

Nutrition tips to help you prevent kidney stones

What you eat and drink can help prevent kidney stones. We've created this document to help you.

What to drink

The best way to prevent kidney stones is drink a lot of fluid. Most of your fluids should come from water, but all fluids count.

Drink 2.5 liters of fluid each day. This is 10 cups.

Healthy fluid choices

- Water
- Coconut water
- Unsweet carbonated water
- Low-fat milk
- Crystal Light lemonade
- Low-calorie juices (less than 50 calories)
- Tea (unsweet, black, green, or herbal)
- Coffee (unsweet, only 2 cups per day)

Fluids to avoid

- Juice (regular and sweetened)
- Soda
- Sweet tea
- Fruit punch
- Tomato, vegetable, and "green juice"
- Hot chocolate

Try infused water

If it's hard for you to drink enough water, try infusing it with fruits and vegetables. This will add flavor and makes it easier to drink more water every day.

Here are ideas for infused water.

- Watermelon and fresh basil
- Strawberries, lemon, and basil
- Lemon, cucumber, and mint
- Orange and ginger

Add fruits or vegetables to the water. Chill in the fridge for 2 hours before you drink.

What to eat

What you eat is just as important as what you drink. There are several tips to remember about your diet to help you stay healthy.

Cut out salt

- Do not eat more than 2,300 mg of sodium per day.
- Look for foods with less than 140 mg of sodium per serving.
- Did you know that 1/4 teaspoon of salt is 600 mg of sodium? Most food we eat already has salt. Do not add extra salt when you cook.

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Avoid salty foods

Processed meats and cheeses

Deli meat, bacon, turkey bacon, sausage, hot dogs, bologna, American cheese, Velveeta cheese, and Cheese Wiz.

Sauces and condiments

Salad dressing, soy sauce, ketchup, barbecue sauce and pickles.

Breaded and fried foods

French fries, fried chicken and fish, chicken nuggets and mozzarella sticks.

Salty snack foods

Potato chips, pretzels and salted nuts.

Frozen, canned or boxed foods

Frozen meals, pizza, frozen stir-fry, canned chili, canned ravioli, boxed macaroni and cheese.

Canned meats and vegetables

Avoid these or look for low salt ones.

Packaged bread and cereals

Read the label on these foods. Choose ones that have 6 percent sodium or less (140 mg).

Limit meats

Too much meat can make kidney stones worse. Limit these meats in your diet: beef, chicken, duck, fish, game meat, lamb, pork veal, shellfish, turkey and organic meats.

You can have 2 servings a day.

Your serving should not be more than 4 ounces, the size of a deck of cards.

Try these plant proteins instead

Beans (pinto, lima, kidney), chickpeas, lentils, peas, seitan, tempeh, tofu (with no added calcium), or whole grains such as farro, quinoa, and barley.

Eat enough calcium

It is important to eat enough calcium if you have kidney stones. You should eat 1,200 mg of calcium a day. The best way to do this is eat 3 servings of dairy every day.

Ask your provider if a calcium supplement may be right for you.

Healthy calcium foods

- Milk (non-fat or low-fat)
- Yogurt (non-fat or low-fat)
- Cottage cheese (low sodium)
- Rice, oat and coconut milk
- Kefir yogurt
- Cheese (low sodium mozzarella, swiss, and ricotta)

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Eat more fruits and vegetables

Fruits and vegetables give your body many important vitamins, minerals and fibers. These foods can help lower acid in your urine and prevent kidney stones.

Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day.

In addition to the 5 servings, try this drink to add more citric acid to your diet:

- Add 2 ounces (1/4 cup) pure lemon or lime juice (not lemonade or limeade) and mix with water.
- Drink this 2 times per day.

Avoid Vitamin C supplements

Do not take any Vitamin C supplements unless your provider tells you to. Natural Vitamin C in food is okay.

You might need to limit high oxalate foods

Based on your blood work, your provider will tell you if you need to limit these foods.

Oxalate is in many healthy foods. You can't avoid it, but will need to limit certain foods.

Limit these

- Rhubarb (1/2 cup cooked)
- Spinach (1/2 cup cooked, 1 cup raw)
- Swiss chard (1/2 cup cooked)
- Almonds (22 nuts)and almond product like milk, flour, and butter
- Cashews (18 nuts)
- Corn grits or corn meal (1 cup)
- Miso Soup (1 cup)
- Bran cereals (1 cup)
- Beets and beet greens (1/2 cup cooked)
- Navy beans (1/2 cup)
- Soy flour (1 cup)
- Potatoes (white or sweet) 1 medium baked with skin
- French fries (1/2 cup)
- Mashed potatoes, white or sweet (1 cup)
- Potato chips (18 chips)