KidneyCare
Me and My lifestyle
Preventing injury – safety around the house

Having brittle bones makes you prone to fractures (when the bone breaks).

Looking after my bones

I need to take special care of my bones

Our kidneys play an important role in maintaining healthy bones. As a patient with chronic kidney disease, you may be at risk of bone disease or ‘renal osteodystrophy’.

When the kidneys fail, they can’t maintain the proper levels of calcium and phosphorus in the blood, leading to abnormal bone hormone levels. The result is that your body cannot take up calcium from food, so it “borrows” the calcium it needs from the body’s biggest calcium storage depot: your bones, making them brittle (weak) and likely to break.

Prevent injury with these guidelines:

- Remove loose rugs around the house
- Cover slippery floors – especially in the bathroom
- Get rid of any low furniture
- Use anti-slip devices where possible
- Wear good quality, stable, non-slip shoes
- Ask your doctor about hip pads if you have osteoporosis as these can help prevent hip fractures if you have a fall

Prevent osteoporosis by regularly monitoring your blood calcium and phosphate levels, and taking steps to correct bone disease due to your chronic kidney failure (secondary hyperparathyroidism)

- Take special care after haemodialysis, especially if you feel faint for a while. Ask a family member or friend to collect you and rest until you feel better

Planning ahead

You may be spending a lot of time on dialysis and at the clinic. This will mean that you need to make sacrifices and perhaps have less time to do some of the things that you used to do. By planning ahead, you can make sure that you are ready for activities that you have to do and make time for the things that you want to do.

Planning meals ahead of time can make sure you have food available at home, so that you eat the right foods and don’t skip meals. Some things to think about when planning ahead:

- When are you going to the clinic?
- How are you going to get there and get home?
- How long will you spend there?
- When are you going to work? Are there deadlines for specific projects?
- When can you fit that work in?
- When will you go shopping?
- When are you going to eat? What are you going to eat?
- What are some of the things that you really enjoy doing?
- When will you fit those in?
- When are you going to spend time with friends and family?
- When are you going to plan some physical activity and time for hobbies?

“People who become partners in their care live longer.”
What I can and what I can’t eat

Limiting my protein

Protein is necessary to maintain a healthy body and to prevent infection. However, breakdown products from proteins in the diet put an extra strain on the kidneys. In people with kidney disease, this may speed up the worsening of your kidney function.

Therefore, people with chronic kidney disease who are not on dialysis need to lower their protein intake. Dialysis will help to take out breakdown products of proteins and so, if you are getting dialysis regularly, you may have more protein in your diet again.

Sources of good quality protein include beef, pork, chicken and turkey, fish, and eggs.

My daily eating and drinking

Good nutrition principles, limitation of fluid, regular physical activity and taking your medicine as prescribed are the foundation for greater wellbeing in patients with kidney conditions.

Because your kidneys are not working, your body is not getting rid of extra water and waste as it normally would do. So, in between dialysis sessions you need to be careful of how much fluid you take in and what type of foods you eat.

It is necessary that you meet with a dietitian, who will guide you on the dietary changes that you need to make and give you a detailed eating plan with a focus on the foods you need to cut down or stay away from.

The type of dialysis you are getting will affect which foods you can eat and which ones you should stay away from.

Limiting my fluid intake

When you have kidney failure, you are not able to pass urine and when you drink fluids, these fluids store in the body. The extra fluid in the body puts strain on especially your lungs and your heart.

Remember all foods that are fluids at room temperature hold water, for example drinks, soup, ice cream and jelly.

Many fruit and vegetables have a lot of water in them, for example pawpaw, peaches, oranges, nectarines, tomatoes, celery and grapes.

Stay away from salty foods that are likely to make you thirsty.

Dealing with thirst

Try sucking on an ice cube or ice chips (1 ice cube = 25 ml water), cold sliced fruit or sour sweets; or chew sports gum with citric acid, which may ease a dry mouth.

What to do when injury happens

No matter how hard you try, you may at some point injure yourself. Here’s what to do if this happens:

- If you are mobile get medical care at your GP or casualty unit
- If you are not mobile call an ambulance for help. Make sure you keep all important emergency telephone numbers on hand at all times.

