

Everyday Lifestyle Tips for IgA Nephropathy

Having a chronic kidney disease like immunoglobulin A (IgA) nephropathy means you may have to make some adjustments in your daily life. We're here to help—we've got some lifestyle tips that can help make things a little easier. Before you make any changes to your diet or lifestyle, be sure to discuss them with your doctor and care team.



Patient portrayal.



Take care of yourself

Take time for you



Take a break to go for a walk, meditate, or do something you enjoy. Taking a break can help you relax, as well as staying aware of your mental and physical health.

Connect with a team



A social support team can help you navigate the emotional ups and downs of chronic kidney disease. Your team could be family and friends, a community organization, or religious group.

The Home Front: Family Life and Chores



Delegate heavy chores

Enlist the help of other members of your household on days when you aren't feeling well or are fatigued.



Plan ahead

Schedule household tasks throughout the week, rather than all on one day, to avoid overexertion.



Your feelings are important

If you feel overwhelmed or are feeling down, share your emotions with your family, friends, or social support team, who are there to help you.



Caring for children

If you're having trouble participating in physical activities, try other kinds of activities with your kids that you can enjoy together. These can include doing puzzles, playing board games, watching a movie, or reading a book.

For strategies on navigating IgA nephropathy at work, check out our guide for tips on working while living with IgA nephropathy at KidneyHope.com



Take charge of your fitness

Make Regular Physical Activity a Priority



Talk to your doctor

Most people with chronic kidney disease can benefit from some exercise, but it's important to talk about the best activities for you with your care team first.



If you're just starting exercise

Gradually work your way up with low-impact stretching, or try strengthening and light cardio exercises for your first workouts.



Build a routine

Find the time of day when you have the most energy to exercise. Then, make a plan to exercise at that time on days when you are able. That way, you can get used to making exercise a regular part of your routine.



Don't overdo it

You should slow down if you have difficulty breathing, if you don't feel fully recovered one hour after exercise, or if muscle or joint soreness prevent you from exercising the following day.

If you use tobacco products, get help to quit



Smoking, vaping, chewing, and other tobacco products can damage your kidneys and interfere with blood pressure medications you might take. Talk to your doctor and care team about quitting, and avoid tobacco products if you have a chronic kidney disease. For more information on the effects of tobacco products on your kidneys and your overall health, visit the National Kidney Foundation at [kidney.org](https://www.kidney.org).



Monitor your food intake

Diet and nutrition

It's important to consult your doctor and care team before making any changes to your diet.



You may need to reduce sodium (salt) in your diet if you have a chronic kidney disease

Some foods, like soy sauce, teriyaki, or fish sauce, are often high in sodium. To help reduce salt intake, substitute vinegar, lemon or lime juice, or fresh herbs for extra flavor in your cooking.



Some diets for chronic kidney disease may also limit your protein intake

When dining out or ordering takeout, remember that portions might be larger than what you're used to at home. To estimate serving size, remember that 3 ounces of cooked meat is about the size of a deck of cards.



Your doctor may tell you to limit fluids in your diet to help minimize swelling and other potential health problems

Measure your fluid intake throughout the day, and try drinking out of small cups to help keep track of how much you've had.



Feeling thirsty? Try these tips

1

Squeeze lemon juice into your water.

2

Try chewing gum to keep your mouth from feeling dry.

3

Suck on ice, mints, or sugar-free hard candy.



Manage your social life

Social life



Reach out to other chronic disease or kidney disease groups online or on social media

You can make new friends and find opportunities to connect with people going through similar struggles.



If your doctor recommends exercise, find a way to work it into your social life

Find a fitness class or exercise with friends to make working out a fun and socially engaging part of your routine.



If you suffer from fatigue, find a hobby or activity that doesn't require too much physical energy

Participate in a community garden, take art classes, or join a book club.

Make a plan with your doctor to help manage IgA nephropathy

Living with IgA nephropathy can be challenging, but the right strategy can help you manage the disease. Your social support and care teams are there to help you implement a care plan and stick to it.

For more patient tools and guides to help you navigate IgA nephropathy, visit [KidneyHope.com](https://www.kidneyhope.com)

