphorus in foods.
2. Phosphorus which is added to foods.

The amount of phosphorus that is absorbed by the body from foods will affect your blood phosphate level.

1. Naturally occurring phosphorus in foods

The naturally occurring phosphorus found in fresh meat, fish, fruit, vegetables and grains is only partly absorbed by the body. This is called a low to moderate bioavailability.

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2. Phosphorus that is added to food



INGREDIENTS: ENRICHED FLOUR (WHEAT FLOUR, NIACIN, REDUCED IRON, THIAMIN MONONITRATE [VITAMIN B1], RIBOFLAVIN [VITAMIN B2], FOLIC ACID), CORN SYRUP, SUGAR, SOYBEAN AND PALM OIL (WITH TBHQ FOR FRESHNESS), CORN SYRUP SOLIDS, DEXTROSE, HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP, FRUCTOSE, GLYCERIN, CONTAINS 2% OR LESS OF LECITHIN, PROCESSES WITH ALKALIN, CONTAINS 2% OR LESS OF SALT, DRIED KIDNEY BEANS, POLYDEXTROSE, MONOSODIUM PHOSPHATE, BAKING SODA, SODIUM ACID PYROPHOSPHATE, MONOCALCIUM PHOSPHATE, CALCIUM SULPHATE, DISTILLED MONOGLYCERIDES, SODIUM SODIUM ACID PYROPHOSPHATE, PHOSPHATE, PALM KERNEL OIL, SODIUM BENZOATE, BUTYRATE, PHOSPHATE, CALCIUM SULPHATE, DISTILLED MONOGLYCERIDES, HYDROGENATED PALM KERNEL OIL, SODIUM STEARATE, FLAVIN, COLOUR ADDED, SOY LECITHIN, DATE

Why is phosphorus added to foods?

When phosphorus is added to food the term that is used is phosphate additives. Phosphate additives are added to avoid spoilage of foods. Whilst this can be a good thing, it means that extra phosphorus is put into everybody's diet, including those whose kidneys are not working very well.

Almost 100% of the phosphorus that is added to foods is absorbed, giving these foods a high bioavailability. Therefore, eating a lot of foods with added phosphorus may cause your blood phosphate levels to rise.

It can be hard to know if a food contains phosphate additives. However, you can sometimes figure it out if you do some detective work! Look out for the words PHOS in the ingredients list.

However, even with the best detective work, it can still be a challenge as phosphate additives are not always listed on the label. The best thing to do is to try to limit your intake of processed foods and try to make meals using fresh ingredients if possible.

What else can I do to reduce my intake of phosphorus?

Another important way of reducing the amount of phosphorus in your diet is to reduce the amount of those foods which are rich in phosphorus. Here are some ideas to help you with this:



- As mentioned above, limit any foods that may contain added phosphorus such as cheese, processed chicken, meats, sausages, frozen products such as fish fingers, chicken nuggets and cola-based fizzy drinks.
- Limit foods made with baking powder – such as waffles, pancakes, or biscuits. This is because baking powder has an ingredient called sodium phosphate in it to help foods rise when they are baked. So foods made with baking powder have a lot of phosphorus.
- Limit your intake of dairy products such as milk, cheese, yogurt and ice cream. Having a small amount of these foods is usually ok, but try to only have one serving per day.

A serving is a cup of milk, a small container of yogurt, a slice of cheese or ¼ cup of grated cheese. Your Dietitian can tell you what serving sizes are best for you!

- Meat – although fresh meat will provide us with protein which our bodies need, it is rich in naturally occurring phosphorus. Your Dietitian may advise you to reduce your portion sizes of meat or replace meat with other foods in some meals.

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How can I still eat a healthy diet?

Eating a diet with a variety of foods is best. As previously mentioned, try to make homemade meals using fresh ingredients and avoid using packaged or convenience foods. Ask your parents or guardians if they will show you how to make some of your favourite meals from fresh ingredients; try preparing some fruit or vegetables for the family meal or learn to cook simple meals with only a few ingredients.



My low phosphate meal plan

For my breakfast I can choose:

For my mid-morning snack I can choose:

For my lunch I can choose:

For my mid-afternoon snack I can choose:

For my evening meal I can choose:

My drinks throughout the day:

Always check with your Dietitian regarding which foods you can have and which foods you should limit in your diet. Everyone's needs are different.