

## Kidney Wellness Starter Kit

**Welcome!** We are pleased that you have chosen to review our Kidney Wellness Starter Kit!

The purpose of this toolkit is to support individuals in building kidney-friendly habits that promote overall wellness. Use this guide to track progress, reflect, and stay motivated.

The guide includes:

- Kidney Wellness Checklist
- Kidney-Safe Grocery List
- Journaling, Stress, and Mindfulness Tools
- Strategies for Improving Your Environmental Health
- Strategies for Improving Your Social Health
- Top 10 Q&A

If you have any questions or would like to schedule an appointment, please do not hesitate to contact our office at (702) 877-1887 or email [info@ksosn.com](mailto:info@ksosn.com).

Warmest Regards,

Kidney Specialists of Southern Nevada

## Kidney Wellness Checklist

### Daily Habits (Check Off Each Day):

- ☐ Drink at least 8 cups (64 oz) of water (or as advised by your doctor)
- ☐ Eat a kidney-friendly fruit or vegetable
- ☐ Avoid added salt – use herbs and spices instead
- ☐ Take medications as prescribed
- ☐ Move your body for 20 minutes (walk, stretch, light exercise)
- ☐ Avoid sugary or processed drinks
- ☐ Track weight and blood pressure (if recommended by your doctor)
- ☐ Take 5 minutes for deep breathing or mindfulness

### Weekly Habits (Check Off Each Week):

- ☐ Prep 2–3 kidney-friendly meals/snacks
- ☐ Reflect on emotional well-being
- ☐ Try a relaxation technique (e.g., deep breathing, journaling)
- ☐ Limit protein portions to the amount advised by your dietitian
- ☐ Practice one self-care activity (bath, reading, hobby)

### Monthly Habits (Check Off This Month):

- ☐ Schedule lab work or tests (as recommended)
- ☐ Evaluate your fluid intake habits
- ☐ Set a new monthly health goal (small and achievable)
- ☐ Connect with a support group or kidney health resource
- ☐ Review and restock kidney-safe pantry staples

## Kidney-Safe Grocery List

Designed to help patients shop smart and support kidney function. This list focuses on foods lower in sodium, potassium, and phosphorus, while providing good nutrition.

**Always check with your doctor or renal dietitian for specific dietary needs. Adjust based on your stage of kidney disease and lab results.**

### Fruits (Low in Potassium)

- Apples
- Berries (blueberries, strawberries, raspberries)
- Grapes
- Pineapple
- Peaches (fresh or canned in juice)
- Watermelon
- Plums
- Cherries

### Vegetables (Lower Potassium Options)

- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Cucumber
- Green beans
- Peppers (bell peppers)
- Zucchini
- Lettuce
- Onions
- Carrots (in moderation)
- Eggplant

**Tip:** Double-boil or soak high-potassium veggies like potatoes if you want to enjoy them occasionally.

### Bread & Grains

- White bread or sourdough
- Unsalted crackers
- Plain rice (white or brown)
- Pasta (avoid whole grain if potassium is restricted)
- Low-sodium tortillas
- Cream of wheat or grits
- Cornflakes, puffed rice cereal

### Seasonings & Condiments

- Fresh herbs: parsley, basil, thyme, cilantro
- Garlic and onion powder (not garlic/onion salt)
- Lemon juice or vinegar
- Olive oil
- Salt-free spice blends (e.g., Mrs. Dash)
- Mustard (check sodium)
- Black pepper, paprika, turmeric

### Protein

- Eggs or egg whites
- Fresh skinless chicken (limit portion)
- White fish (cod, tilapia)
- Tofu (check phosphorus content)
- Low-sodium canned tuna (rinse well)
- Unsalted peanut butter (in small amounts)

### Beverages

- Water
- Unsweetened rice milk or almond milk (check phosphorus additives)
- Herbal teas (caffeine-free)
- Cranberry or apple juice (in small amounts)

### Pantry Staples

- Low-sodium broth (or homemade)
- Unsalted canned vegetables (rinse before using)
- Canned fruit in juice
- Olive oil or canola oil
- Plain rice cakes or popcorn (unsalted)
- No added salt - tomato sauce (use sparingly)

### Limit or Avoid

- Processed meats (bacon, sausage, ham)
- Pickles, olives, and cured foods
- Dark colas, sports drinks, and high-potassium juices
- Dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt — limit or choose low-phosphorus versions)
- Potatoes, tomatoes, oranges, bananas (unless cleared by your dietitian)
- Limit red meats and processed meats.

