

Lowering your phosphate levels

This leaflet is for people with kidney disease. It tells you why it is important to lower the level of phosphate in your blood and suggests ways you can do this. If you have any further questions, please get in touch using the details on the back page.

Why do I need to lower my phosphate levels?

Phosphate is a mineral found in your body and in many foods. The kidneys normally help to control the level of phosphate in your blood. If your kidneys are not working properly, phosphate is not adequately removed and the phosphate levels in your blood increase. High levels of phosphate in your blood can cause weak bones and can build up in your blood vessels, joints or muscles causing them to harden.

Reducing your intake of phosphate-rich foods and taking phosphate-binding tablets can help to lower the level of phosphate in your blood.

The following tables show foods that are high in phosphate that you should avoid or limit. Suitable alternatives are also given.

| Dairy | Allowances |
|---------|--|
| Milk | 180ml ($\frac{1}{3}$ pint) per day This includes milk in drinks, cereals, puddings and sauces |
| Cheese | 110g (4oz) per week (1 oz is the size of a small matchbox) Choose cream cheese or cottage cheese where possible |
| Yoghurt | 2 small cartons per week |
| Eggs | 4 per week |

| Avoid | Choose instead |
|---|---|
| Dried milk and tinned milks, such as evaporated milk | 180ml ($\frac{1}{3}$ pint) fresh milk per day (as stated in allowances). |
| Hard or processed cheese, such as cheddar, Dairylea, Primula, Laughing Cow | Up to 110g (4oz) per week of cheeses such as brie, camembert, mozzarella, cream cheese, cottage cheese, ricotta cheese. |
| Nuts and all products containing nuts | Plain biscuits*, cakes* and cereals* |
| Milk-based or yoghurt-based drinks such as Nutriment, Horlicks, hot chocolate | Tea, fruit squashes*, fizzy drinks*, flavoured water* and plain water |

*Some of the foods listed may not be suitable for people with diabetes.

Phosphate binders

Phosphate binders are medicines that help to lower the level of phosphate in your blood. They work by reducing the amount of phosphate absorbed by your body from food, and are therefore taken with meals. Many different phosphate binders are available and your doctor will prescribe the one most suitable for you. Examples of the available preparations include calcium carbonate (Adcal[®] or Calcichew[®]), calcium acetate (Phosex[®]), sevelamer (Renagel[®]), and lanthanum carbonate (Fosrenol[®]).

Remember

- Take the **full dose** of phosphate binders that has been prescribed for you.
- Phosphate binders need to be taken around mealtimes – your pharmacist or dietitian will give you specific advice on how to take the one that you are prescribed.
- If you do not eat anything, you do not need to take a phosphate binder.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about lowering your phosphate levels, please do not hesitate to ask your renal dietitian by calling the nutrition and dietetics department on **020 7188 4128**, 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday – please leave a message on our answer phone and we will call you back.

Alternatively you can talk to your nurse or pharmacist.

Pharmacy medicines helpline

For information about any medicines that you have been prescribed at Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals, you can speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

t: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Knowledge & Information Centre (KIC)

For more information about health conditions, support groups and local services, or to search the internet and send emails, please visit the KIC on the Ground Floor, North Wing, St Thomas' Hospital.

t: 020 7188 3416

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk