

Low-phosphorus Diet

What is phosphorus?

Phosphorus is a mineral found naturally in many foods. It is also added to many processed foods to thicken them, improve taste, prevent discoloration or preserve them. It plays an important role in the health of your kidneys, bones, muscles, and blood vessels, as well as each cell in your body. When you eat foods that have phosphorus, most of the phosphorus goes into your blood. A normal phosphorus level is 2.5 to 4.5 mg/dL. Healthy kidneys remove extra phosphorus from the blood. If your kidneys don't work well, you can develop a high phosphorus level in your blood, putting you at greater risk of heart disease, weak bones, joint pain and even death.

If you need to limit phosphorus

How much phosphorus you need depends on your kidney function. If you have early-stage kidney disease or you're on dialysis, you may need to limit phosphorus.

Current nutrition guidelines

For many years, people who needed to limit phosphorus were told to limit healthy foods such as whole grains, legumes and other plant-based foods. Recent research shows that this isn't necessary. **Current guidelines recommend choosing natural foods instead of processed foods that have phosphorus added to them. Your body absorbs less of the phosphorus from natural foods, and natural foods offer better nutrition overall.**

Check food labels carefully

Check food labels to see whether any ingredients contain "phos" in the term **and avoid foods that list terms with "phos" among the ingredients.** Examples of phosphorus added to food include:

- Calcium **phosphate**
- Disodium **phosphate**
- **Phosphoric acid**
- Monopotassium **phosphate**
- Sodium acid **pyrophosphate**
- Sodium **tripolyphosphate**

Nutrition Facts		Ingredients
Serving Size 0.2 bag Servings Per Container 8		
Amount Per Serving		
Calories 50	Calories from Fat 10	Enriched Noodles (Durum Flour, Egg Yolks, Niacin, Ferrous Sulfate, Thiamin, Mononitrate, Riboflavin, and Folic Acid) Onions, Potatoes (contains Mono and Diglycerides, and Sodium Acid Pyrophosphate) Sugar, Potassium Chloride, Monosodium Glutamate, Vegetable Shortening (Partially Hydrogenated Cottonseed, and Soybean Oil) Garlic, Potassium Citrate, Dill Seed, Turmeric, Celery Seed, Thyme, White Pepper, Parsley.
% Daily Value*		
Total Fat 1g	1%	
Saturated Fat 0g		
Trans Fat 0g		
Cholesterol 10mg	3%	
Sodium 95mg	4%	
Total Carbohydrate 9g	3%	
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%	
Sugars 2g		
Protein 2g	0%	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%	
Calcium 2%	Iron 4%	



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Foods high in phosphorus

The best way to reduce phosphorus in your diet is to **limit foods that contain the most phosphorus**. The table below gives examples of foods lower in phosphorus that you can substitute for foods higher in phosphorus. Although a food or drink may be low in phosphorus, you still need to watch portion sizes and limit the number of servings you eat or drink each day.

Higher phosphorus foods	Lower phosphorus foods
Fast foods, convenience, restaurant meals and gas station foods	Homemade meals or snacks made from fresh ingredients or options without "phos" in the ingredients
Milk, pudding, yogurt, soy milk, and nondairy creamers and enriched milks	Unenriched almond or rice milk
Processed cheeses and cheese spreads	A small amount of brie, Swiss, cheddar, or mozzarella cheese
Fat-free cream cheese or fat-free sour cream	Regular or low-fat cream cheese or sour cream
Ice cream or frozen yogurt	Sherbet, sorbet or frozen fruit pops
Quick breads, biscuits, cornbread, muffins, pancakes or waffles	Fresh dinner rolls, bread, bagels or English muffins
Processed meats, such as bacon, bologna, chicken nuggets, ham and hot dogs, and fresh or frozen meat, poultry or seafood with "phos" in the ingredients	Lean beef, eggs, lamb, wild game, or poultry, seafood or other fish without "phos" in the ingredients
Chocolate or caramel, including chocolate drinks and candy bars	Jellybeans, hard candy, fruit snacks or gumdrops (in moderation)
Colas and pepper-type sodas, some flavored waters, bottled teas, energy or sports drinks, beer, wine, and some drink mixes (any with "phos" in the ingredients)	Lemon-lime soda, ginger ale, root beer, plain water and some drink mixes (any without "phos" in the ingredients); fresh-brewed coffee (made from beans) or brewed tea (made from tea bags); lemonade

Talk with your doctor or registered dietitian

Work with your Registered Dietitian Nutritionist to make sure you get enough nutrition while following your medical recommendations. Your doctor may recommend a phosphate binder medication to help control the amount of phosphorus your body absorbs from foods. These medications only help a little. You'll still need to limit the amount of phosphorus in your diet.

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