It is important to have a MedicAlert bracelet so that medical staff can immediately get all your medical information, especially if you are unconscious after a fall. For application details, turn to the “Making sure everyone knows about my condition if an emergency arises” section of this book on page 88.

If you have fallen, make the necessary changes to prevent it happening again.

Including healthy fats in my diet

Fats are necessary for health. They give energy and form building blocks of cells and hormones that control body function. However, there are different types of fat in foods and some are healthier than others. A healthy diet must have ‘healthy’ fats, but stay away from ‘unhealthy’ fats.

Healthy fats (polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats) include omega-3 and omega-6 fats and are found in oily fish like salmon and sardines. Vegetable oils like sunflower oil and olive oil also contain healthy fats. Patients with chronic renal failure may eat more total fat than the general population (up to 35% of the total energy), but it must be healthy fats.

Less healthy fats (saturated fats) are found in red meat, poultry and dairy products. When including these in your diet, look for trimmed meat and ‘low fat’ or ‘fat-free’ options.

Fats that are very unhealthy (trans fatty acids) and that should be avoided are found in baked, fried and processed foods like chips, pies, confectionery (cakes and puddings) and fast foods.
Staying away from sodium

Sodium is found in salt and seasonings. Processed foods (for example canned and frozen foods, fast foods and snacks) often have lots of salt in them. Sodium causes your body to store water and makes your blood pressure higher, and you must stay away from it.

Look for ‘low salt’ or ‘salt-free’ options when choosing food or ingredients for making a meal. However, be careful of salt substitutes (replacements), because they may have potassium, which you must also stay away from.

Instead of salt and traditional seasonings, try these options to pack food full of flavour:

- Any fresh and dried herbs
- Spices: cinnamon, ginger, coriander, garlic, cayenne pepper, any pepper, curry powder, chillies, Tabasco, paprika
- Vinegar.

Lowering my potassium intake

High potassium levels may have a bad effect on your heart. Because potassium levels may get higher in between dialysis sessions, it is important to lower the amount of potassium that you eat.

Potassium is a mineral found in fruit, vegetables and dairy products such as milk and yoghurt.

It is therefore important that potassium levels are watched closely. Generally people on dialysis can have one serving from the high-potassium group of foods, two servings from the medium-potassium group and two to three servings a day from the low-potassium group. Use this handy table to guide you when choosing foods that have potassium.

Potassium-containing foods

High potassium-containing fruits:

- Oranges, orange juice, kiwi fruits, watermelon, grapes, mango, melons, nectarines, prunes, prune juice, raisins, dried fruits, bananas, fresh peaches

NOTE: Stay away from star fruit altogether.

Medium potassium-containing fruits:

- Apple, canned fruit cocktail, plums, canned pineapple/apple/pear, grapefruit juice, pineapple juice.

Low potassium-containing fruits:

- Berries, cherries, (drained), pineapple, plums (canned), pears (fresh or canned), tangerine/naartjie and cranberry juice, grape juice.

High potassium-containing vegetables:

- Unleached potatoes, including french fries, chips, sweet potatoes, parsnips.

- Unleached carrots and beetroot tomatoes, tomato sauce, gem squash, butternut, avocado, cooked small leaf/baby spinach and rhubarb.

Medium potassium-containing vegetables:

- Broccoli, carrots, celery, eggplant, mushrooms, mixed vegetables, hubbard pumpkin, leached potatoes, sweet potatoes, parsnips, carrots, beetroot, Swiss chard spinach, Boer pampoen / flat white pumpkin, asparagus, cauliflower, green beans and peas.

Low potassium-containing vegetables:

- Cabbage, cucumber, garlic, lettuce (all types), onions, corn, peppers (all types), radishes, watercress, frozen zucchini and yellow squash.
Keeping your phosphorus at a safe level will keep your bones healthy. To do this it’s necessary to keep phosphorous intakes low and calcium high. However this is difficult because foods that have high levels of calcium such as milk and dairy products are also high in phosphorus. Also the high-protein recommendation may also lead to high phosphorus intakes. To help control the high levels of phosphorus in your blood, you may need to chew phosphate binders with your meals and snacks as prescribed by your doctor. Taking extra calcium and active vitamin D are commonly prescribed to prevent complications such as metabolic bone disease.

