This information will be helpful for most people who get a kidney transplant. The transplant dietitian will talk with you about your own diet needs.

**Protein:**

- **Short-term:**
  - In the first 6 weeks, eating more protein will help you heal from surgery.
  - Prednisone, especially high doses, can break down muscle protein; a high protein diet can help limit this.
  - Good sources of protein are:
    - Lean meat, fish, and chicken
    - Low-fat dairy products (milk, yogurt and cheese)

- **Long-term:**
  - After six weeks, you can lower your protein intake to a normal amount (look in the Canada Food Guide).

**Potassium**

- A potassium limit is **not** needed for most people.
- Some people can have a high potassium level when taking cyclosporine (Neoral®) or tacrolimus (Prograf® or Advagraf®).
- Your health care team will tell you if a potassium limit is needed.

**Fluid**

- Keeping well hydrated is very important.
- Drink at least 2 - 3 litres (8-12 cups) of fluid daily.
- Distilled water is only needed in the hospital right after surgery.

To be used in conjunction with advice from a Registered Dietitian.
GENERAL NUTRITION GUIDELINES
AFTER A KIDNEY TRANSPLANT

- Limit salt or sodium to lower fluid retention (swelling) and help blood pressure.
- Limit sodium intake to about 2-3 grams per day.
  This means:
  o Do not add salt to your food.
  o Avoid salty foods such as canned soups, frozen dinners, processed meat, pickles, olives and some snack foods.
- This limit may not be needed if your blood pressure is low.

**Phosphorus**

- Blood phosphate levels may fall.
- Include **high** phosphorus foods such as:
  o Milk, yogurt, cheese (non-fat or low-fat)
  o Beans and legumes

**Calcium**

- Taking prednisone for a long time is one thing that might lead to osteoporosis (thinning of the bones).
- It is important to eat or drink good sources of calcium such as dairy foods:
  o For example, at least **four 8-ounce cups of milk each day** (low-fat milk is best).
- If you cannot eat or drink dairy foods, tell your physician or dietitian. Calcium tablets may be needed.
- Always check with your doctor before starting or changing your dose of calcium.
GENERAL NUTRITION GUIDELINES
AFTER A KIDNEY TRANSPLANT

Weight Gain

- Weight gain can be a serious problem and can cause high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and lead to your new kidney not working well. You can avoid weight gain. Ways to limit weight gain are:
  - Avoid too many fats and sweets
  - Limit second helpings of high calorie foods
  - Regular daily activity helps keep you and your kidney healthy.
    - Try to do aerobic exercise daily (e.g. brisk walking).
  - Check with your doctor before starting any exercise program.

Sugar

- Sugar can be included, if blood sugar levels are well controlled.
- A limit on sweets can help limit weight gain

Cholesterol

- Some anti-rejection medicines increase the risk for having high blood cholesterol levels.
- High cholesterol levels are a risk factor for heart disease.
- Limiting total fat intake, especially saturated fats (found largely in animal products) and trans fats, can help lower cholesterol levels.
- Exercise can help to lower cholesterol levels.
- Your transplant team will suggest diet changes and medicine if your cholesterol is too high.

Vitamins

- Vitamins are **not** needed if your diet includes fruits, vegetables, grains and dairy products.
- Pills with vitamin A and C should **not** be taken.
- Before starting any vitamin or mineral pill, it is best to check with your transplant dietitian, pharmacist or doctor.
GENERAL NUTRITION GUIDELINES
AFTER A KIDNEY TRANSPLANT

Alcohol

- Short-term: avoid all alcoholic beverages.
- Long-term: an alcoholic drink on occasion, if your doctor says it is okay.

Food Safety

People on anti-rejection medicines are at higher risk of infections.

- Make sure meat, poultry, fish and eggs are cooked fully before eating.
- Practice safe handling methods when making and storing food.
- Buffets and salad bars should be avoided – this increases risks for food contamination.

Grapefruit Juice and Grapefruit

- Do not have any grapefruit or grapefruit juice.
  - Blood levels of cyclosporine (Neoral®) and tacrolimus (Prograf® or Advagraf®) can get too high.

Speak to your Transplant Dietitian if you have any questions about your specific nutrient needs.

Dietitian’s Name: ______________________________

Dietitian’s No: ______________________________