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MONTANA KIDNEY PLLC



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR PATIENTS WITH KIDNEY DISEASE

Source: [NKF-National Kidney Foundation Kidney.org](https://www.kidney.org)

1. Going to appointments

It is very important for patients with kidney disease to keep their doctor's appointments. Unfortunately, forgetting about your doctor's appointment or lack of transportation are common barriers that may make it difficult.

Try using these tips to get you back on track:

- **Buddy system:** Ask a friend or family member to be your appointment buddy. Give them your schedule and ask them to text you a few hours before your appointment.
- **Digital reminders:** Most phones have a built-in calendar and reminder apps. As soon as you get your appointment time, make a reminder in one of these apps. You will also receive a text reminder so please make sure you provide your correct phone number.
- **Questions for the doctor:** we recommend you write down all questions before your appointment and bring in notebook so everything is addressed.
- **Transportation assistance:** If you can't physically get to your appointments, help is out there. Please research local transportation opportunities in Montana.

2. Following nutritional guidelines – healthy eating

Many people with severe kidney diseases need to limit sodium to no more than 2000mg per day, potassium no more than 3000mg per day, and phosphorus. Following kidney-friendly nutritional guidelines can be challenging, but it's also an opportunity to get creative with food. Remember, every patient is different, so speak with your healthcare team before making significant changes to your diet.

You may have special restrictions to consider. The best diet based on peer reviewed studies for anyone with renal disease is the Mediterranean diet. Limit red meat and pork consumption as much as possible. Turkey and chicken are ok in moderate quantities usually the size of your fist or palm of your hand.

Here are four kidney-friendly meal tips:

Sodium: Use fresh garlic and onions, garlic and onion powder, black pepper, lemon juice, and vinegar over table salt. Less than 2000mg per day is the goal.

Potassium: limit high potassium foods such as tomatoes, bananas, avocados, and potatoes.

Protein: Replace animal protein like beef and pork with plant protein (legumes, nuts, soy, tofu, or grains) at a meal. These foods are much easier to process by the kidneys.

Phosphorus: Many processed foods use phosphorus additives, which the body completely absorbs. This additive on food labels can be found by scanning for “PHOS.”

3. Taking medicine

According to an American Journal of Kidney Disease study, lower medication adherence is associated with adverse safety events in individuals with chronic kidney disease. Barriers to medical adherence include lack of finances or forgetting to take or pick medications up. Also, ask your pharmacy if they can do bubble packs to help with adherence.

Here are some helpful solutions

- **Reminders:** Try the buddy system and digital reminders tip from the above section. A reminder system is one of the best ways to get yourself into the habit of taking medicine.
- **Free prescription discount card:** You can sign up and start saving up to 80% of medication costs. No income qualification, paperwork, or waiting for your pre-activated card.
- **Speak with your healthcare provider:** If you don't like the side effects, can't afford your medicine, or struggle to stick to your medication schedule, speak with your doctor. They may be able to offer a solution not listed here.

4. Managing mental health

It can be easy to forget about one's mental health when dealing with other issues but mental health is essential, especially when you have kidney disease. If you're struggling, don't be afraid to let your care team know how you're feeling. They'll help determine a course of action to get you feeling like yourself again.

You can also speak with other patients through NKF's Communities or NKF PEERS mentoring program. Sometimes the best advice comes from the people who have lived your situation.

- NKF Communities: Our communities are safe places to share experiences, ask questions, and get answers. Participation is free and anonymous.
- NKF PEERS: No one knows what it's like to live with kidney disease better than someone who lives with it every day. Sign up for access to a trained peer mentor who's been there. This program is all held over the phone, so there is no need to go to a physical location. Go to the website [NKF Kidney Research Connect](#).



We wish you a safe and healthy New Year!

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