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# NEWSLETTER

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**News, stories  
hints & tips**

for children with kidney disease and their families



VitaFlo™

# My Renal Nutrition NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the sixth edition of the My Renal Nutrition newsletter - a newsletter devised by Vitaflo™ for children with kidney disease and their family, with content written by individuals who have personal experiences of living with kidney disease as well as healthcare professionals who work alongside patients with this condition.

This edition of the newsletter focuses on mindfulness and creating tasty meals.

If you have a story to share or even a great recipe idea, please let your dietitian know and we can be sure to include it in future newsletters.

Yours sincerely  
The team at Vitaflo



## WHAT'S INSIDE...

**MINDFULNESS AND  
CREATING A MINDFUL  
KITCHEN**

**CREATING TASTY MEALS**

when following a kidney friendly diet

**MY TOP TIPS FOR  
CREATING TASTY MEALS**

written by an individual with experience of living with kidney disease

**RECIPE IDEAS**

Fish fingers and polenta chips

**PARENTS CORNER:**

**THE USE OF PLAY TO  
ENCOURAGE ORAL DIET**





# MINDFULNESS

It is important to make sure we are looking after our mental health as well as our physical health. One tool which can help with this is something called "mindfulness".

Mindfulness allows you to focus on the here and now, to take a break and just be. This in turn can help you feel relaxed. It may even help your attention on other things like your school work.



## CREATING A MINDFUL KITCHEN

Written by Maggie Murphy, a Dietitian from the USA



When you have kidney disease, a lot of time can be spent thinking about what foods you can include within your diet, how best to cook these foods and also how to adapt meals to suit any specific dietary restrictions you may need to follow.

A clean and well-organized kitchen will aid your ability to put together mindfully crafted meals that are going to help keep you well.

Here are some tips to help you and your family organise the kitchen:

### GET ORGANISED

- Consider using shelf organizers or storage containers to store items like snacks, canned goods, bags of rice etc.
- When adding food items to the shelves, place the newest foods to the back so you use those with the shortest dates first.
- Make a list of what you have in your cupboard so you don't buy items that you already have in stock.
- Labelling and dating your food will also help you see what you need to purchase next.

HERE ARE SOME FOOD ITEMS THAT YOU COULD ALWAYS HAVE AVAILABLE IN YOUR KITCHEN TO HELP ADD FLAVOUR AND TEXTURE TO YOUR MEALS:

### CANNED BEANS

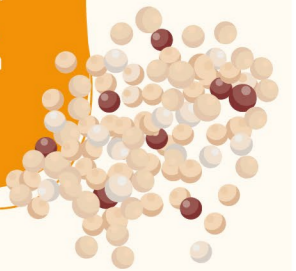
e.g. black beans, chilli beans

Canned beans (examples include black beans and chilli beans) are a healthy, high fibre protein source which are affordable and versatile. Beans are a great base for veggie burgers, soups and stews, and make a simple salad topper. **Choose those which are tinned in water rather than salted water**, or rinse the beans before using to get rid of excess salt. Quick-cooking lentils are also easy alternatives to stash in your pantry. If you are following a low potassium diet, please check with your dietitian about whether you can include these options in your diet or not.



### WHOLE GRAINS

Versatile and quick-cooking whole grains, like quinoa, whole-wheat couscous and whole-wheat pasta, contain **fibre, antioxidants and inflammation-fighting phytonutrients**. Whole grains are a healthier compared to white pasta, white rice and white bread and can help keep you feeling full and satisfied for longer.



### ONIONS, GARLIC & SHALLOTS

These **flavourful vegetables** can be tossed in a basket at the bottom of your pantry and last for weeks. Add them to a stir-fry, or mince and add to a dressing or marinade.



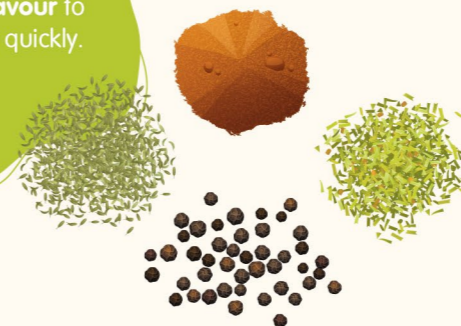
### LEMONS & LIMES

Citrus flavours can be **added to any** marinade or salad dressing, so having a few lemons, limes, oranges on hand



### HERBS & SPICES

Having these available in your kitchen means you **can add flavour** to your meals very quickly.



### ASSORTED OILS & VINEGARS

Oils can be used for cooking and making dressings / sauces for foods.





# CREATING TASTY MEALS

when following a kidney friendly diet

Meals may need a little more thought and planning when you are following a kidney friendly diet. However it is still possible to have lovely meals that you can enjoy with your family and friends. Here are some suggestions to get you started.

## IDEAS

### PASTA OR NOODLES



**START WITH:** any kind of pasta: spaghetti, spirals, orzo, etc.

**ADD A SAUCE:** butter, garlic, herbs, oil, small amounts of cream sauces.

**ADD MORE:** add fresh, cooked meat or fish and some lower potassium vegetables such as runner beans, beansprouts and carrots.

**EXAMPLE IDEA:** Spiral pasta with fresh, cooked chicken and peas in a cream based sauce.

### RICE OR COUS COUS



**START WITH:** any kind of rice: long grain, wild rice, pilau rice, basmati rice and risotto. Cous cous can also be used.

**ADD:** fresh, cooked meat or fish.

**ADD MORE:** add some lower potassium vegetables.

**EXAMPLE IDEA:** Wild rice with beef, carrots and broccoli.

### SALADS



**START WITH:** mixed lettuce.

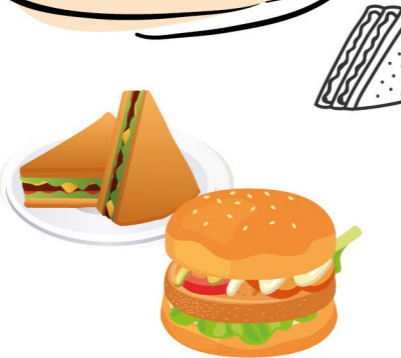
**ADD VEGGIES:** chopped green peppers, cucumber and a small amount of onion.

**ADD MORE:** cream cheese, tuna, cottage cheese.

**ADD:** a low salt dressing, mayonnaise, salad cream or olive oil. You can also add croutons for added crunch!

**EXAMPLE IDEA:** Mixed greens with an oil and vinegar dressing, chopped, grilled chicken, sprinkling of sweetcorn, and sliced apple.

### SANDWICHES



**START WITH:** your bread; consider different types such as wholemeal or granary bread, pitta, rolls, bagels, sourdough, bun etc

**ADD FRESH, COOKED MEAT:** such as chicken, pulled pork, or a beefburger. You could try a bean burger if you prefer to have a meat-free option.

**ADD MORE:** mustard, mayonnaise, relish.

**ADD LOW POTASSIUM VEGETABLES:** cucumber, peppers, sweetcorn, lettuce or grated carrot.

**EXAMPLE IDEA:** Grilled chicken sandwich on a sourdough bun with lettuce and mustard

### WANT TO ADD A SIDE DISH?



**TRY LOWER POTASSIUM VEGETABLES:** sliced carrots, asparagus, or a green side salad.

**TRY LOWER POTASSIUM FRUIT SUCH AS:** grapes, strawberries, canned fruit in syrup such as peaches or pears, apple slices, etc.

**TRY:** unsalted tortilla chips, breadsticks, unsalted rice cakes, corn cakes, pitta wedges.

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.



# MY TOP TIPS FOR CREATING TASTY MEALS

for those with kidney disease



Written by Aphria

Aphria was diagnosed with congenital nephrotic syndrome at one year of age. Congenital nephrotic syndrome is a kidney condition that begins in infancy and typically leads to irreversible kidney failure by early childhood. Both her kidneys were removed at 18 months old, and she was on dialysis until receiving a kidney from her dad. The kidney began failing when she was 17 years old, and after being on dialysis again, Aphria has just received her second successful kidney transplant. Here Aphria shares her tips for creating tasty meals when you have kidney disease.

