

# Fruits and Vegetables May Help Protect the Kidneys

by Carter Zimmerman | Feb 7, 2013 | Nutrition | 0 comments



Adding fruits and vegetables to the diet may help protect the kidneys of patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) with too much acid build-up, according to a study appearing in an upcoming issue of the Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology (CJASN).

Western diets that are based in animal and grain products are highly acidic and can lead to metabolic acidosis, when too much acid builds up in the body. This is particularly common in patients with CKD because the kidneys are responsible for removing acid through the urine. Metabolic acidosis can cause rapid breathing, confusion, and lethargy. Severe cases can lead to shock or death.

Alkali supplementation therapy such as bicarbonate is used to treat CKD patients with severe metabolic acidosis, but simply adding more fruits and vegetables—which contain alkali—to the diet might also help.

## The Beavers

Our colleagues tested this diet and vegetables or fruits today. The diet was low in dietary acid by half.

Among the major findings:

- Kidney function was similar between the two groups after one year.
- One-year plasma total carbon dioxide (PTCO<sub>2</sub>) increased in both groups, which is consistent with a lessening of metabolic acidosis. PTCO<sub>2</sub> was higher in patients receiving bicarbonate than in those receiving added fruits and vegetables.
- Urine measurements of kidney injury were lower after one year in both groups.
- Although fruits and vegetables are rich in potassium and might raise blood potassium to dangerous levels, levels did not increase in either group.

"We showed that by addition of alkali such as bicarbonate or alkali-inducing fruits and vegetables, patients had a favorable response by reduction of urinary kidney injury markers," said Dr. Wesson. "Our study suggests that these interventions will help maintain kidney health in those with kidney disease," added Dr. Goraya.

[Fruits and vegetables may help protect the kidneys.](#)

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