## Journaling

Managing a chronic condition like kidney disease can be emotionally overwhelming. Journaling helps release bottled-up emotions and reduce stress, which in turn can positively affect physical health.

Use these journal prompts weekly or whenever you need reflection or motivation.

- How do I feel physically and emotionally today?
- What's one habit I'm proud of this week?
- What triggers unhealthy choices for me, and how can I manage them?
- What kidney-friendly meals or snacks did I enjoy?
- What challenges am I facing in my wellness journey?
- What small change can I make next week to feel better?
- What motivates me to take care of my kidneys?
- How am I caring for my mental and emotional health?

Get started on your journey here: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Stress & Mindfulness Tools

- Breathing exercise: Inhale 4 seconds, hold 4, exhale 4
- Grounding exercise: Name 5 things you can see/hear/feel
- Gratitude list: Write 3 things you're grateful for each day
- Improve your physical health
  - Get active & maintain your muscles.
  - Find a healthy weight.
  - Eat a healthy diet
  - Build healthy habits

## Strategies for Improving Your Environmental Health

- **Make your home healthier**
  - Look around your home for your household goods and products. Some chemicals can harm your health. To reduce potential toxins in your home:
    - Clean with “Safer Choice” or non-toxic products & dust using a damp rag.
    - Use a wet mop to clean floors & vacuum with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter.
    - Wash your hands often.
- **Reduce your allergies**
  - When sneezing, itchy eyes, or a runny nose suddenly appear, allergies may be to blame. Take steps to reduce your exposure to allergens:
    - If pollen counts are high, stay inside with the windows closed and use the air conditioning.
    - Reduce indoor allergens. Keep humidity levels low in the home to keep dust mites and mold under control.
    - Wash your bedding in hot water once a week & vacuum the floors once a week.
    - Talk with your doctor about medications and allergy shots.
- **Stay safe during hot weather**
  - Heat is the biggest danger in the summer months. Being hot for too long can cause many illnesses, some of which can be deadly.
    - Do outdoor activities during the coolest part of the day.
    - Wear protective clothing, such as hats, long-sleeved shirts, and long pants or skirts.
    - Use sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15, preferably 30. Reapply frequently.
    - Use sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB.
    - Drink plenty of liquids, especially water. Avoid drinks that contain alcohol or caffeine.
- **Guard against cold weather**
  - Cold air can pose threats to your health, whether you’re indoors or outside.
    - At home, wear socks, slippers, and a hat. Or stay covered up with a blanket.
    - Keep your heat set to at least 68°F or higher during cold weather. If you need help paying your heating bills, see if you qualify for the HHS energy assistance program.
    - Wear a windproof and water-proof jacket if you’re heading into cold, rainy, windy, or snowy conditions. Dress in layers.
- **Air quality and your health**
  - The combination of high temperatures, pollution, and airborne particles can brew up an unhealthy mixture in the air and can make it hard to breathe and sap your energy.
    - Avoid outdoor activities in the afternoons on warmer days, when the risk of air pollution is highest.
    - Reduce pollutants in your home. Don’t let anyone smoke in your home. Avoid burning candles, incense, or wood fires. Run fans or open a window when cooking.
- **Stay safe in the water**
  - Summer is a great time to go out and have fun in the water. But recreational waters, including swimming pools, lakes, and oceans, can sometimes get contaminated with bacteria and viruses.
    - Shower before and after swimming.
    - Try not to swallow the water.
    - Never go to the bathroom in the water & stay out of the water if you’ve had diarrhea recently to help protect others from infectious germs.
    - Always wash your hands before you eat or drink & cover open wounds with waterproof bandages.
    - Don’t swim in water that looks murky or has an odor.
- **Clear out toxins in your home**
  - Some hazards in the home are easy to see, but others are harder to spot, and some are invisible.
    - If your home was built before 1978, test exposed paint for lead.
    - Use vent fans in rooms that have lots of moisture, like the bathroom, to prevent mold growth.
    - If you have a leak or flood in your home, quickly dispose of damaged items.
    - Clean small areas of mold on walls or fabric with hot, soapy water.
    - Test your home for radon.

### Resource:

<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/your-healthiest-self-wellness-toolkits/environmental-wellness-toolkit>

## Strategies for Improving Your Social Health

- **Make connections.**
  - Social connections may help protect health and lengthen life. To find new social connections:
    - Join a group interested in a hobby, volunteer & stay in touch with family, friends, and neighbors. Connect in person, online, or by phone.
    - Help others. Run errands for people with limited mobility or access to transportation.
    - Be more active in your local community. Take part in community or senior center events.
- **Take care of yourself while caring for others.**
  - Get organized. Make to-do lists and set a daily routine.
  - Ask for help. Make a list of ways others can help.
  - Try to take breaks each day.
  - Keep up with your hobbies and interests when you can.
  - Join a caregiver's support group.
  - Eat healthy foods, and exercise as often as you can.
  - Build your skills.
- **Get active with friends, family, and other social connections.**
  - Build your network. Find a group for people with shared interests.
  - Make a shared routine.
  - Be accountable.
  - Take a class.
  - Join a team.
- **Shape your family's health habits.**
  - Be a role model. Eat healthy family meals together.
  - Make healthy choices easy.
  - Focus on fun. Cook a healthy meal together.
  - Change a little at a time.
- **Bond with your kids.**
  - Give children meaningful jobs at home and positive recognition afterward. Help them improve their skills one step at a time.
  - Use kind words, tones, and gestures when giving instructions or making requests.
  - Spend some time every day in warm, positive, loving interaction with your kids
  - Brainstorm solutions to problems at home or school together. Be available for advice and support, especially for teens.
  - Ask about your child's concerns, worries, goals, and ideas.
  - Participate in activities that your child enjoys
- **Build healthy relationships.**
  - Recognize how other people influence you.
  - Share your feelings honestly & ask for what you need from others.
  - Listen to others without judgment or blame. Be caring and empathetic.
  - Disagree with others respectfully. Conflicts should not turn into personal attacks.
  - Avoid being overly critical.
  - Compromise. Try to come to agreements that work for everyone.
  - Protect yourself from violent and abusive people. Set boundaries with others.

### Resource:

<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/your-healthiest-self-wellness-toolkits/social-wellness-toolkit>

## Top 10 Q&A

1. **What is kidney disease?**  
Kidney disease is a chronic state of low kidney function usually because of another chronic condition, type 2 diabetes or high blood pressure.
2. **How would I know if I have kidney disease?**  
This is one of the most commonly asked questions. For the most part, kidney disease is asymptomatic unless very advanced. A simple lab test can detect kidney disease.
3. **What are the common causes of kidney disease?**  
In this country, the most common cause of kidney disease is diabetes, followed by high blood pressure and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug use. In certain cases, kidney disease can be hereditary.
4. **What are the symptoms of kidney disease?**  
Unfortunately, in the early stages, there are no symptoms of kidney disease. During late or advanced stages, the symptoms could be: retention of water in the body or generalized swelling, difficulty breathing, puffiness around the face and eyes, and frothy urine.
5. **What drugs are harmful to the kidneys?**  
The most common medications that are harmful to the kidneys are nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories commonly known as NSAIDs
6. **How can I protect my kidneys if I take medications to treat other health conditions?**  
It is always necessary to get your kidney function checked before your health care provider can advise you of the specific measures needed to protect the kidneys.
7. **What foods should I avoid for my kidney health?**  
Generally, food high in sugar, high in salt, and high in saturated fatty acids is harmful to the kidneys.
8. **How does my nephrologist know that I need to have dialysis or get a kidney transplant?**  
A simple blood test and urine test, along with kidney imaging, is helpful in making the determination.
9. **Do I need to get labs drawn before each visit, and why?**  
For the most part, kidney disease is asymptomatic, meaning it does not have any symptoms other than some abnormal labs. A lot of these conditions are fairly progressive, so it is important to have labs drawn before each visit to assess the latest situation.
10. **Why do I need to schedule a follow-up visit after my initial consultation?**  
An initial visit reviews your prior history, and the doctor may order tests to further diagnose the condition and manage it accordingly. A follow-up is a must to review the test results and discuss further treatment strategies with the nephrology team.