Limit high-phosphorus foods to one portion a day, which is equivalent to:
- ½ cup of low-fat or fat-free milk or yoghurt
- 2 scoops of tub ice cream (not soft serve)
- 60g ricotta or cottage cheese.

Include food products low in phosphorus:
- Soft-tub margarine
- Rice or soya milk.

High phosphorous foods and drinks to avoid:
- Coffee creamer
- Cola-type drinks
- Beer
- Maas
- Soya products

Learning to read and understand food labels

Read labels carefully, and don’t forget that what you eat can have a major impact on your condition.

Most foods that come in tins or packets have a label that tells you what the nutritional content of the food is. By understanding these labels you can make informed decisions about which foods you buy. Ask your dietitian to show you how to read and understand a food label.

Stop constipation

Due to fluid limitations, low fibre intake, and maybe the use of phosphate binders, you may battle with constipation. Eating a mixture of fruits and vegetables (in line with the dietary guidelines for dialysis), oats porridge, brown rice and brown bread could help. Including oil in your diet is also important.

Read labels carefully and don’t forget that what you eat has a major impact on your condition.

“Talk to a dietitian to help you choose the best foods for your condition.”
What you eat has an important impact on the management of your disease

Eating well is the key to giving your body the right kind of fuel – while not damaging necessary organs and functions. You need to keep your energy levels up, and feed your body and mind with the right kinds of foods while you are dealing with kidney failure and getting treatment. Eating badly and making unwise food choices gets in the way of your body’s functioning and your response to treatment.

In the next section, we’ll show you how you can eat well within the guidelines for people on dialysis. And you’ll be pleased to know you don’t need to feel deprived, we’ve included some healthy treats too. Enjoy!

The recipes have been planned based on the dietary guidelines for people on dialysis due to kidney failure. It is necessary to talk to a registered dietitian so that an individualised meal plan can be worked out for you in line with specific protein, phosphorous, potassium, calcium and sodium recommendations. We have also included some note pages where you can write down your own favourite recipes and make notes about the protein, phosphorous, potassium, calcium and sodium content of your favourite foods.

Short-term changes in my weight may be due to fluid retention

Because your kidneys are not working properly, your body will store water in between dialysis sessions, causing you to weigh more. Your weight after completing a dialysis session is called your dry weight.

Your dietitian will tell you how to control your fluid intake so that you maintain the best possible dry weight.

What you eat has an important impact on the management of your disease

Eating well is the key to giving your body the right kind of fuel – while not damaging necessary organs and functions. You need to keep your energy levels up, and feed your body and mind with the right kinds of foods while you are dealing with kidney failure and getting treatment. Eating badly and making unwise food choices gets in the way of your body’s functioning and your response to treatment.

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Maintaining a healthy weight

Being overweight puts you at a higher risk of getting other medical problems, in addition to your kidney disease. Some of these include cardiovascular diseases (like high blood pressure, heart attack or stroke), diabetes, sleep disorders and painful joints and arthritis.

Maintaining a healthy weight is important, because people with chronic kidney disease are already at a higher risk of getting some of these conditions. Being overweight may also make other treatments for kidney disease, such as dialysis or transplant surgery more difficult.

Keeping an eye on the size of my waist

Your healthcare provider or dietitian can tell you what a healthy weight is for you. As a simple rule of thumb, measuring your waist circumference (all the way around your waist) can tell you if you are at a high risk of weight-related problems.

- In men, waist circumference should be less than 102cm
- In women, waist circumference should be less than 88cm.

However, remember that if you are on peritoneal dialysis, the fluid in your abdomen will make your waist circumference bigger.

Losing weight if I am overweight

If you are overweight, you can help to improve and care for your health by losing weight. The general principles of losing weight are simple – you need to use up more energy than what you take in when you eat and drink. That means eating fewer calories and doing more exercise.

Eating less food and making healthy food choices

Your dietitian will advise you on healthy food choices that are right for you.

The following tips may help you to cut down the amount of food that you eat during the day:

- Eat a good breakfast every day
- Drink a glass of water before your meal
- Eat slowly and chew each mouthful
- Use smaller plates, serve smaller portions and take smaller mouthfuls
- Eat at the table and not in front of the television
- Don’t shop when you are hungry
- Try not to snack in between meals
- Eat smaller meals more frequently (for example five small meals during the day, instead of three large ones).
French toast topped with mixed berries

Serves 4

Ingredients
4 slices rye bread
1 egg, beaten
¾ cup fat-free milk
10 large strawberries (250g), washed and sliced
½ cup blueberries (140g), washed
½ teaspoon cinnamon

Method
1. Mix the egg and milk, and then dip the slices of bread into the egg mixture
2. Spray a saucepan with a non-stick spray and heat the saucepan on the stove
3. When hot add the egg-soaked bread to the saucepan, and cook the bread slice until golden brown on both sides and cooked through
4. Remove from the heat, and top each slice of French toast with the strawberries and blueberries
5. Sprinkle with cinnamon and serve.

Nutritional values for each serving:

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<tr>
<th>Nutrient</th>
<th>Amount (g)</th>
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Breakfasts

Artichoke and mushroom omelette

Serves 4

Ingredients
4 large eggs
4 egg whites
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 punnet mushrooms (220g), raw, thinly sliced
2 artichoke globes, sliced
Black pepper, freshly ground

Method
1. Heat the olive oil in a large non-stick pan
2. Beat together the eggs and egg whites and pour the egg mixture into the pan once the olive oil is warm
3. Allow the omelette to cook through until it is opaque in colour and has started to bubble, then add the sliced artichoke globes and mushrooms
4. Fold the omelette over and slice into four portion sizes (or alternatively make four individual omelettes)
5. Season with freshly ground black pepper, serve and enjoy.

Nutritional values for each serving:

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<th>Amount (g)</th>
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“Food preparation takes time and effort and you may not feel up to it all the time. When you cook, double your recipes and freeze meals for those days when you can’t face the kitchen.”
Cucumber-wrapped salmon bites

Serves 4

Ingredients
1 medium cucumber (300g)
160g fresh salmon fillet, cut into bite-sized cubes
1 tablespoon sesame seed oil
2 tablespoons sesame seeds
2 teaspoons ginger, fresh, sliced
4 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
Fresh coriander, to garnish

Method
1. Rub the salmon with the sesame seed oil and then sprinkle over the sesame seeds
2. Place them into a saucepan and sear on all sides, then remove from the heat and allow to cool
3. Peel the cucumber and then use a vegetable peeler to shave long ribbons of cucumber
4. Roll each cube of seared salmon in a cucumber ribbon and place onto an attractive serving plate
5. Top each salmon bite with a slice of ginger, a drizzle with balsamic vinegar, then garnish with fresh coriander and serve.

Nutritional values for each serving:

- Energy: 672 Kilojoules (kJ)
- Protein (g): 10.9
- Total fat (g): 11.4
- Saturated fat (g): 2.1
- Monounsaturated fat (g): 3.0
- Polyunsaturated fat (g): 2.3
- Cholesterol (mg): 31
- Carbohydrates (g): 6.6
- Of which is sugars (g): 3.9
- Fibre (g): 0.1
- Sodium (mg): 210
- Phosphorus (mg): 160
- Potassium (mg): 227

Saucy chutney and coriander chicken breasts

Serves 4

Ingredients
4 small chicken breasts, skinless (320g)
2 tablespoons fruit chutney
2 tablespoons low-fat mayonnaise
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
4 tablespoons coriander, finely chopped
Black pepper, freshly ground

Method
1. Preheat the oven to 180°C
2. Place the chicken breasts into an oven dish
3. Mix together the chutney, mayonnaise, lemon juice, garlic, and vinegar until well combined and then pour this mixture over the chicken breasts
4. Bake the chicken breasts for 25 – 30 minutes, or until cooked through
5. Remove the chicken from the oven, and serve garnished with chopped fresh coriander, and season with freshly ground black pepper.

