

Emergency Kidney Diet Guide

Below is a patient-facing emergency kidney diet table designed to accompany the resource, “Emergency Kidney Diet: Guiding Principles During a Disaster or Emergency”. Remember: A perfect diet is not critical during an emergency!

Food Group	Specific Food Examples	Special Considerations	Suggested Daily Intake *
Fruits	Apples, applesauce, pears, peaches, canned fruit packed in water or juice (drained), grapes, berries	Dried fruits (raisins, dates, apricots, prunes) are concentrated sources of potassium. Choose canned fruit packed in water rather than juice or syrup when possible.	2–4 servings per day (1 serving = 1 small fruit, ½ cup canned fruit, or ½ cup applesauce). Limit dried fruits to ¼ cup per day. Limit fruit juice to no more than 1 cup per day.
Vegetables	Green beans, carrots, corn, cabbage, cucumbers, lettuce, canned green beans (rinsed), canned carrots (rinsed)	Some canned vegetables contain potassium additives and large amounts of sodium. Read ingredient lists and rinse canned vegetables before eating when possible.	2–4 servings per day (1 serving = ½ cup cooked or 1 cup raw vegetables)
Carbohydrate-Rich Foods	Unsalted crackers, rice cakes, plain cereals, oatmeal, white rice, pasta, bread, tortillas, low-sodium crackers/biscuits	Avoid products with potassium chloride. Strongly flavored snack foods may contain large amounts of sodium and additives that increase thirst.	6–10 servings per day, based on appetite and energy needs
Protein Sources	Pouches of tuna or chicken, canned chicken or tuna, shelf-stable tofu, powdered egg products, freeze-dried meats, legumes, baked or canned beans, nuts, shelf-stable protein supplements	Avoid products with potassium chloride. Canned proteins may contain added sodium and potassium additives. Freeze-dried protein products can be lightweight, shelf-stable options that may contain fewer additives.	Approximately 2–3 servings per day (1 serving = 2–3 oz cooked meat, poultry, fish, or equivalent). Limit nuts to ¼ cup per day.

*Suggested Daily Intake

Suggested amounts are intended for short-term emergency use (approximately 2–4 weeks) and should be individualized based on dialysis status, kidney function, diabetes, body size, and guidance from a healthcare professional.

Food Group	Specific Food Examples	Special Considerations	Suggested Daily Intake *
Healthy Fats & Calorie Boosters	Vegetable oils, olive oil, canola oil, mayonnaise, margarine, nut-free spreads, shortening	Useful for maintaining calorie intake during emergencies. High-fat foods can help prevent unintentional weight loss when food supplies are limited.	Include small amounts with meals and snacks throughout the day.
Condiments and Flavorings	Herb blends without salt, vinegar, lemon juice packets, mayonnaise, oil-based dressings, low-sodium seasonings	Some condiments are high in sodium and sugar, which may increase thirst and fluid intake. Check labels when available.	Use sparingly to improve taste and encourage food intake.
Fluids	Water, bottled water, filtered water, ice chips, beverage flavorings, low-potassium beverages	Safe water access is critical. Store bottled water and consider water purification tablets or a portable water filter. Fluid needs vary depending on urine output and dialysis status.	Follow your healthcare team's guidance. If you make urine, focus on staying hydrated. If you make little or no urine, fluid restriction may be necessary.
Fiber Sources	Oatmeal, high-fiber cereals, whole-grain crackers (if tolerated), breads, cereals, wholegrains, crackers, pasta, rice, legumes, nuts	Maintaining fiber intake may help prevent constipation during emergencies when activity levels and routines change. Increase gradually if fluid intake is restricted.	Aim for regular intake throughout the day; target approximately 25 g/day when possible.
Foods for Low Blood Sugar (Diabetes)	Glucose powder, dextrose tablets, jellybeans, hard candies, Life Savers®, glucose gel, small amounts of apple juice	Keep a fast-acting carbohydrate source in your emergency kit. Juice may be effective but contributes to fluid intake. Follow it up with a snack. Follow your diabetes sick-day plan when available.	Reserve for treatment of low blood sugar episodes rather than routine consumption.

Additional Emergency Diet Tips

- Create a plan for how to use your emergency food supplies for meals.
- Spread meals and snacks throughout the day to help manage thirst and maintain energy.
- Prioritize shelf-stable foods that require little preparation. Check expiration dates routinely and replace emergency food supplies as needed.
- People taking immunosuppressive medications (such as many kidney transplant recipients) should be especially vigilant about food and water safety.
- If dialysis treatments are delayed, pay particular attention to fluid intake, high-potassium foods, and symptoms such as swelling, shortness of breath, muscle weakness, or heart palpitations.