

Chronic Kidney Disease and Acid

The last thing you might expect to hear from your nephrologist is that you need to eat baking soda! But it's true. *Arm & Hammer*[®] – the same soda you use for cooking or deodorizing your refrigerator – will be suggested in your CKD treatment.

What does acid have to do with CKD?

Your body normally produces acid as it breaks down certain proteins in your diet or in the normal process of repair and turnover of body tissues. If you have acidosis (too much acid), your kidneys are unable to get rid of it in your urine.

Why is treating acidosis necessary?

- Treating acidosis **protects your bones**. Your bones will release calcium and phosphate in an attempt to buffer the acid, leading to osteopenia (decreased bone density) and kidney failure-associated damage known as hyperparathyroid bone disease.
- Treating acidosis **protects your muscles**. Your muscles break down when there is increased acid in your blood, leading to weakness and wasting.
- Treating acidosis may **prevent further kidney damage**.
- Treating acidosis **helps prevent dangerously high potassium levels**.

How do I take baking soda?

You will be told how many teaspoons to take each day. Try one of these methods:

- Mix soda with an eight ounce glass of water.
- Mix it with applesauce or apple juice.
- Place it in empty capsules available at most pharmacies.

Are there complications?

Most patients have no difficulties. The most common side effect is diarrhea; placing the soda in capsules may prevent this. Even though you will see “sodium” on the box, soda produces little or no problems with swelling or high blood pressure. As with any medicine, if you have problems, call your doctor or nurse. Never stop taking baking soda without calling us!

If, for whatever reason, you cannot take baking soda, there are alternatives such as sodium bicarbonate tablets or sodium citrate solution. Your doctor or nurse will give you specific instructions if these treatments are ordered.