

PROTEIN

NEED FOR PROTEIN:

As a dialysis patient, your protein needs are high because of the protein lost during each dialysis treatment. The protein in your diet must be enough to replace those losses and supply your ordinary protein needs. Those who have albumin levels of 4.0 or greater live longer and have fewer hospitalizations. (Lowry and Lew study) Dietary protein is needed to combat infection, develop muscles, repair tissues, make hormones, produce antibodies and enzymes, and replace the protein lost from dialysis.

SOURCES OF PROTEIN:

The best kind of protein (high quality protein) comes from animal sources such as beef, chicken, eggs, fish, lamb, pork, turkey, and veal. Milk and milk products (cheese and yogurt), soy products, and nuts are good protein sources, but need to be limited because they are high in phosphorus. Avoid meats like bacon, bologna, ham, hot dogs, salami, and sausage because they are high in sodium.



GETTING ENOUGH PROTEIN:

Blood urea nitrogen (BUN) can be used as a measure of recent dietary intake of protein. Albumin is a type of protein found in the blood. These two lab values are drawn each month to help monitor nutritional status. Normal values for dialysis patients are: BUN 50mg/dl -90mg/dl and Albumin 4.0g/dl or greater. If these values are low, then increased protein in the diet is indicated. Most dialysis patients need to eat about 8-10 ounces of high quality protein a day. The dietitian will calculate your individual protein needs and assist you in achieving your daily dietary protein goal.

WAYS TO INCREASE PROTEIN:

- Eat high protein food at every meal
- Eat the high protein food first, before other food items
- Try meat, tuna, or egg salad on unsalted crackers as a snack
- Make high protein shakes to replace your other beverages-ask your dietitian for recipes
- Have protein bars (10 grams or more) as a snack
- Speak with your dietitian about available protein supplements



SPEAK WITH YOUR DIETITIAN ABOUT YOUR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS.