

Low Oxalate Diet

Reducing oxalate to prevent calcium oxalate kidney stones.

Oxalate is a natural compound in many plant foods. In the kidney it binds with calcium to form crystals. When those crystals grow, they become calcium oxalate stones — the most common type of kidney stone.

Why This Matters

If you have passed a calcium oxalate stone, your risk of forming another is roughly 50 percent within five years without changes. Stones are not only painful; repeated stones and obstruction cause permanent kidney damage over time. The goal is not to eliminate oxalate — it is present in many otherwise healthy foods — but to reduce the highest sources and change how you eat them.

Choose More Often (Lower Oxalate)	Limit or Avoid (Higher Oxalate)
Apples, grapes, melons, bananas, cherries	Rhubarb, star fruit, raspberries, figs, dates
Cauliflower, cabbage, cucumber, mushrooms, peas, zucchini	Spinach, Swiss chard, beets and beet greens, okra, sweet potatoes
White rice, corn tortillas, refined breads	Wheat bran, buckwheat, quinoa, brown rice in large amounts
Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cheese, yogurt, milk	Almonds, cashews, peanuts, peanut butter, sesame, tahini
Water, lemonade, most juices	Black tea, chocolate and cocoa, soy milk
Olive oil, butter, most herbs and spices	Soy products, navy beans, potato chips, French fries

Do Not Cut Calcium — This Is the Mistake Almost Everyone Makes

- It sounds logical to avoid calcium if you form calcium stones. It is exactly backwards.
- Calcium eaten WITH a meal binds oxalate in the gut so it leaves in the stool instead of reaching the kidney.
- Cutting dietary calcium leaves more free oxalate to absorb — and raises your stone risk.
- Aim for calcium from food at meals. Ask us before taking a calcium supplement; timing matters.

Water Is the Most Effective Treatment You Have

- Target enough fluid to produce at least 2 to 2.5 liters of urine daily — for most people, 2.5 to 3 liters in.
- Your urine should be pale, nearly colorless. Dark yellow means you are behind.
- Add fresh lemon or lime — citrate naturally inhibits stone formation.
- Drink a full glass before bed. Overnight is when urine concentrates most and stones form.

Two Practical Levers

- Boiling reduces the oxalate content of vegetables meaningfully — discard the cooking water.
- Sodium drives calcium into the urine, which feeds stones. Reducing salt lowers stone risk directly.

Questions

Every patient is different. The right targets for you depend on your kidney function, your other medical conditions, and your medications. Bring this guide to your next visit and ask us what applies to you. Call **949-642-4974** with questions between visits.