Nutritional values for each serving:

- Energy: 846 Kilojoules (kJ)
- Protein (g): 23.4
- Total fat (g): 8.6
- Saturated fat (g): 2.1
- Monounsaturated fat (g): 3.0
- Polyunsaturated fat (g): 2.3
- Cholesterol (mg): 74
- Carbohydrates (g): 6.6
- Of which is sugars (g): 3.9
- Fibre (g): 0.1
- Sodium (mg): 210
- Phosphorus (mg): 160
- Potassium (mg): 227
## Fresh watermelon and herb salad

**Serves 4**

**Ingredients**
- 3 crowns watermelon (600g)
- 1 round feta cheese (60g)
- 1 bunch coriander, fresh
- 1 bunch basil, fresh
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

**Method**
1. Cut the watermelon into bite-size cubes
2. Finely chop all of the herbs, and mix them with the watermelon cubes
3. Drizzle over the olive oil and balsamic vinegar, and crumble over the round of feta cheese
4. Serve and enjoy!

**Nutritional values for each serving:**

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## Lemon foil-baked fennel fish

**Serves 4**

**Ingredients**
- 4 small hake fillets (400g)
- 1 cup fennel, thinly sliced (87g)
- 4 sprigs fennel fronds
- 1 medium red onion (120g), finely sliced
- 4 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 lemon, juice and zest
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- Black pepper, freshly ground
- 4 sheets of foil, doubled

**Method**
1. Place each hake fillet into its own sheet of foil, and fold the side of the foil up into a boat shape
2. Top it with the finely sliced fennel bulb and red onion and scatter over some fennel fronds
3. Divide the lemon juice, lemon zest and balsamic vinegar between the fish parcels, season with freshly ground black pepper, and crush together the foil at the top so that it forms an enclosed parcel
4. Place onto a braai or into the oven to grill for 15 – 20 minutes or until the fish flakes easily
5. Serve with a fresh green salad.

**Nutritional values for each serving:**

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Desserts

Cinnamon and spice plums

Serves 4

Ingredients

4 plums (200g), halved and stoned
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 cup fresh apple juice
4 cloves
2 star anise
120 ml fat-free vanilla yoghurt

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180 °C
2. Place the plums, facing down, in a baking dish, and pour over the apple juice, then add the cinnamon, cloves and star anise
3. Place into the oven and bake until soft and fragrant, for about 30 – 35 minutes
4. Remove from the oven and serve warm with a blob of fat-free vanilla yoghurt.

Nutritional values for each serving:

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Raspberry and blackberry fruit pavlova

Serves 10 – 12

Ingredients

2 egg whites
1/2 teaspoon vinegar
20ml cold water
1/2 teaspoon vanilla essence
1 1/2 teaspoon corn flour
125ml castor sugar
25ml sucralose baking sweetener

Topping:

4 tablespoons (50g) smooth, fat-free cottage cheese
1/2 cup fat-free vanilla yoghurt
1/2 vanilla pod
4 teaspoons sucralose baking sweetener
1 punnet fresh raspberries (220g)
1 punnet fresh blackberries (220g)
2 teaspoons lemon juice
2 tablespoons fresh mint, finely chopped

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180 °C
2. Beat the egg whites until stiff. Add 1/2 teaspoon vinegar, 20ml cold water, 1/2 teaspoon vanilla essence, 1 1/2 teaspoon corn flour, 125ml castor sugar and 25ml sucralose baking sweetener to the egg whites and mix until well combined.
3. Place into a piping bag and pipe mounds on a baking tray lined with baking paper. Bake in the oven for about 25 minutes until firm and golden.
4. Once cooled, place the mounds on a plate and top with the raspberry and blackberry fruit pavlova topping.

