



National **Kidney** Foundation®

A TO Z HEALTH GUIDE

Vitamins and Minerals in Kidney Disease

Are you getting enough vitamins and minerals for your health? If you have kidney disease or kidney failure, here's what you need to know.

What are vitamins and minerals?

Vitamins and minerals are substances your body needs to help carry out special functions. They help your body use the foods you eat. They provide you with energy, help your body grow and repair tissue, and help maintain life. Everyone needs them. But if you have kidney disease or are on dialysis, you may not be getting enough.

How do I know if I'm not getting enough vitamins and minerals?

Almost all vitamins and minerals come from the foods you eat. Your body cannot make these substances. People with healthy kidneys who eat a variety of foods from all the food groups (meats, grains, fruits, vegetables and dairy products) can get lots of vitamins and minerals. But if you have kidney disease or are on dialysis, your diet may limit some food groups; therefore, you may not be getting all the vitamins and minerals you need each day. You may need to take some in the form of supplements. Your healthcare provider can help you find out which vitamins and minerals you may need by looking at your health history and running some tests.

Why do I need different amounts of vitamins and minerals?

Having chronic kidney disease changes your need for some nutrients. Some of the reasons are:

- The waste products that build up in your body each day can change the way your body uses vitamins and minerals.
- Some of the medicines you take can change the way your body uses certain vitamins and minerals.
- Some vitamins are lost during dialysis treatment.
- Following a diet for kidney disease can mean you miss certain vitamins and minerals from some food groups.
- On days when you may not feel well enough to eat regular meals, you may not get enough daily vitamins and minerals.
- Having kidney disease changes your body's ability to make some vitamins. An example is vitamin D.

