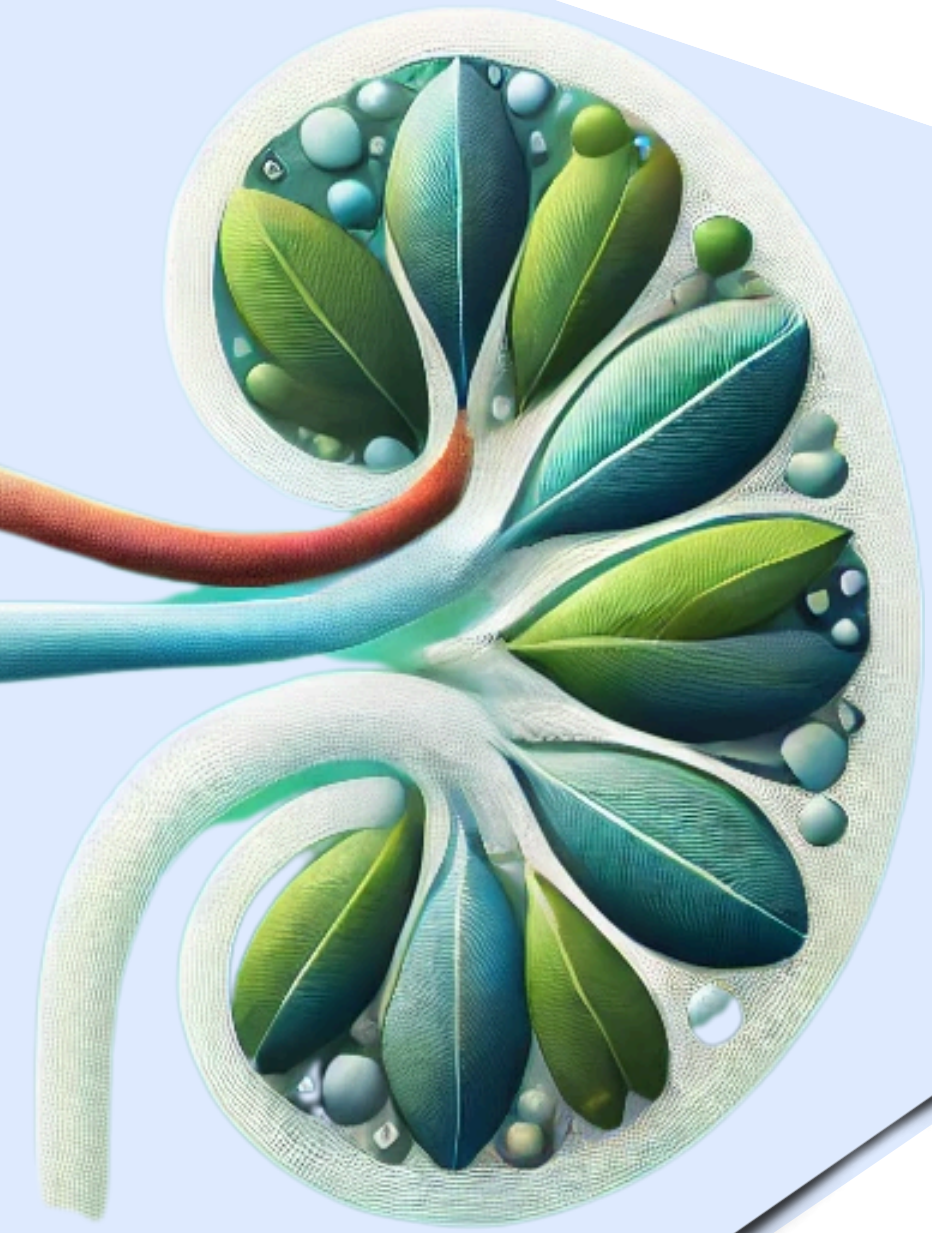
Stress-Free CKD Eating:



eGFR & Creatinine Basics

Hello, Hello!
It's so nice to meet you.