Nutritional values for each serving:

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<th>Energy</th>
<th>Kilojoules (kJ): 275</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cholesterol (mg): 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbohydrates (g): 13.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which is sugars (g): 0.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibre (g): 1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium (mg): 23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phosphorus (mg): 41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potassium (mg): 183</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Frozen apple and blueberry ice lollies**

**Serves 4**

**Ingredients**

- 500ml apple juice
- 2 punnets frozen or fresh blueberries (440g)
- 4 ice lolly moulds

**Method**

1. Place the apple juice and blueberries into the ice lolly moulds, put them into the freezer until frozen.
2. Serve and enjoy as a light and summery fruity treat.

**Nutritional values for each serving:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutritional Value</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kilojoules (kJ)</td>
<td>538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein (g)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total fat (g)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated fat (g)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monounsaturated fat (g)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyunsaturated fat (g)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol (mg)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbohydrates (g)</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which is sugars (g)</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibre (g)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium (mg)</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phosphorus (mg)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potassium (mg)</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Method**

1. In a glass bowl beat the egg whites until stiff, then add the cold water and continue beating.
2. Gradually add the castor sugar to the egg whites.
3. Once all of the sugar has been added to the egg whites, add the sweetener.
4. Once the sweetener has been mixed in add the vinegar, corn flour and vanilla essence, and beat to combine all of the ingredients.
5. Spoon the mixture into a greased oven proof dish and bake for 25 – 30 minutes or until the Pavlova is cooked through and crispy.
6. Once the Pavlova has cooked, remove it from the oven and allow it to cool.
7. For the topping mix together the yoghurt, cottage cheese, and the remaining sweetener. Remove the seeds from the vanilla pod and add the pod to the yoghurt mixture.
8. Spread the yoghurt mixture so that it covers the entire rectangular section of the Pavlova.
9. Place the raspberries and blackberries on top of the yoghurt mixture and then sprinkle over the freshly chopped mint.
10. Roll the Pavlova lengthways, then place it onto an attractive serving dish, and slice just before serving.

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Exercising with a friend or in a group makes the activity more fun and will help to keep you motivated.

Aim for 30 to 60 minutes of exercise on most days of the week. Choose a cardiovascular activity that you enjoy, for example walking, running, swimming or cycling. Start slowly and aim to step by step build up to about an hour of moderate intensity exercise five to seven days a week.

Moderate intensity means that you should not be uncomfortably out of breath while you are exercising.

"Physical exercise is very important to help you keep as healthy as you can be."

**Benefits of physical exercise**
- Improves physical fitness
- Lowers blood pressure
- Helps to prevent diabetes and cardiovascular disease
- Improves muscle strength
- Helps to strengthen bones and ease joint stiffness
- Helps you to lose weight (only if you stick to your diet as well!)
- Helps to improve mood and creates an improved sense of wellbeing.

**Talk to your doctor before you start an exercise programme**

If you have not been active, there are risks linked to starting an exercise programme. You need to choose activities that are right for you and the current state of your health.

Get advice from your doctor before starting or changing your exercise programme, especially if you:
- have high blood pressure, diabetes or cardiovascular disease
- have bone or joint disease
- have started or are changing your dialysis programme
- are taking any medicine or if you start new medicine
- are older than 40 years and have not been active for a while.

**Exercising with a friend or in a group makes the activity more fun and will help to keep you motivated**

Aim for 30 to 60 minutes of exercise on most days of the week. Choose a cardiovascular activity that you enjoy, for example walking, running, swimming or cycling. Start slowly and aim to step by step build up to about an hour of moderate intensity exercise five to seven days a week.

Moderate intensity means that you should not be uncomfortably out of breath while you are exercising.

Notes pages

Pages to write down your own recipes and to make notes of the nutritional values of each serving
Physical activity will improve your health even if you are overweight

However, if you want to lose weight, you must stick to your diet. Physical activity alone (without dietary changes) will not help you to get the weight loss results that you are hoping for. Having said that, once you have lost weight, physical activity is crucial to maintaining a healthier weight and preventing you from putting the weight back on.

