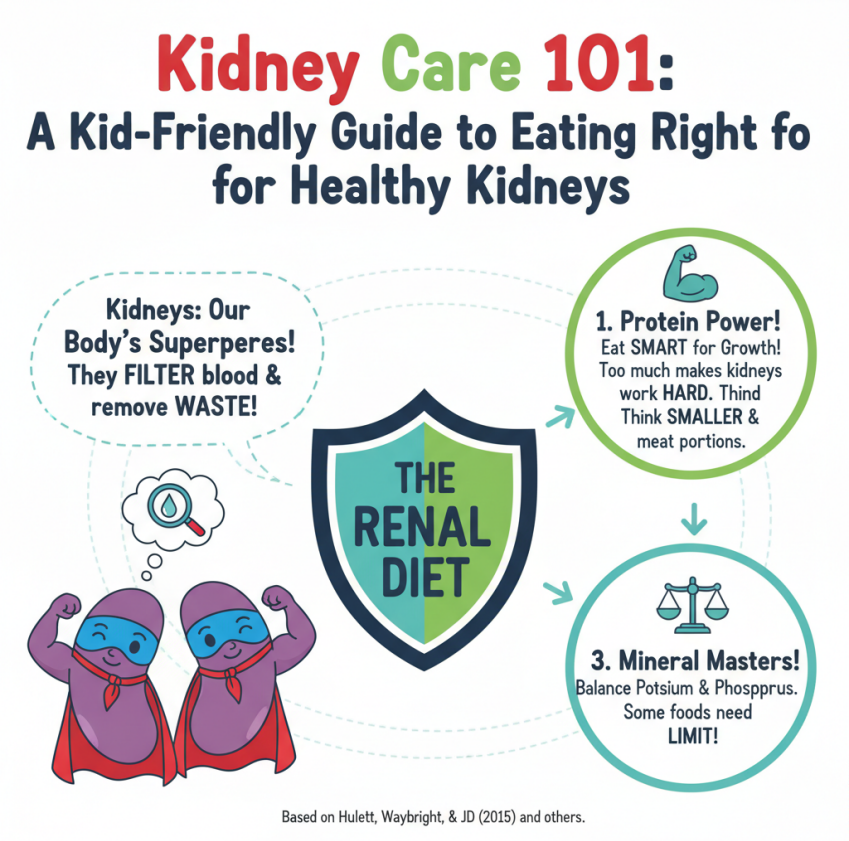
**"Kidney Care 101: A Kidney Friendly Guide to Eating Right for Healthy Kidneys"**

The kidneys are like superheroes for our bodies. They work hard to filter our blood and eliminate waste and extra fluids, helping us maintain a healthy balance of minerals and electrolytes. This is crucial to keep our body functioning well. However, sometimes people can develop kidney problems, which can make it difficult for them to perform their job properly. When this happens, doctors often recommend a special diet to keep the kidneys healthy and help manage any problems (Hulett, Waybright, & JD, 2015).

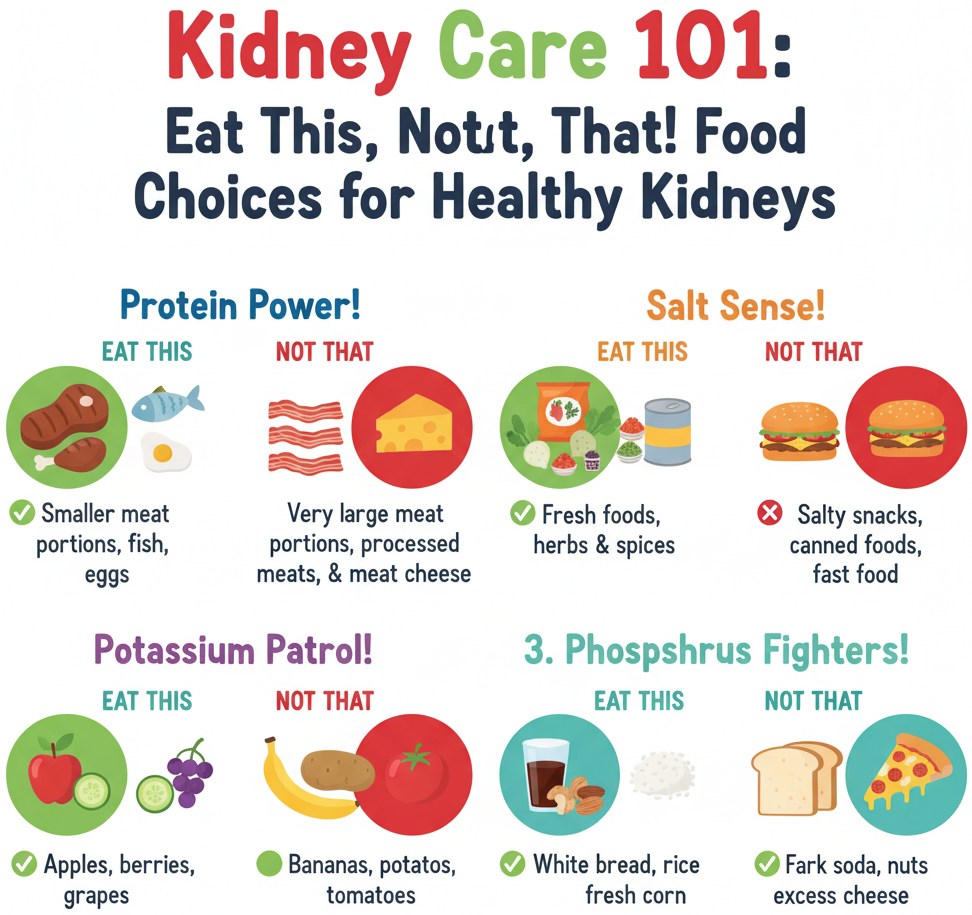



So what is a renal diet? It's not a special meal with a hidden superpower, but rather a way of eating that helps our kidneys work better. The renal diet generally focuses on three main things: controlling protein, reducing salt, and controlling potassium and phosphorus intake.

First, let's talk about proteins. Protein is extremely important for our body because it helps with growth, muscle building and tissue repair. You can find protein in foods like meat, fish, eggs, dairy, beans and nuts. However, when the kidneys are not working properly, eating too much protein can create a lot of waste that the kidneys have to filter, which can be very difficult for them leading to the kidneys overworking and becoming weaker faster (Rysz, Franczyk, Ciałkowska-Rysz, & Gluba-Brzózka, 2017). A renal diet generally involves eating only the amount of protein your body actually needs, which

may mean choosing smaller portions of meat or opting for other protein sources that are easier on the kidneys.

Next we have salt. You may have heard that too much salt is bad for you, and this is especially true for those with kidney problems. Salt can cause the body to retain extra water, which puts more strain on the kidneys. For someone following a renal diet, it is very important to limit salt intake. This means avoiding adding salt to meals and being careful with processed foods, as they often contain a lot of hidden salt (Kalantar-Zadeh, Jafar, Nitsch, Neuen, & Perkovic, 2021).