Tasty nutritious meals are important throughout every stage of kidney disease. However, you may feel that diet and fluid restrictions can take away some of the enjoyment of food; this doesn't have to be the way!



Personally, when I got used to having dialysis treatment I found the 'kidney friendly diet' or 'renal diet' (as it is sometimes called) a great opportunity to get more creative with food. It pushed me to find alternative ways to create new flavours or try new foods and food combinations. I definitely remember variations of stuffed peppers becoming an easy regular meal!

## MY TIPS:



**1. Know what foods you can have in your diet by talking to your Dietitian or Doctor - and find ways you like to eat them, whether that be grilling, roasting, lightly frying, cold, warm etc.**



**2. Experiment with flavours – think of adding spices, herbs and lemon or lime to give foods a little bit of extra flavour. This can make a big difference, especially if you find yourself eating very similar foods and meals regularly.**



**3. Ginger, paprika, garlic, pepper etc were definitely my favourites (and still are) to add to meals.**



**4. Despite fluid restrictions, you can still add dressings. For example, just add half of the amount that you used to use.**



**5. Little platters or 'picky meals' such as Houmous, pitta and veggies are useful if your appetite isn't great.**

If you are having a particular craving for a certain dish, you could still have it but maybe have a smaller portion. **Ask your Dietitian about this.**



# Fish Fingers



Try making this recipe



Serves  
4

## Ingredients

300g white fish fillet (cod, haddock, pollock)

50g breadcrumbs (blitz 1-2 slices of bread in a food processor or grate)

1 egg, beaten

50g cornflakes

120g plain flour

Oil for frying

## Method

1. Cut the fish fillets into 8 fingers
2. Set out 3 bowls; one with the beaten egg in, 1 with the flour in and one with the cornflakes and breadcrumbs in.
3. One at a time, coat the raw fish in flour, then dip into the beaten egg mixture before finally coating in the cornflakes or breadcrumbs, making sure you coat all the fish evenly.
4. Carefully fill a frying pan with rapeseed, vegetable or sunflower oil about 1 cm deep to shallow fry. Heat the oil, to test the temperature, drop a cornflake in, it should sizzle slowly and gently brown over 20-30 seconds. If the bread coating browns too quickly and burns, the oil is too hot.
5. Fry the fish for about 3 minutes each side. Be careful not to splash the hot oil.

**Tip**

**Serve with polenta chips and peas.  
Be aware of the potassium content in any accompanying vegetables.**



# Polenta Chips



Serves  
4

## Ingredients

50g polenta  
200ml reduced salt chicken or  
vegetable stock, or water

1 tbsp Parmesan cheese (optional)  
2 tbsp sunflower oil

## Method

1. Bring the stock to a boil in a saucepan and add the polenta in a steady stream. Cook, stirring continuously, for 5 minutes (take care as polenta bubbles furiously).
2. Take off the heat and stir in the parmesan (if using).
3. Spoon the mixture onto the tray and flatten into a large rectangular shape, about 5-10 mm thick (depending on how thick you want your chips!) using the back of the wooden spoon. Leave to cool for 10-15 minutes.
4. Using a sharp knife, chop into thin chip shapes. Fry lightly and evenly on all 4 sides in oil. Serve hot and enjoy!

Try making this recipe





# THE USE OF PLAY TO ENCOURAGE ORAL DIET



Written by Neoma Jacobs, Play Specialist, Leeds General Infirmary, UK

## HOW CAN FOOD PLAY HELP WITH ORAL DIET?

Children often go through stages of being a 'fussy' eater but for many they can be more sensitive to the smell or feel of food. For many children with renal conditions their diet is limited and they have fluid restrictions, often due to spending time in hospital or worrying about infection risks due to having different lines etc they can miss out on messy activities that would introduce them to different textures.

The aim of food play is to introduce foods of different textures, smells, taste in a fun and engaging way with no pressure on them to eat it. Food play should be fun and incorporate things they enjoy and are interested in. Once children are exposed to food, they are more likely to be willing to try new taste and textures to eat.