Linda is a Certified Renal Nutritionist dedicated to helping individuals manage their kidney health through personalized nutrition.
As a Chef honors graduate of Auguste Escoffier Culinary School (yes, she is a CKD chef!), she combines her culinary expertise with her nutritional knowledge to create delicious and safe kidney-friendly meals. (see the cookbooks page).
She is certified as a Kidney Health Coach and has spent the past decade as a caregiver to her husband, who has stage 3 kidney disease, ensuring his diet supports his health while still being enjoyable.

Linda's work includes serving as a culinary consultant for American Kidney Fund® for four years. Many of her recipes are featured on their Kidney Kitchen® website. She has also provided cooking demos, webinars, and educational content for their blog. She has also taught educational classes locally and online. Her involvement extends to her online support groups, and she also does informational guest spots for medical professionals and organizations who wish to learn the proper execution of a kidney diet and how to work with her. Linda has also demonstrated her CKD culinary expertise for the National Kidney Foundation® and has been featured in Culinary Entrepreneurs® magazine.

"I am a Renal nutritionist (& chef!) who decided to branch out from the traditional office setting to better serve clients. By practicing online, I can reach more people and be more available without the constraints and high costs associated with office visits. This way, I can focus fully on helping individuals like you navigate your health journey, no matter where you are."

Stages of CKD Based On eGFR

Here’s how they are defined or broken down according to eGFR.

Stage 1: 90-120 with evidence or symptoms
Stage 2: 60-89
Stage 3a: 45-59
Stage 3b: 30-44
Stage 4: 15-29
Stage 5: anything below 15

eGFR (Estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate) and What It Represents

What GFR Measures:

- eGFR (Estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate) is a way to estimate how well your kidneys are filtering your blood. It doesn't count the exact number of functioning filters (called glomeruli) in the kidneys, but it gives an overall idea of how well your kidneys are working.

Relation to Glomeruli:

- Although eGFR doesn’t directly show how many glomeruli are still working, it reflects how well the remaining glomeruli are filtering blood. As kidney disease gets worse and more glomeruli get damaged, the kidneys can filter less, and the eGFR number goes down. So, a lower eGFR means fewer filters are working at full strength.

How It’s Calculated:

- eGFR is usually calculated using a formula that looks at things like creatinine levels, age, sex, and body size. When creatinine builds up in the blood, it means your kidneys aren’t filtering it out as well, which usually indicates reduced kidney function.

In short, eGFR doesn’t tell us exactly how many glomeruli are still working, but it’s a good way to understand how much of your kidney’s filtering ability is left. A lower eGFR means fewer filters are working well, and a higher eGFR suggests better kidney function overall.

Your eGFR Fluctuates.

Why GFR Fluctuates

- **Hydration Levels**: Dehydration can cause a lower GFR, while being well-hydrated can increase it.
- **Medications**: Some medications, like diuretics or blood pressure meds, can affect GFR.
- **Sleep and Rest**: Poor sleep or physical stress on the body can cause temporary changes in GFR.
- **Dietary Changes**: A high-protein meal before testing can increase creatinine, which can slightly lower GFR.
- **Physical Activity**: Intense exercise before a test can temporarily impact creatinine levels, affecting GFR.
- **Labs**: Lab test results can vary slightly due to the testing process, equipment, and conditions.

Normal Fluctuations: It's very normal to see GFR bounce around a bit. A fluctuation of 10-15 points is considered within "normal". If you're fluctuating within a single stage (like Stage 3a), it's generally less concerning. If GFR is **trending down consistently**, that's when it's worth discussing with your healthcare team.

Here's an easy breakdown of the difference between GFR and creatinine:

1. **Creatinine**
   - *What It Is*: Creatinine is a waste of muscle metabolism and creatine breakdown. Our kidneys filter it out of the blood.
   - *What It Tells Us*: Creatinine levels in the blood give us a snapshot of how well the kidneys filter waste. Higher creatinine levels mean the kidneys aren't filtering as well, while lower creatinine levels suggest better kidney function.

Quick Takeaway: Creatinine is a waste product measurement that hints at how hard the kidneys are working to filter waste.

2. **eGFR** (Glomerular Filtration Rate)
   - *What It Is*: eGFR estimates how much blood the kidneys filter each minute.
   - *What It Tells Us*: eGFR is a broader measure of overall kidney filtering ability and indicates the percentage of kidney function remaining. Higher GFR means better filtering ability, while lower eGFR means reduced kidney function.

Quick Takeaway: eGFR estimates kidney function capacity and efficiency. It reflects the percentage of healthy filtering functions left.

How They Work Together

Think of creatinine as the indicator of how much work the kidneys do to keep waste levels down, while eGFR tells us how much filtering power the kidneys still have left.

- Example: If eGFR is low and creatinine is close to normal, your kidneys still work relatively well with what function they have left. If eGFR is low and creatinine is high, it suggests the kidneys are struggling more to filter waste.

In short, Creatinine is the current filtering load, and eGFR is the overall filtering capacity. Together, they give a fuller picture of kidney health.

Think of the kidneys as a coffee filter system.

1. eGFR (Estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate) is like the quality of coffee filters in the machine.
   - **High** eGFR: Imagine you have a new set of high-quality filters. Water flows through quickly and smoothly, making clean coffee without any grounds.
   - **Low** eGFR: Over time, some of those filters get worn out, torn, or clogged. They struggle to do the job,
2. Creatinine is like the coffee grounds that are in the filter basket.
   - **Normal** Creatinine: With strong filters (high eGFR), the machine can handle the grounds easily. Most grounds are left in the basket, leaving you with a clean brew.

- **High** Creatinine: With clogged, torn, or overused filters (low eGFR), the grounds end up in your mug because the filter isn't filtering as efficiently. Now, there's no chance of a clean brew. There are grounds everywhere (high creatinine in the blood), signaling the machine (kidneys) is struggling.

Putting It All Together
Kidneys are the coffee machine.
- eGFR is the (quality of the) filters.
- Creatinine is the coffee grounds.

Both tell us how well your "coffee machine" (kidneys) function.

If you aren't sure what your stage is or your dietary restrictions, see the section regarding renal dieticians.

Can You Improve Your eGFR? Here's the Truth

It is possible to improve your eGFR (and even get off dialysis in some cases, or raise a stage), but it doesn't happen overnight—and for some, it may not happen at all. In Fact, it's rare.
What's most common?
The people who share stories about raising their eGFR dramatically (not necessarily about getting off dialysis) often had lifestyles that were hard on their kidneys. When they made big changes, their kidneys got a much-needed break and "bounced back" a little. This doesn't mean they found a miracle cure; it means they stopped damaging their kidneys and started treating them better.

The truth:
✅ There's no cure for CKD.
✅ The real goal is to slow or stop the progression.

Here's what you can do:
- Manage blood pressure and diabetes, if applicable.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat according to your personalized CKD nutrition needs.

You may also want to talk with your doctor about medications that could help. Remember, every step you take toward better care gives your kidneys a better chance to stabilize.

Lowering Creatinine—What You Need to Know!

When it comes to creatinine, a lot of confusion circulates. The truth is, our bodies make and excrete creatinine—and contrary to popular belief, diet doesn't play much of a role in lowering it.

Here's the kicker: You could be in stage 4 CKD with a creatinine level closer to normal because your remaining kidney function is still filtering well.

You could be in stage 2 with a high creatinine level because, although you have much kidney function available, it is struggling to filter.

So, when I hear people say, "I need to lower my creatinine" or "How do I lower my creatinine?" They're really asking, "How can I help my kidneys filter better?"

Unfortunately, creatinine numbers don't change much with diet alone. It's not something we can control directly through food. But don't worry, this is where medicine and science come into play. There are medications available, so talk to your doctor about how to manage it.

👉 **The Bottom Line**:

Creatinine is not something we can fix with diet. If your creatinine is high, it's time to talk to your doctor about treatment options to stabilize those numbers.

Did You Know Your Nutritional Needs Depend on More Than Just Your CKD Stage?

Your CKD nutritional needs are shaped by many factors, including:

- Your stage / eGFR
- Lab results
- Other health issues
- Activity levels
- Medications, etc

🌐 Here's the catch: Most online information and recipes are designed for Stage 3—the largest CKD group—but even Stage 3 has a wide range of needs!

For example:

- Upper Stage 3a may handle higher nutrient levels.
- Lower Stage 3b often needs stricter limits.

Under- or over-consuming nutrients can lead to new health issues and faster CKD progression.

- That's why a personalized approach is key to protecting your kidney health.

Renal Dieticians

A renal dietitian is your go-to professional for medical-based decisions about your diet, including determining your specific restriction numbers.
With the convenience of online services, you can arrange an online consultation and have your health information securely shared with a dietitian. Here's a helpful link to find a renal dietitian. You can search by location and choose either in-person or telehealth options. Select Kidney Specialist when searching.

Find a Renal Dietician Here

Once you have those numbers, a **renal nutritionist** (that's me! 👋) can help you create a personalized diet that fits your unique needs and goals. As a renal nutritionist, I can't provide your exact restriction numbers. However, within my CKD nutrition program, I can guide you with temporary numbers to use as a starting point until you receive your own unique numbers.

Your dietary needs, including protein, potassium, and phosphorus levels, will vary depending on your stage. For example:

- **Stages 1-2**: You may not need strict restrictions or might even benefit from increasing potassium or protein.
- **Stage 3**: Temporary guidelines can help until you receive personalized recommendations.
- **Stages 4-5**: Lower nutrient levels are often needed.
- **Dialysis**: Protein intake usually increases significantly.

Not sure how to navigate your numbers? My CKD Nutrition Program offers temporary guideline ranges until you can receive your own, plus we personalize your kidney nutrition to your needs.
💡 Tip: Any positive change in your diet is better than none!

Can I Repair My Kidneys? Let's Talk Reality.

I get it—you're scared, frustrated, and desperate for answers. Living with CKD is hard, and it's natural to want a miracle, something to make it all go away. But the truth is, there are no shortcuts.

☢️ The Dangerous Truth About "Quick Fixes"

You've probably seen the promises:

- "Cure CKD"
- "Reverse Kidney Damage"
- "Detox Your Kidneys"
- "Flush Toxins"

Or products like:

- Supplements
- Herbs
- Teas
- "Ancient Remedies"
- Science-Based Meal Plans
- Gut Health Fixes

Here's the scary part: many of these are gimmicks. They're designed to play on your desperation, take your money, and sometimes even worsen your kidney function.

⚠ What's Really at Risk

Quick-fix promises like these waste precious time and resources while your kidneys need real, personalized support. They can also lead to fast CKD progression by straining your kidneys or causing imbalances in your body.

⛔ The Reality You Need to Hear

There is no cure for CKD and no way to reverse the damage. But that doesn't mean all hope is lost. What you can do is to help slow its progression, protect your kidney function, and avoid risky jumps in decline. The ONLY way to do this safely is to:

- Adjust your diet based on YOUR lab numbers.
- Make lifestyle changes specific to YOUR needs.
- Follow professional medical guidance.

