



Patient & Family Guide  
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# High Phosphorus Foods to Limit or Avoid



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# High Phosphorus Foods to Limit or Avoid

## What is phosphorus?

Phosphorus and calcium are minerals found in your body. When your kidneys are working well, they stay in good balance. This is good for your bones.

## What causes high phosphorus?

When your kidneys do not work well, phosphorus levels in your blood go up.

Phosphorus can get too high if you:

- › eat too much phosphorus.
- › forget to take your phosphorus binders (see page 2).
- › do not get enough dialysis.

Your phosphorus level should stay between:

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

## What are the symptoms of high phosphorus?

When phosphorus gets too high, your body will start to take calcium from your bones. This can make your bones weak, painful, and easier to break.

The calcium then travels to your skin, joints, blood vessels, and other parts of your body. This may cause itching, stiff joints, and organ damage (like heart and lung problems). High phosphorus can make your kidneys fail faster.

## How can I control phosphorus?

- Avoid high phosphorus foods.
- Take your phosphorus binders as prescribed with meals and snacks. Phosphorous binders include:
  - › Tums®
  - › Calcium carbonate
  - › Fosrenol®
  - › Renagel®/Sevelamer
  - › Milk of Magnesia®
- If you are on dialysis, go to all of your dialysis treatments and stay for your whole treatment.

- Read food labels:
  - › Check for “**phos**” on the ingredient lists of packaged foods (for example, **phosphoric acid** or dicalcium **phosphate**).
  - › Choose grain products with less than 6% daily value (DV) of phosphorus.
  - › If phosphorus is not on the label, choose products with no more than 3 grams of fibre or 12% DV of fibre.
- Follow your dietitian’s advice.

## **High phosphorus foods to limit**

Your body absorbs about **half** of the phosphorus that is found **naturally** in foods. Ask your dietitian if you can safely have these foods:

- › Dairy products (like milk, yogurt, and cheese)
- › Lentils and beans
- › Nuts, nut butters, seeds
- › Whole grains (like bran cereal, brown rice, and whole wheat bread)

## High phosphorus foods to avoid

Your body absorbs almost **all** of the phosphorus that is **added** to foods. Avoid these processed and packaged foods:

- › Baking powder (Ask your dietitian what you can use instead.)
- › Processed cheese slices and Cheez Whiz®
- › Chocolate, cocoa, carob, and caramel
- › Corn tortillas and cornbread
- › Fast food and takeout items
- › Fish bones (like in sardines or canned salmon)
- › Organ meats (like liver or kidney)
- › Packaged meals (like Kraft Dinner®, instant noodles, and microwave dinners)
- › Pancakes, waffles, muffins, and biscuits (mixes and frozen products)
- › Pizza
- › Pre-cooked and seasoned meats
- › Processed meats (like bacon, chicken nuggets, deli meats, hot dogs, and sausages)
- › Puddings, custards, and ice cream

## High phosphorus drinks to avoid

- Beer
- Hot chocolate and chocolate milk
- Any drink that has “phos” on the ingredient list, such as:
  - › Colas (like Coca-Cola®, Dr Pepper®, and Pepsi®)
  - › Some other pops (like Fanta® Orange)
  - › Bottled iced teas and iced coffees
  - › Energy and sports drinks (like Powerade®)
  - › Flavoured and vitamin waters
  - › Nondairy creamers (like International Delight® and Rich’s® Coffee Rich®)
  - › Some juices (like Hawaiian Punch® and SunnyD®)

**It can be hard to make changes to your eating habits. If you have questions, please ask to talk with a dietitian.**

**We are here to help you.**