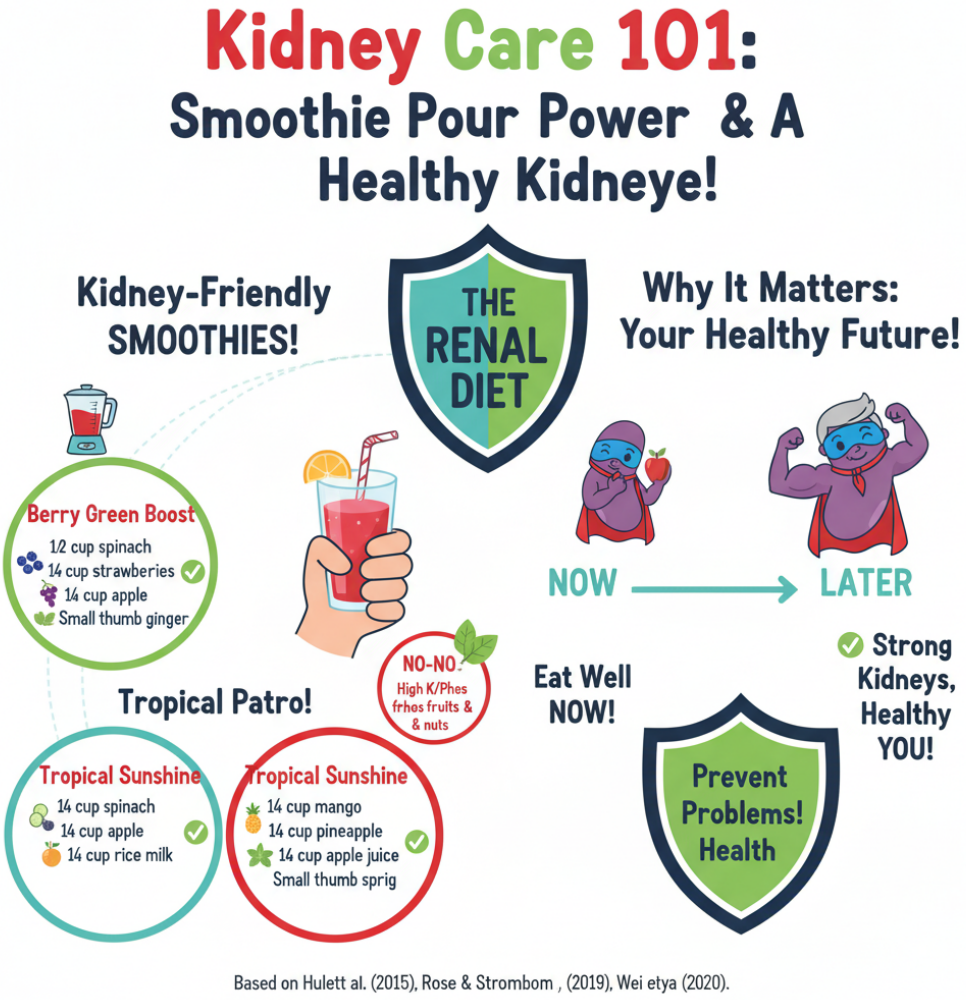



Based on Hulett at. (2015), Kalantar-Zaeeh al. (2021), Palmer ael & Goraya & Wesson (815).

Now, let's take a look at potassium and phosphorus. These are special minerals that help with different functions of our body, but they can become a problem if the kidneys cannot filter them well. Foods such as bananas, potatoes, tomatoes, and dairy products are rich in potassium, while phosphorus can be found in foods such as cheese, nuts, and dark sodas (Palmer, Colbert, & Clegg, 2020). On a renal diet, it's common to keep an eye on the amount of these foods you eat so that your kidneys don't become overloaded. Instead, people may need to choose foods that are low in potassium and phosphorus to keep everything balanced.

For example, instead of a banana as a snack, someone might choose an apple because apples are low in potassium (Goraya & Wesson, 2015). To help visualize foods that are good for kidney health versus those that should be limited, an infographic showing food categories can be beneficial. This can illustrate protein servings, examples of low-salt foods, and which foods high in potassium and phosphorus should be avoided.

Understanding the renal diet can be overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be boring. Smoothies can be a fun and tasty way to combine healthy, kidney-health-friendly ingredients (Hulett et al., 2015). Using low potassium fruits and vegetables and blending them together can be a delicious treat that helps our bodies. Another infographic could show some kidney-friendly smoothie recipes and highlight ingredients to use and avoid.




Lastly, it is essential to talk about why it is important to make early dietary changes. Being mindful of what you eat can help prevent kidney problems from worsening. Studies have shown that adequate nutrition can improve kidney function and overall

health outcomes (Rose & Strombom, 2019; Wei et al., 2020). When children and young people adopt healthy eating habits now, they are setting themselves up for a healthier future. It is much easier to maintain good kidney health than to reverse the damage already caused.

In short, a renal diet is like giving your kidneys special care. By controlling your protein intake, reducing salt and controlling potassium and phosphorus levels, we can help our kidneys do their job better. Taking steps now to eat well is crucial because it can make a significant difference to your kidney health later in life. Combined with taking your medication and controlling your blood pressure can transform kidney disease from a progressive disease into a manageable condition, offering patients years of health, independence, and a better life. The time to start is not when kidneys have failed, but today.

**Citations:**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