



# Kidney Q&A

4-12 months

Life Options Rehabilitation Program

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[www.lifeoptions.org](http://www.lifeoptions.org)

## Q: What can I eat at restaurants and other people's homes?

**A:** You don't have to be at home to follow your dialysis meal plan. Just do a little pre-planning. If you know you'll eat out, try to "budget" your fluids, potassium, and phosphorus for the day so you can treat yourself a bit. Remember to bring your binders.

A book that can help you look up the sodium, potassium, and phosphorus content of foods is *Bowes & Church's Food Values of Portions Commonly Used* by Jean A. T. Pennington, PhD, et al.

### What I can do to eat healthy meals away from home:

- Slowly sip a drink with ice, and turn down refills to limit fluids.
- Avoid very salty foods, like processed meats, olives, soy sauce, etc.
- Ask for sauces on the side, if possible, so I can control the amount I eat.
- At a buffet, choose grilled, baked, or broiled meats; pasta with small amounts of tomato sauce; salad without salty condiments; and lower potassium vegetables and fruits.
- Watch portion sizes—at restaurants, ask for a take-out carton and put half of my meal in it if the portions are very large.
- At a Chinese restaurant, ask for no monosodium glutamate (MSG) or soy sauce.
- At an Italian restaurant, choose chicken, beef, pasta, or pizza with a white sauce or a small amount of tomato sauce, and a green salad with oil and vinegar dressing.
- Ask for what I need—restaurants want me to come back.
- Get menus from my favorite restaurants and plan ahead for what to eat.
- Keep a list of lower potassium fruits and vegetables handy so I can make good menu choices. Read the *Na-K-Phos Counter* on-line at [www.aakp.org](http://www.aakp.org) or *Dining Out with Confidence* at [www.kidney.org](http://www.kidney.org).
- Visit module 9 of Kidney School™: *Nutrition and Fluids* at [www.kidneyschool.org](http://www.kidneyschool.org) to learn more about eating out.
- Consider getting more treatment by doing daily or nocturnal hemodialysis at home or in a center. My diet can be more normal. Learn more at [www.homedialysis.org](http://www.homedialysis.org).

What can I eat at restaurants and other people's homes?