



## A TO Z HEALTH GUIDE

# Foods to Avoid After Transplantation

## Will I have to watch my diet after a transplant?

Yes, your diet still plays a big role after a **kidney transplant**. It is important to maintain a healthy weight and exercise regularly. A healthy, balanced diet will help prevent high blood sugar, excess weight gain and promote overall wellness and health.

After a kidney transplant, plan to follow a diet low in **salt**. A balanced diet includes a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, lean meats, reduced-fat dairy products, whole grains, and plenty of water.

Additionally, you may need to avoid eating certain types of foods. Your healthcare team can help you understand which foods you should avoid – and why. The dietitian at your transplant center can help you find a diet that is right for you.

## Why do I need to avoid certain foods?

After your kidney transplant, you will need to take special medicines, called **“immunosuppressive drugs”** or **“anti-rejection medicines.”** These medicines help lower the risk of your new kidney being rejected. However, these medicines also weaken your body’s ability to fight infection. Taking these medicines increases your risk for getting sick from germs, such as bacteria.

Some germs cause bacterial infections. Some bacterial infections can be picked up from food. You can help lower your risk of infection from food by:

- Handling foods safely, like washing your hands after touching raw chicken or eggs.
- Being careful when eating out.
- Avoiding certain ‘high-risk’ foods because they are more likely to have bacteria that can cause an infection.

You may also need to take steroids, which can cause increased:

- Appetite, causing unwanted weight gain

- Increased blood fat levels (cholesterol & triglycerides)
- Salt and fluid retention
- It can also cause a breakdown in muscle and bone tissue

Due to unwanted weight gain, it's important to make healthy food choices and stick to appropriate portion sizes. It may be good to avoid fatty foods and foods high in simple sugar. Check with your doctor before exercise. Most often, you may need to exercise 3-4 times a week for 20-30 minutes each time.

## What are some of the 'high-risk' foods to avoid?

It is recommended to avoid foods that are spoiled, moldy or past its "use by" date, as well as avoid the foods listed below. If you have any questions, talk to your healthcare team.

### **Meat, fish and poultry**

Raw or undercooked:

- Meat, poultry and fish
- Prawns or shrimp
- Crayfish
- Crab
- Squid
- Clams, oysters, and mussels

### **Dairy products**

- Unpasteurized milk and foods made from unpasteurized milk, like cheese and yogurt
- Uncooked or undercooked eggs and any products containing them

### **Fruits and vegetables**

- Grapefruit or grapefruit juice and pomegranate or pomegranate juice; especially if you are taking cyclosporine or prograf (specific immunosuppressive medications)
- Unwashed raw fruits and damaged fruits
- Unwashed raw vegetables and unwashed salads
- Unpasteurized juices or ciders
- Salad from salad bars or delicatessens
- Sprouts (like alfalfa or bean sprouts)

If you have questions or need more information about a healthy eating plan after your kidney transplant, ask your transplant team to refer you to a registered dietitian.

For more details, you may go to the USDA's Food Safety for Transplant Recipients

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booklet at:

<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/FoodbornenessContaminants/UCM312793.pdf>.

**Date Reviewed:** August 26, 2016

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