## IDEAS TO HELP ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO TRY DIFFERENT FOODS

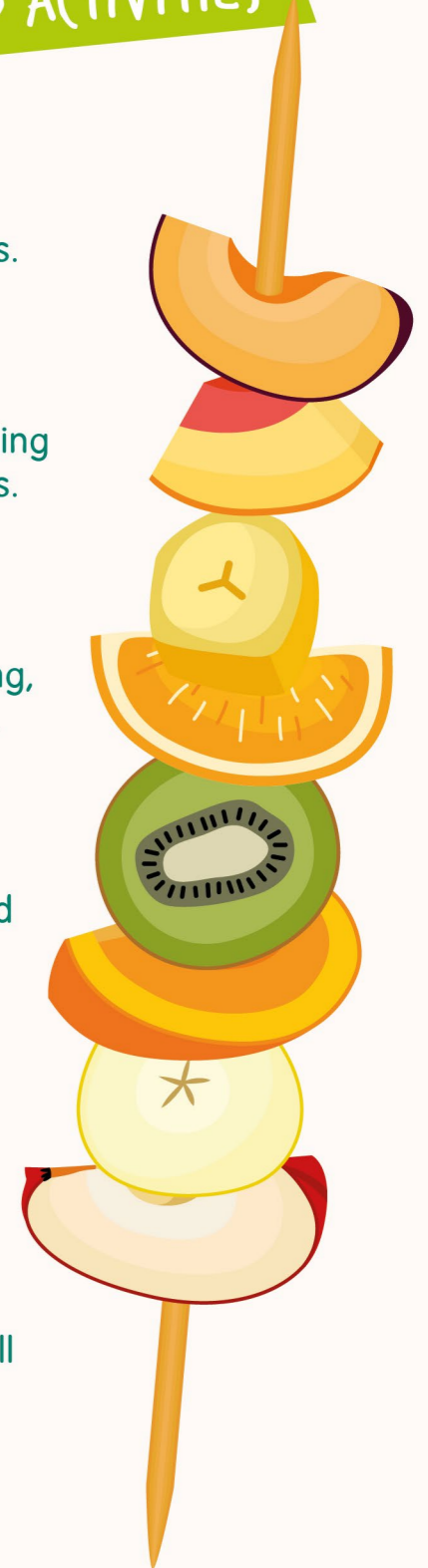
We usually suggest food play is not done over meal times and that dry foods such as cereal are used before moving onto foods that are tacky or may have a strong smell. Do not directly put the food on the child's hand, give them time to look at and touch if they want to. Offer spoons and other utensils for picking up and move the items without having to touch it until they are comfortable.

- Dry food - cereals, uncooked pasta or rice, crisps
- Cooked veg - Broccoli, pea's, corn
- Tacky food - marshmallows, cooked pasta/rice
- Starchy food - mash potato, mushy pea's
- Wet foods - custard, jelly, sauces
- Smelly food - citrus, cheese, cinnamon, popcorn



## WAYS OF INCORPORATING FOOD INTO ACTIVITIES

- \* Use Weetabix to build towers.
- \* Farm play, tractors move food to feed animals.
- \* Trains transporting and unloading food at different parts of tracks.
- \* Broccoli forest/jungle trees and cereal beaches.
- \* Marshmallow squishing, rolling, wetting and sticking together.
- \* Mash potato and bean/sauce volcanos.
- \* Toys in jelly, custard and food colouring mixing, yoghurt finger painting.
- \* Fruit printing/ fruit kebabs, smally boxes.
- \* Cooking/Baking activities, biscuit decorating.
- \* Juice pong, different cups to aim for and if ping pong ball goes in you have to drink and guess the drink.



IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO EXPLORE WARM AND COLD FOODS AND DIFFERENT TEXTURES.



Vitaflo (International) Ltd is a clinical nutrition company who specialise in developing products and resources for those with kidney disease. The information in this newsletter is for general information only and must not be used as a substitute for professional medical advice or treatment. Your dietitian and doctor will provide you with advice with regards to the management of your condition and it is important that you follow the advice that they provide.



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