

Eating well during your hospital stay with kidney disease

For kidney (renal) patients



Information for patients
Sheffield Dietetics



PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



Introduction

You may find that you eat less when you are in hospital than you do at home. This could be for many reasons, including your medical condition and treatment, being away from home or not knowing what foods are suitable to eat.

This leaflet gives you advice on ways to eat well in hospital. It suggests snacks that visitors can bring in for you that are suitable for people with kidney disease.

Why is eating important?

A nourishing diet is important to help you recover from illness or surgery. Even though you are probably not being as active as you usually are, your body still needs enough energy (calories), protein, vitamins and minerals which come from the food that you eat.

What meals should I choose from the menu?

Whilst you are in hospital you may be advised to choose meals from the renal menu. This menu has foods which are low in potassium. Potassium is a mineral found in a variety of foods. One of the things it does is help your muscles to work properly, including your heart muscle.

The amount of potassium in your blood is controlled by your kidneys. If they are not working very well, you may need to reduce the amount of potassium you eat. The nurse or doctor looking after you will be able to tell you if your potassium level is too high.

To help improve your food intake try to:

- Choose the hot main meal or sandwich, rather than salad
- Choose the hot pudding, cake or tinned fruit with cream
- Try a cooked breakfast, for example bacon, sausage or egg

If you find that the meal choices are limited, please tell the nursing staff. They will speak with the catering department to see what else may be available.

Should I have snacks between meals when I am in hospital?

If you are not eating well, you will be offered snacks and/or nutritional supplements. These are especially important if you have asked for smaller main meals, or have been unable to finish your meals.

Snacks available from the ward include biscuits, cereals, sandwiches, and bread or toast with butter, jam or marmalade.

How can visitors help?

- All wards have set visiting times and this is an ideal time to enjoy a snack brought in by visitors.
- If you need help with eating, your visitors may wish to discuss with the nurse in charge about visiting at meal times.
- Providing staff with a list of your food likes and dislikes can help.
- Ask visitors to bring in some of the following snacks for you. These are suitable for people with kidney disease.

Cakes: Jam or lemon sponge cake, apple pies, iced buns, jam doughnuts, jam or lemon curd tarts, cherry cake, Madeira cake or chocolate éclairs topped with chocolate icing.

Biscuits: Arrowroot, Rich Tea, Nice, plain shortcake, custard creams, shortbread, jam filled, iced rings or wafers.

Snacks: Cream crackers or bread sticks, plain or sugared popcorn, wheat, maize or corn snacks such as tortilla chips, Sunbites, Nik Naks and mini Cheddars.

Fruit: Such as apples, pears, satsumas, clementines or peaches. Tinned fruit (do not drink the juice or syrup).

Confectionery: Boiled sweets, mints or jelly sweets.

Food safety advice about bringing food into hospital

Hot food: Your visitors should not bring in food that needs heating as this cannot be done on the ward. If your visitors wish to bring in hot food they may bring it in food flasks. Make sure they follow the instructions for using the food flask.

Chilled food: Food safety is very important, so please check with the nursing staff if your visitors wish to bring in anything that needs chilling (such as mousses and trifles). These foods should be eaten straight away or stored in the ward fridge. They will need to be labelled clearly with the date and time of storage as well as your name.

And finally...

If you or your visitors have any concerns, please raise them as soon as possible. It is best to speak to the nurse in charge of the ward or the doctor in charge of your care.

If you are advised to follow a diet for your kidneys when you go home, you will be contacted by a renal dietitian who can give you written information and help. If you require any dietary help or information during your hospital stay, ask your nurse who can refer you to a dietitian if necessary.

Alternative formats can be available on request.

Please email: sth.alternativeformats@nhs.net

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