Include some resistance training

An ideal exercise routine involves both cardiovascular (any exercise that gets your heart pumping at a high speed) and resistance training, which adds to muscle strength by working muscles against a weight, such as a dumbbell, barbell or special machines. It is important to note however, that wrong use of resistance equipment and bad technique causes injuries. You should also concentrate on lighter weights and stay away from heavy lifting. A resistance training programme needs to be tailored specifically for you and it is best to get some advice from a qualified fitness trainer or biokineticist who will help you to get started at home or in the gym and show you how to use the equipment and do the exercises safely.

Whatever you choose, the important thing is to stay active!

Other things you can do to be more active

- Gardening and mowing the lawn
- Taking the stairs, rather than the lift
- Parking the car further from the door at the shops or the clinic
- Taking up a sport, such as tennis or bowls
- Walking with the dog or grandchildren
- Dancing.

Do not exercise if:

- You’ve recently had a medical procedure, for example catheter insertion, or AV fistula
- You’ve just started dialysis
- You’re not feeling well or have a fever (see your doctor!)
- You feel chest pain, or are very out of breath when doing physical activity (see your doctor!)

Sticking to my treatment plan

Why it’s important to stick to my treatment plan

It’s very important to know why you have to take your medicine and also understand why you need to take it like you’ve been told to.

Why I must stick to my dialysis schedule

Missing dialysis sessions will allow waste products to build up in your body and make you feel ill

- Frequent dialysis sessions may be shorter depending on your doctor’s dialysis prescription
- Frequent dialysis sessions are less likely to result in ‘ups and downs’ in how you feel from day to day
- Remember that it is your dialysis sessions that are keeping you alive
- If there is something that is worrying you, talk to your doctor or clinic sister
- Find out what your dialysis options are, so you can choose one that is right for you.

Why I must take all my medicine as prescribed

There may be times when it’s right for you to stop taking a certain medicine. But only your doctor can make this decision, so always talk about your treatment with your team.

Reasons why I may not take my medicine

- There are way too many medicines – I only take the important ones
- Ask your doctor or clinic sister about your medicines. Make sure you understand what they are for. Ask your healthcare provider if they are still all necessary – maybe your medical condition has changed and your treatments can be looked at.

“Sticking to your dialysis schedule, your eating and drinking recommendations and taking your medicine as prescribed will help you to feel as well as you can feel and help to prevent getting other medical conditions.”
It’s too difficult to remember when and how to take them

It can get confusing when you have to take different medicines at different times. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist to help you draw up a daily, weekly or monthly plan to help remind you when to take each of your medicines. Keep your plan in a place where you can check it easily. Ask your pharmacist for a pill box that shows the day and time. Spend some time each morning or each week (with your plan as a reference) dividing up your medicine into the correct compartments in your pill box. Ask your clinic sister or pharmacist to show you how to do this. You can also ask a family member or friend to help by reminding you when to take your medicines.

I get side effects – my medicine makes me feel unwell

All medicines can have side effects. It is very important to make sure that you are taking the medicine correctly – in the correct dose, the correct number of times a day, and at the correct times during the day (not too frequently). Unless your doctor tells you to, never break tablets in half, chew tablets or open capsules to sprinkle the powder on your food.

If you are getting side effects that worry you, speak to your doctor or pharmacist. Don’t stop taking your medicine without speaking to your doctor first.

I don’t like injecting myself

Injections can be unpleasant. Check with your clinic sister – make sure you are doing it the right way! Ask for tips on how to make the injections less uncomfortable, for example putting on an anaesthetic cream that numbs the area or massaging the skin.

I forget to take my medicine

Keep your medicine in a place where you will see it. This could be next to your toothbrush or next to the kettle, for example.

You can also set reminders for yourself by setting the reminder alarm on your watch or cellphone or ask a friend or family member to help you remember. It also helps to start a routine so that taking your medicines becomes automatic, like taking them with your meals.

I can’t afford them

Depending on your plan type and the type of medicine you’re on, you may have to pay towards your medicine. If this is difficult for you and stops you taking your medicine as prescribed, please speak to your doctor or social worker.

There are often less expensive choices, or sometimes there are ways to get medicines on compassionate grounds or as a member in a medical study.

