

5 ways to enjoy kidney-friendly fall flavors

Fall brings cozy soups, warm spices, and comforting family meals. But you might be wondering how to enjoy your favorite seasonal foods while staying on track with a kidney-friendly diet. Good news: You don't have to give up the flavors you love. With a few simple swaps and tips, you can savor the season and support your health at the same time.

Here are five easy ways to make this fall's flavors work for you.

A simple trick:

Season your dish with herbs, taste it, then season again before you consider salt. You may find you don't need it at all.

1 Enjoy pumpkin and squash in moderation

Pumpkin, butternut squash, and acorn squash are popular fall foods, but they're also higher in potassium. That doesn't mean you need to skip them entirely. Try enjoying smaller portions and balance your plate with lower-potassium vegetables like green beans or cauliflower. If a recipe calls for a full cup of pumpkin puree, try cutting it to one half-cup and adding a half cup of unsweetened applesauce. This will reduce the potassium content of the recipe.

Talk with your dietitian about how much potassium is right for you.

2 Swap warming spices for salt

Fall dishes often lean on rich, savory flavors, but too much sodium can strain your kidneys and raise your blood pressure. Instead of reaching for the saltshaker, try warming spices like cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and allspice. These add depth and comfort to soups, stews, and baked goods without adding extra sodium. Avoid using potassium chloride salt substitute as it is high in potassium.

Food type	Kidney-friendly flavor-boosters
Baked goods	Allspice, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg
Soups and stews	Allspice, fresh garlic, fresh onion, low- sodium/salt-free seasoning blends, vinegar
Meats	Allspice, dill, marjoram, rosemary, thyme

3 Choose kidney-friendly proteins for holiday meals

As the holidays approach, many meals center around protein-heavy dishes. Turkey and chicken are great options, but portion size matters. A serving about the size of your palm is a good guideline for most people with CKD. Avoid processed meats like sausage or deli turkey, since they tend to be high in sodium and phosphorus additives.

If you're hosting or attending a gathering, don't be afraid to ask about how a dish was prepared. It's okay to speak up for your health.



4 Stay hydrated, even when it's cooler outside

It's easy to drink less water once the weather cools down, but staying hydrated is still important for your kidneys. If your care team has given you specific fluid guidelines, keep following them closely. Warm herbal teas (unsweetened) can be a comforting way to stay on track without adding sugar or excess fluid if you're monitoring intake.

If you're not sure how much fluid is right for you, ask your care team.

5 Make comfort food kidney friendly

Fall means casseroles, stews, and baked goods, but many traditional recipes are high in sodium, potassium, or phosphorus, which can be hard on kidneys. You don't have to skip your favorites. Try leaching high-potassium vegetables like potatoes by soaking and double boiling them before eating or adding them to casseroles or other dishes. Use low-sodium broths in soups and stews. And when baking, cut sugar where you can and add natural flavor with spices instead.

Small changes like these can help you enjoy the comfort of fall cooking while keeping your kidney health in mind.



We are here to help

We are here to support you along the way. Reach out for more tips on making kidney-friendly food choices this fall.