

Opinion Article

Nutritional strategies to delay the progression of chronic kidney disease

Rogelio Fekety*

Department of Urology, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy.

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DESCRIPTION

Kidney disease, a prevalent and growing health issue worldwide, significantly impacts patients' nutritional status and dietary intake. Proper nutrition is critical for managing kidney disease, as it can help slow the progression of the disease, manage symptoms, and improve overall quality of life. Managing protein intake is crucial for people with kidney disease, as too much protein can strain the kidneys.

The importance of nutrition in kidney disease

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) affects the body's ability to filter waste and excess fluids from the blood, leading to a build-up of toxins. This can result in a range of complications, including high blood pressure, anemia, weak bones, poor nutritional health, and nerve damage. The nutritional status of kidney patients is important for several reasons:

Preventing malnutrition: CKD can lead to malnutrition due to decreased appetite, altered taste, and dietary restrictions. Malnutrition in CKD patients is associated with increased morbidity and mortality.

Managing phosphorus and potassium levels: Elevated phosphorus and potassium levels are common in CKD and can lead to cardiovascular complications and other health issues.

Maintaining optimal protein intake: While protein is essential for health, excessive intake can burden the kidneys. Conversely, inadequate protein intake can lead to muscle wasting and poor health outcomes.

Protein management: Kidney patients must balance protein intake to avoid excess strain on the kidneys while preventing protein-energy wasting. This requires careful planning and monitoring.

Electrolyte and mineral balance: Managing levels of potassium, phosphorus, sodium, and calcium is vital. Foods high in these

minerals must be limited, which can restrict dietary options and lead to nutrient deficiencies.

Fluid intake: Patients with advanced CKD or those on dialysis often need to monitor and limit fluid intake to prevent fluid overload, which can lead to hypertension and heart failure.

Caloric intake: Maintaining adequate caloric intake is challenging due to dietary restrictions and decreased appetite. Insufficient caloric intake can lead to weight loss and muscle wasting.

Protein intake: For non-dialysis CKD patients, a diet with 0.6g-0.8 g of protein per kg of body weight per day is recommended. For those on dialysis, the requirement increases to 1.0 g-1.2 g per kg per day.

Phosphorus management: Foods high in phosphorus, such as dairy products, nuts, seeds, and certain whole grains, should be limited. Phosphate binders may be prescribed to help control phosphorus levels.

Potassium control: Patients should limit high-potassium foods like bananas, oranges, potatoes, and tomatoes. Instead, they can opt for low-potassium alternatives such as apples, berries, and green beans.

Sodium reduction: A low-sodium diet (less than 2,300 mg per day) helps control blood pressure and reduces fluid retention. Processed foods, canned soups, and salty snacks should be avoided.

Fluid management: Fluid restrictions vary based on the stage of CKD and treatment modality. Monitoring weight and blood pressure can help manage fluid intake effectively.

Clinical management and monitoring

Regular monitoring of nutritional status is need for kidney patients. This includes:

*Corresponding author. Rogelio Fekety, Email:
Rogeliof@pharmamar.com

Anthropometric measurements: Regular assessment of body weight, Body Mass Index (BMI), and muscle mass can help detect changes in nutritional status.

Biochemical parameters: Blood tests to monitor serum albumin, prealbumin, electrolytes, and other markers provide insights into the patient's nutritional health and kidney function.

Dietary assessments: Dietitians can conduct detailed dietary assessments to evaluate nutrient intake and adherence to dietary recommendations.

Interdisciplinary approach: Managing CKD requires a team approach, including nephrologists, dietitians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals to provide comprehensive care.

Effective nutritional management is a cornerstone of care for kidney patients. A customized diet plan that addresses the unique needs of each patient can help manage symptoms, slow disease progression, and improve quality of life. Regular monitoring and an interdisciplinary approach are essential to ensure optimal nutritional status and overall health in kidney patients. By addressing the challenges and implementing evidence-based dietary strategies, healthcare providers can significantly enhance the well-being of individuals living with kidney disease.