

KIDNEY HEALTH

Healthy Foods for People with Kidney Disease (By DaVita renal dietitian, Sara Colman, RD, CSR, CDE)

- **Red bell peppers:** Red bell peppers are low in potassium and high in flavor, but that's not the only reason they're perfect for the renal diet. These tasty vegetables are also an excellent source of vitamin C and vitamin A, as well as vitamin B6, folic acid and fiber. Red bell peppers are good for you because they contain lycopene, an antioxidant that protects against certain cancers.
- **Cabbage:** A cruciferous vegetable, cabbage is packed full of phytochemicals, chemical compounds in fruit or vegetables that break up free radicals before they can do damage. Many phytochemicals are also known to protect against and fight cancer, as well as foster cardiovascular health. Sulforaphane, a phytochemical in cruciferous vegetables, may prevent or stop cancer cell growth in lung, colon, breast, and bladder, prostate and ovarian cancers. High in vitamin K, vitamin C and fiber, cabbage is also a good source of vitamin B6 and folic acid. Low in potassium and low in cost, it's an affordable addition to the kidney diet.
- **Cauliflower:** another cruciferous vegetable, cauliflower is high in vitamin C and a good source of folate and fiber. It's also packed full of indoles, glucosinolates and thiocyanates — compounds that help the liver neutralize toxic substances that could damage cell membranes and DNA.
- **Garlic:** helps prevent plaque from forming on your teeth, lowers cholesterol and reduces inflammation.
- Buy it fresh, bottled, minced or powdered, and add it to meat, vegetable or pasta dishes. You can also roast a head of garlic and spread on bread. Garlic provides a delicious flavor and garlic powder is a great substitute for garlic salt in the dialysis diet.
- **Onions:** a member of the Allium family and a basic flavoring in many cooked dishes, contains sulfur compounds which give it its pungent smell. But in addition to making you cry, onions are also rich in flavonoids, especially quercetin, a powerful antioxidant that works to reduce heart disease and protects against many cancers. Onions are low in potassium and a good source of chromium, a mineral that helps with carbohydrate, fat and protein metabolism.
- **Apples:** have been known to reduce cholesterol, prevent constipation, protect against heart disease and reduce the risk of cancer. High in fiber and anti-inflammatory compounds, an apple a day may really keep the doctor away.
- **Cranberries:** these tangy, tasty berries are known to protect against bladder infections by preventing bacteria from sticking to the bladder wall. In a similar way, cranberries also protect the stomach from ulcer-causing bacteria and protect the lining of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, promoting GI health.
- **Blueberries:** high in antioxidant phytonutrients called anthocyanin's, which give them their blue color, and they are bursting with natural compounds that reduce inflammation. Blueberries are a good source of vitamin C; manganese, a compound that keeps your bones healthy; and fiber, and may also help protect the brain from some of the effects of aging.
- **Raspberries:** contain a phytonutrient called ellagic acid which helps neutralize free radicals in the body to prevent cell damage. They also contain flavonoids called anthocyanins, antioxidants which give them their red color. An excellent source of manganese, vitamin C, fiber and folate, a B vitamin, raspberries may have properties that inhibit cancer cell growth and tumor formation.
- **Strawberries:** are rich in two types of phenols: anthocyanins and ellagitannins. Anthocyanins are what give strawberries their red color and are powerful antioxidants that help protect body cell structures and prevent oxidative damage. Strawberries are an excellent source of vitamin C and manganese and a very good source of fiber. They are known to provide heart protection, as well as anti-cancer and anti-inflammatory components.
- **Cherries:** have been shown to reduce inflammation when eaten daily. They are also packed with antioxidants and phytochemicals that protect the heart.
- **Red grapes:** contain several flavonoids that give them their reddish color. Flavonoids help protect against heart disease by preventing oxidation and reducing the formation of blood clots. Resveratrol, a flavonoid found in grapes, may also stimulate production of nitric oxide which helps relax muscle cells in the blood vessels to increase blood flow. These flavonoids also provide protection against cancer and prevent inflammation.
- **Olive oil:** is a great source of oleic acid, an anti-inflammatory fatty acid. The monounsaturated fat in olive oil protects against oxidation. Olive oil is rich in polyphenols and antioxidant compounds that prevent inflammation and oxidation.