

Kidney Stones: What You Can Do to Help Prevent Them in the Future

This guide has been prepared for your use by registered dietitians. If you have questions or concerns, please call the nearest Aurora facility to contact a dietitian.

Drink more fluids

- Try to drink at least 12 cups (1 cup = 8 ounces) of fluids a day; water is preferred.
- Choose noncarbonated beverages.
- If you prefer something other than plain water, try Crystal Light or sugar-free Kool-Aid®.
- It's best to drink fluids throughout the day and early evening.
- Coffee and tea can add to total fluid intake, but limit amount since they do contain oxalate.
- Moderate intake of beer and wine may also protect against stone formation.

What else should you keep in mind?

- Increase your fluid intake when you exercise and when the weather is warm and humid.
- Limit soda to no more than one 12-ounce serving a day.

Limit salt in your diet

- Studies show that less sodium in your diet can help reduce the chance of recurring kidney stones.
- You should have no more than 2,000 mg (or 2 grams) of sodium a day.
- Please see the back side of this handout for more information.

Get enough calcium in your diet

Limiting calcium is no longer recommended to prevent kidney stones. In fact, low amounts of calcium in your diet can lead to an increase in kidney stones. The calcium you take in through foods and liquids can reduce the risk of stones forming.

However, please note that calcium supplements can cause an increase in stones. If you believe you need to use calcium supplements, be sure to discuss this with your doctor.

The normal daily needs for calcium, based on age, are:

- Age 9 to 18 years: 1,300 milligrams (mg)
- Age 19 to 50 years: 1,000 mg
- Age 50 years and older: 1,200 mg

Eat 3 to 4 servings of calcium-rich foods each day to meet your daily needs. Here are some good sources of calcium that provide about 300 milligrams calcium:

- 1 cup milk or yogurt
- 1½ ounces natural cheese
- 1 cup calcium-fortified orange juice
- 2 ounces American cheese

Limit foods high in oxalate

Oxalate is a substance found in many kidney stones. Here is a list of foods that have higher amounts of oxalate in them. It's best to avoid eating several foods from this list on the same day, and to eat smaller portions of these foods:

- Beans – dried (black, chili, white, navy, soy, pinto, baked)
- Beans (string, wax)
- Beets
- Blackberries
- Celery
- Chocolate, cocoa, chocolate drink mixes
- Dark leafy greens (spinach, Swiss chard, beet greens, endive, escarole, parsley)
- Dried apricots or prunes
- Gooseberries
- Grits, polenta, cream of wheat
- Nuts, nut butters
- Okra
- Peel (lemon, lime and orange)
- Raspberries
- Rhubarb
- Sesame seeds/tahini
- Soy products
- Strawberries
- Summer squash
- Sweet potatoes, white potatoes
- Wheat germ and bran

Cutting down on sodium – more information

Tips on label reading

If a product has been changed to lower the amount of sodium it contains, you may see certain terms on the label. Here are a few of those terms and what they mean:

- **Reduced or Less Sodium:** At least 25% less sodium than the original product.
- **Light in Sodium:** At least 50% less sodium than the original product.
- **Low Sodium:** 140 mg of sodium (or less) per serving.
- **Very Low Sodium:** 35 mg of sodium (or less) per serving.
- **Sodium Free:** Less than 5 mg of sodium per serving.

The lists below offer examples of foods to include – and avoid – in your diet to limit sodium. Talk with your doctor if you have questions.

Tips on dining out

When dining out, try these suggestions to reduce the sodium content in your meal:

- Use pepper, lemon juice or bring your own salt-free seasoning for flavor.
- Go easy on condiments and sauces. Mustard, catsup, salad dressing, sauces and gravy increase the amount of sodium in your meal.
- Ask that food be prepared without added salt. Ask for sauces, salad dressing and gravy to be served on the side.
- Know which words mean a high sodium content: marinated, pickled, smoked, au jus, teriyaki, soy sauce or in broth.
- Keep it simple. A broiled cut of meat or fish is a better choice than entrees covered with special sauces or toppings. Plain meat-type sandwiches are lower in sodium than chicken, egg or tuna salad sandwiches.

Food choices for cutting down on sodium	
Choose these foods	Avoid these foods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk – fluid, evaporated, or powdered milk; chocolate milk; yogurt; low sodium buttermilk • Meat and fish – 4 to 6 ounces a day (cooked weight) of any meat, poultry or fish prepared, frozen or preserved without salt or sodium; canned tuna or salmon (rinsed) • Egg – 1 daily or ¼ cup egg substitute daily • Nuts – regular peanut butter 3 times a week (2 Tbsp = 1 ounce meat); unsalted nuts • Cheese – 2 ounces a day of regular cheese, cream cheese, ricotta, or cottage cheese (drained): low sodium cheese as desired • Frozen dinners with less than 600 mg sodium • Spices, herbs without sodium or salt compounds Low sodium soy sauce, Tabasco sauce, Veg-It, Mrs. Dash, yeast, low sodium catsup, low sodium chili sauce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buttermilk • Any salted, smoked, cured, pickled, dried or canned meat, fish or poultry. Examples: bacon, bologna, chipped or corned beef, frozen breaded meats, frankfurters, bratwurst, ham, meats koshered by salting, luncheon meats, salt pork, sausage, anchovies, caviar, pickled herring and sardines • Salted nuts, salted snack foods • Processed cheese, cheese spreads and cheese sauce; bacon and sausage substitutes • Canned baked beans • Salt, flavored salts, sea salt, lite salt (Morton’s), mono-sodium glutamate (MSG) • Meat tenderizers, soy sauce, teriyaki sauce, tartar sauce, Worcestershire sauce, flavored vinegars • Relish, olives, pickles • Kitchen Bouquet, Butter Buds

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