

Kidney *Chronicles*

END-STAGE RENAL DISEASE NETWORK OF NEW ENGLAND

JUNE 2015

HELPFUL TIPS
TO EMPOWER
ESRD PATIENTS
AS CONSUMERS



Improving Healthcare
for the Common Good®

Don't flood your health. Manage your fluids. Fluid Management Awareness

As a dialysis patient, it is essential to follow the fluid intake recommendations from your dietician and nephrologist. Having End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD), means your kidneys are not able to remove excess fluids and harmful toxins from your body, which is why you are on dialysis. If you take in more fluid than recommended, you may be at risk for serious health complications such as difficulty breathing, high blood pressure, heart damage, headaches, and **edema***. In order to prevent these serious health complications from occurring it is recommended that you take the following proactive steps:



- Be aware of the amount of fluid that you consume. Fluid includes anything that is liquid at room temperature such as soup, ice cream, ice, Jell-O, gravy, etc.
- If your mouth is dry, suck on a piece of candy or mint, a lemon wedge, frozen fruit, or by chew on sugar-free gum.
- Avoid eating foods that are high in sodium. Too much sodium intake may enhance your thirst.
- Avoid eating too many fruits. Some fruits, such as melons, contain a lot of water.
- If you are experiencing dry mouth or severe thirst, ask your doctor or pharmacist if any your medications could be causing your symptoms.
- Talk with your dietician and healthcare team members about the right amount of fluid for you. Recommended fluid intake is different for each person.

How the Network Serves You

- Advocates on your behalf;
- Answers your questions about treatment, modality choices or other issues;
- Develops and provides educational materials, i.e., newsletters, for you and your family;
- Works with renal professionals to improve the care provided to you;
- Helps keep you informed and updated to support your involvement in your care and treatment options; and
- Evaluates and resolves grievances.

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What is dry weight?

Dry weight is your body weight without extra fluid. Your healthcare team can determine your dry weight by comparing your previous weight, your breathing, any swelling you may have, and your blood pressure.

What is fluid weight?

Fluid weight is the weight that you gain between treatments based on what you have consumed (food and liquids). If you urinate, your body is able to remove some of the liquid and your fluid weight may decrease. If you do not urinate, you may experience more fluid gain between treatments. The more fluid weight you gain, the harder it is for the dialysis machine to remove all of the fluid and toxins from your body.

*What is edema?

Edema (eh-dee-ma) is a condition that occurs when too much fluid builds up in the body. If you have edema, you may experience headaches, fatigue, difficulty breathing, heart damage, high blood pressure, stroke, and noticeable swelling of your hands, legs, feet or face. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, it is essential that you contact your doctor immediately because this can be life-threatening.

Eat right. Feel right.

The Key to a Kidney-Friendly Diet

Summer is the season for cook-outs, barbecues, and picnics, but it is important for you as an ESRD patient to not be tempted and to eat only kidney-friendly foods. According to DaVita:

“As kidney function declines, protein waste and minerals become hard to remove, and diseased kidneys must work harder to get rid of them. Each person’s kidney prescription is different, but the main nutrients limited in kidney diets include protein, phosphorus, potassium, and sodium.”

If you are an End-Stage Renal Disease patient, it is important that you remain aware of nutritional facts and control your portion intake to ensure that your body is getting only the fuel it needs. By doing so, you are making it easier for your dialysis machine to remove toxins and fluids from the body, which in turn helps your quality of care and quality of life.

Just because you have to watch what you eat, doesn’t mean you have to sacrifice taste! DaVita has hundreds and hundreds of delicious recipes for appetizers, breakfast foods, seafood, desserts, and so much more. To learn more about how to maintain a kidney-friendly diet and to find tasty kidney-friendly recipes, check out DaVita’s website: www.davita.com/kidney-disease/diet-and-nutrition.



Photo from Davita’s recipe booklet, *Today’s Kidney Diet*.

To file a grievance, please contact:

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This material was prepared by IPRO End-Stage Renal Disease Network of New England, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy. CMS Contract Number: HHS-500-2013-NW001C