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**Taking medicine that is not prescribed for you**

In chronic kidney disease, several medicines can be poisonous to the kidneys and you need to stay away from them or take them in lower doses. Among over-the-counter medicines, the following need to be avoided or used with caution:

- Certain analgesics (painkillers): Aspirin; nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medicines (NSAIDs, such as ibuprofen, Motrin, for example)
- Fleets or phospho-soda enemas because of their high content of phosphorus content
- Laxatives and antacids containing magnesium and aluminum such as magnesium hydroxide (Milk of Magnesia) and famotidine (Mylanta)
- Ulcer medicine H2-receptor antagonists: cimetidine (Tagamet), ranitidine (Zantac), (decreased dosage with kidney disease)
- Decongestants such as pseudoephedrine (Sudafed) especially if you have high blood pressure
- Alka Seltzer, since this has large amounts of salt
- Herbal medicines

Always ask your doctor before you use over-the-counter medicine and tell the pharmacist about your kidney condition whenever you get medicine or advice.

If you have a condition such as diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol underlying your chronic kidney disease, take all medicines as prescribed and see your doctor as recommended for check-ups.
Tips for when I travel

The following information is to make life easier for you when you travel and tells you what to do and what to look out for when dialysing in renal units other than the one that you go to every week for dialysis.

Tips for haemodialysing locally

- Know your travel dates and where you are going to travel to.
- Tell your kidney doctor and the manager of the renal unit of your travel plans.
- The renal unit head (Sister) will contact the relevant renal units in the area you are travelling to and book your dialysis for you.
- IMPORTANT: Tell the sister when booking what time you would like to dialyse. Not all renal units operate at the same hours.
- The ‘destination’ renal unit will confirm the dates and times with you.
- Make sure there is a specialist doctor on call at the ‘destination unit’ and what hospital services are available if you might need them.
- Your regular renal unit sister will then communicate the following information to them:
  - Your medical history about your condition/disease
  - Your contact details
  - Your blood values
  - If you are on heparin or erythropoietin and what dosage
  - Your pump speed on the dialysis machine
  - Do you have a fistula, Perm-catheter or graft?
  - Your dry weight – this is important to know, especially when they are taking fluid out of your body.
  - The size of your dialysis filter to prevent complications
  - Whether you have any complications or side effects during or after dialysis.
- Get a copy of the above details from your renal unit sister. Make sure that you have the dialysis dates and times, contact details and direction to the units you will be visiting.
- IMPORTANT: Erythropoietin must be stored in a cool place, if possible with an ice pack in a carrier bag.

Tips for haemodialysing abroad (out of the country)

- You must follow the same steps as above with the exception that you will need to have extra blood tests done at the ‘destination’ renal unit. They will do hepatitis A & B, HIV tests and take swabs off your body. Some ‘destination’ renal units will want these tests done before you get there.
- Get as much information on the renal unit and they way they do things as you can.
- Make sure there is a specialist doctor on call at the ‘destination unit’ and what hospital services are available if you might need them.
- One of the important factors to keep in mind is costs; when abroad they charge per session and you must pay cash up front. You must then hand in these claims to your medical aid when you return home. Make sure that you keep all invoices and receipts and ask that these include as much information about your sessions as possible.
- On your return you have 60 days in which to hand in your claims (or three months if you live outside the borders of South Africa.)
- Discovery Health has an International Travel Benefit (ITB) form that you must complete and attach to your receipt. You must also include a copy of your air-ticket and of your passport with proof of entry and exit from the visited country. Fax these documents to Discovery Health on 0860 329 252.

If you are on peritoneal dialysis make sure that there are support units at your destination in case you need any help.

“The more organised you are the easier it is to enjoy your holiday.”
You can plan your holiday according to your dialysis needs

Don’t feel that you can’t travel around South Africa because you need dialysis. There are professional organisations that can help make it possible for you and your family to travel without compromising on your health needs.

Endeavour Safaris is one such organisation that specialises in coordinating travel for people with medical needs, like renal patients. You’ll still be able to visit the remote parts of South Africa while having access to world-class healthcare facilities.

Go to www.endeavour-safari.com for more details about the different tours they offer or to ask about a tailor-made tour that suits your individual needs.