

Work with your care team for healthy calcium levels

Healthy kidneys perform a complicated balancing act with calcium, vitamin D, phosphorus and hormones in your body. The right balance contributes to strong, healthy bones.

When failing kidneys cannot maintain this balance, weakened bones and other complications can result. Both you and your care team have a role in maintaining healthy calcium levels.

Help your care team respond to any imbalances:

- Tell your care team if you take any vitamin supplements, especially vitamin D.
- Don't take Tums or other antacids without checking with your care team; many are high in calcium, magnesium or aluminum, which can be harmful.
- Reduce the phosphorus in your diet. Ask your dietitian for the full list of low- and high-phosphorus foods.

Bonnie Martin at her home in Buckley with a plate of apples, a healthy, low-phosphorus snack. Bonnie receives dialysis at Northwest Kidney Centers in Enumclaw.



Keep your body chemistry in balance

1. Go to dialysis.

Don't skip scheduled dialysis treatments and do a full session to get rid of as much phosphorus as you can.

2. Watch your diet.

Limit high-phosphorus foods (dairy, processed foods and high-phosphorus drinks).

3. Take your binders.

Take your phosphate binders when you eat to stop the phosphorus in your food from entering your blood.

4. Cook what you need.

There are hundreds of kidney-friendly recipes on www.nwkidney.org. You can search for specific dietary needs, such as low phosphorus, low potassium, high protein and more.

5. Ask your doctor, nurse or dietitian

about other ways to maintain healthy levels of calcium and phosphorus.



Now's the time to prepare for an emergency

Collect your emergency gear in one location. Your kit should be ready at a moment's notice.

Start with the checklist at right. Put supplies in backpacks, bins, 5-gallon buckets, duffel bags, new garbage cans, suitcases, etc.

Keep emergency diet food at home. Ask your dietitian for items to stock or go online to www.nwkidney.org/emergency-diet.

If you're diabetic, keep a week's supply of insulin, syringes, lancets, wipes, batteries and test strips for your glucose monitor. Have food on hand for low blood sugar.

Keep a list of important contacts. Include Northwest Kidney Centers, other health care providers, friends and relatives both in and outside your area.

Make sure we can reach you. Update your emergency contact information with your dialysis clinic. Give staff three ways to reach you: home, cell, relatives, etc.

Plan backup transportation. You may need a new way to get to your treatments. Ask your social worker about resources and talk to friends and relatives who could help.

Keep a week's supply of medications. Keep extra medicine at home and anywhere else you spend time. Ask your doctor about kayexalate, a medication that removes potassium, in case you miss dialysis.

If you end up at an emergency shelter: take your medications with you if you have to leave your home. Tell shelter staff right away that you are a dialysis patient with medical and dietary needs.

Emergency Supplies

- Emergency diet food for three to five days
- Paper or plastic plates, cups, bowls, utensils
- Non-electric can opener
- Aluminum foil
- Battery-operated radio
- Flashlight
- Car cell phone charger
- Extra batteries
- Candles and matches in waterproof container
- First aid kit
- Sharp knife and scissors
- Paper towels
- Baby or sanitary wipes
- Garbage bags
- Gallon jugs of distilled water (one gallon per person per day)
- Bleach and eyedropper to purify water (16 drops per gallon of water)
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Challenged with constipation?

If you don't have a daily bowel movement, have hard stools or strain during bowel movements, you may be constipated. Lots of people on dialysis have this experience.

Eat foods with lots of fiber. To stay regular, eat more fiber. Fiber helps make your stools softer and easier to pass. If you haven't been getting enough, increase gradually – too much fiber too fast can cause bloating, cramping and gas. Try:

- Low-phosphorus and low-potassium fruits and vegetables such as apples, berries, oranges, broccoli, carrots and lettuce. Work with your dietitian to find the ones that are best for you.
- Raw bran and whole grains such as barley, bulgur, corn, millet, quinoa and brown rice.
- Legumes, dried peas and beans such as pinto, navy and garbanzo.

Get some exercise each day. Regular exercise makes it easier to have regular bowel movements. When you're active, blood flows to your intestines and the muscle tone increases. Whether it's a daily walk, a stretching routine or light housework, every bit of activity will help.

Create a bathroom routine. By spending time in the bathroom around the same time each day, you'll establish a routine that your body will remember. Pay close attention to your body and don't resist the urge to have a bowel movement. Ask your doctor about laxatives or stool softeners.



Mat Risher, a research participant, gets a treatment at our Kirkland clinic.

Join in research for better tomorrows

Have you ever considered taking part in a study at the Kidney Research Institute? There may be a study that needs people with exactly your condition. Ask your care team or visit <http://kri.washington.edu/communityconnection>.

Next Step classes can help you plan

What's next for you? Receiving dialysis at home on a flexible schedule? Finding a donor and getting a kidney transplant? Our free Next Step classes can help answer your questions. Visit www.nwkidney.org to see a list of upcoming dates.



Next Step classes are held at convenient places throughout the community.



Stay healthy this winter



Soap and water is good medicine for preventing infections. Anu Sharma, a Lake City patient, washes up.



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Pharmacy: 206-343-4870 or 1-800-947-8902

Northwest Kidney Centers promotes the optimal health, quality of life and independence of people with kidney disease through patient care, education and research.



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What's on your mind?

If something's on your mind, positive or negative, we want to hear about it. You can share comments, complaints or grievances without fear of reprisal. Your feedback helps us improve and give the best care possible.

Talk to the staff in your clinic starting with your nurse manager and social worker. We want to hear about any concerns early to start the problem-solving process.

Respond to patient surveys. We take all feedback seriously. We recently hired a new janitorial service based partly on patient input.

Use the comment forms in your clinic. We have comment forms so you can share suggestions, questions or compliments. Ask a staff member if you can't find them.

If you have a complaint or grievance to file, please talk with your nurse manager or social worker. Whether you communicate in person or in writing, all grievances are kept as confidential as possible. Contact Louise Kato, director of Patient Quality of Life Services, at 206-720-3706 or

Louise.Kato@nwkidney.org for help in resolving your concerns. You also may take your complaint to the Northwest Renal Network and the Washington State Department of Health, outside agencies that respond to grievances from dialysis patients.

Fall 2017



Patient Survey

In the next few weeks, an independent company will be conducting a survey of our patients. Please complete the survey—your feedback is important to us.