Dietary Dialysis Advice – how to control your phosphate level in your blood

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Introduction

This leaflet is for people on haemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis. It provides a guide on how you can help control the phosphate level in your blood. Having good quality dialysis and being careful with your dietary intake are equally important in controlling phosphate levels. The renal dietitian will be able to provide you with individualised dietary advice based on your most recent blood results and will answer any questions.

What is phosphate?

Phosphate is a mineral in the body that is important to keep your bones strong. Normally the kidneys are responsible for keeping your phosphate level stable. However, in kidney failure phosphate levels tend to go up. As dialysis cannot remove all the excess phosphate it is sometimes necessary to adjust your diet.

Why is phosphate important?

Your phosphate level will be measured regularly when you have a blood test in clinic or in the dialysis unit. A high phosphate level (called hyperphosphataemia) can weaken your bones making them more prone to fractures.

Too much phosphate in the blood can also combine with calcium and make your blood vessels hard leading to heart disease and blood vessel disease. High phosphate can cause itching which may be unpleasant. It is therefore important to keep your blood levels in a safe range to help you stay healthy.

Your phosphate level should ideally be between 1.1 and 1.7 mmol/l
How to reduce your phosphate through diet:

Include more fresh foods in your diet rather than processed foods. This is because many processed foods have phosphorus-containing food additives. Examples of food which may contain such food additives are:

- Bakery products: cakes, biscuits, pastries and tortillas.
- Seafood products: frozen processed and unprocessed fish and shellfish. Fish paste.
- Dairy products: evaporated milk, creams, sterilised and UHT milk, dried milk products, milk desserts and yogurt.
- Processed cheese: Spreadable and sliced processed cheese.
- Potato products: frozen, chilled and dried products (for e.g. chips, waffles, roast potato and mashed potato)
- Dried powdered food items: Sauces (especially cheese-based), dessert mixes, soups, instant pasta dishes and instant noodles.
- Non-alcoholic drinks: dark fizzy drinks such as Pepsi, Coca Cola, supermarket own brand cola style drinks, Dr. Pepper. Chocolate and malted dairy drinks.
- Some foods with a high phosphate content such as dairy products, nuts and chocolate should be included in moderation.
- Include fresh meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and pulses in your diet.
- Soft bones of tinned fish such as sardines should be avoided.
- Include wholegrain in your diet regularly.

To help dietary changes lower blood phosphate, we may also suggest that you are prescribed phosphate binding medication.
How do phosphate binders work?

Phosphate binders are taken alongside food and work by attaching themselves to any phosphate in your gut, so less of the phosphate is absorbed and does not build up in your bloodstream.

It is important to take the phosphate binders at the right time as written in the instructions. The table below gives information on phosphate binders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medication</th>
<th>When to take</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calcichew (Calcium Carbonate)</td>
<td>Chew just before meals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adcal (Calcium Carbonate)</td>
<td>Chew just before meals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phosex (Calcium Acetate)</td>
<td>Swallow with meals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renacet (Calcium Acetate)</td>
<td>Swallow with meals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OsvaRen (Calcium Acetate/Magnesium Carbonate)</td>
<td>Swallow with meals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renagel (Sevelamer Hydrochloride)</td>
<td>Swallow with meals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renvela (Sevelamer Carbonate)</td>
<td>Swallow with meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fosrenol (Lanthanum Carbonate)</td>
<td>Chew to a paste and take during or just after meals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Velphoro(Sucroferric Oxyhydroxide)</td>
<td>Chew or break into few pieces. Take with water with meals.</td>
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Remember...

• You are an individual with your own set of unique blood results

• Both good quality dialysis and diet are important in controlling phosphate levels in the blood

• Take your phosphate binders with you if you plan to eat away from home

• It is important that you eat a well balanced diet including wholegrain foods

• If you are worried about your diet or if your appetite is poor please ask to speak the dietitian

• It is important to take your phosphate binder if you eat during your haemodialysis treatment

Where can I find further sources of information?

Further information can be obtained from:

• The National Kidney Federation www.kidney.org.uk

• NHS Choices website has information about a wide range of health topics www.nhs.uk

• Renal Patient View www.renalpatientview.org

• Eating Well for a Healthy Kidney: Expert Guidance and Delicious Recipes (Class Health), Helena Jackson, Gavin James and Claire Green
Please use the space below to write down any questions you may have and bring this with you to your next appointment.
The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm