

## **5 Ways to Reduce Risk of Kidney Stones:**

**Drink plenty of water:** Drinking extra water dilutes the substances in urine that lead to stones. Drink enough fluids to pass 2.5 liters (2 liters is what is in a 2 liter soda bottle!) of urine every 24 hours. Include a glass of water at bedtime. Your work environment will determine how much you have to drink – working outdoors in July will require drinking a lot more water than working in an air-conditioned office.

**Reduce dietary sodium:** The risk of kidney stones increases with increased daily sodium consumption. A low-sodium diet is recommended for people who form calcium stones. Excess sodium is excreted by the kidneys, which also increases the calcium in your urine, increasing stone formation.

Americans' sodium intake averages 3,300 mg daily. Most of that comes from prepared/processed foods. Limiting total daily sodium intake to 2,300 mg will reduce your risk for stones. (The American Heart Association recommends a 1,500mg limit for daily sodium intake for all adults.)

Learning the sodium content of foods is necessary to control sodium intake. Food labels provide information about sodium content. Check labels for all types of sodium, such as: •monosodium glutamate (MSG) •sodium bicarbonate •baking powder •disodium phosphate •sodium alginate •sodium nitrate or nitrite. Keeping a sodium diary can help limit sodium intake to 2,300 mg. Foods that contain high levels of sodium include: •hot dogs •canned soups and vegetables including tomato juice •processed frozen foods •luncheon meats •bacon •pizza •most restaurant/fast food

**Limit animal protein:** Eating too much animal protein, such as poultry, red meat, seafood and eggs, increases urine uric acid and lowers citrate levels, increasing the risk for recurrent stones. If you have recurrent stones, limit your daily animal protein intake to a quantity that is no bigger than a pack of playing cards.

**Avoid stone-forming foods:** Beets, chocolate, spinach, rhubarb, tea, and most nuts are rich in oxalate, and colas are rich in phosphate, both of which can contribute to kidney stones. If you suffer from calcium oxalate stones, you should avoid large quantities of these foods. High doses of vitamin C and cranberry increases stone risk, because the body converts the excess vitamin C into oxalate.

**Get the calcium you need:** Too little calcium in your diet may increase urine oxalate levels and increase kidney stone formation. People who eat a low-calcium diet get *more* kidney stones. To prevent this, make sure to take in enough dietary calcium, 1,000 to 1,200 mg of calcium per day.

If you want more information, consider the “DASH diet” ([dashdiet.org](http://dashdiet.org)) which has been shown to reduce the risk of some kinds of cancer, stroke, heart disease, heart failure, diabetes and kidney stones. It has been proven to be an effective way to lose weight. It is recommended by the US National Institute of Health.