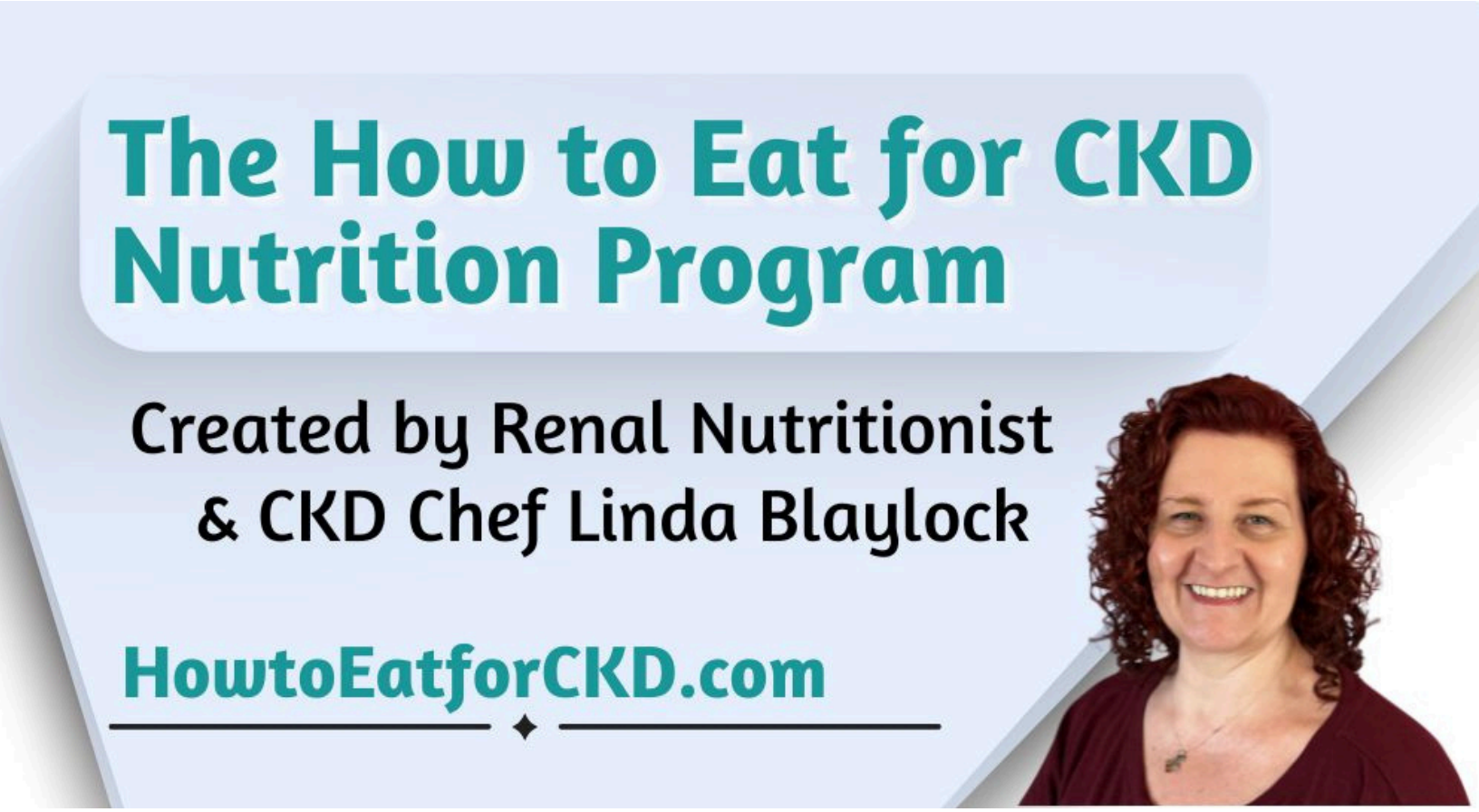
💡 Stop Wasting Time—Start Managing Safely

In my CKD nutritional program, we skip the gimmicks and focus on what works. Together, we'll create a personalized plan that supports your kidneys and helps you manage your health confidently.

Your kidneys don't need a miracle—they need the right care. Let's make it happen.

The How to Eat for CKD Nutrition Program

“I've helped hundreds of kidney patients regain confidence in their diets and take control of their health. No more being consumed by fear or confusion about what to eat. They're now slowing or even stopping disease progression and getting back to living life again. The CKD Nutrition Program puts you in the driver's seat of your health. You'll learn how to make informed choices, confidently manage your CKD, enjoy the foods you love, and understand how to manage your kidney diet for life. No one-size-fits-all plans here—it's personalized, practical, and proven. **One thing is clear: this program works, and it’s changing lives every day.”**



I prefer working with clients online rather than in an office because it allows me to help, inform, and support you more effectively. The best way for me to guide you is by having you join my program or purchase the book. It’s like having ten sessions with me, but you get to go through the steps for managing CKD at your own pace and on your own time!

Head on over to my site:
https://www.howtoeatforckd.com/
for more information .