

# High phosphorus and your kidneys

## What you need to know to keep your bones healthy and feel your best

Having too much phosphorus in your blood is called **hyperphosphatemia**. If you have kidney disease, it is important to control the phosphorus levels in your blood, also called serum phosphorus.

### What is phosphorus?

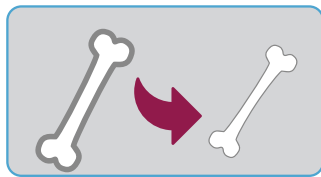
**Phosphorus** is a mineral that works with **calcium** and **vitamin D** to keep your bones healthy and strong. You get phosphorus from certain foods you eat and certain beverages.

### Why do I need to control the phosphorus levels in my blood?

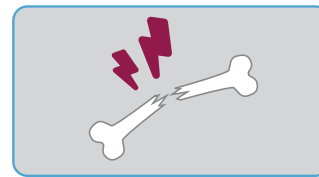
When you have kidney disease, your kidneys cannot remove extra phosphorus from your blood. Phosphorus can build up in your body to high levels and change the balance with calcium and vitamin D. This is important because **your body's levels of phosphorus, calcium, and vitamin D must be in balance** to keep your bones healthy.

### What are the long-term effects of high phosphorus?

Over time, too much phosphorus from the foods you eat and drink can cause phosphorus to build up in your body and cause harm. When phosphorus levels are high, your body pulls calcium out of your bones to try and restore balance. This can make your bones weak, brittle, and more likely to break.

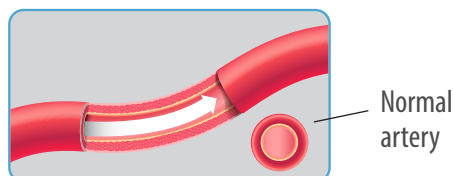


Calcium is pulled out of bones, making them weak and brittle

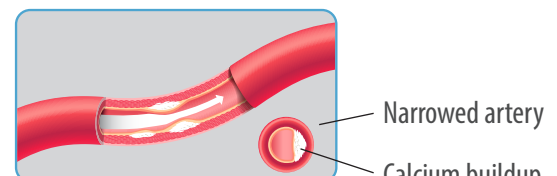


Weak and brittle bones can break easily

High phosphorus can also cause calcium to build up in other areas of your body, such as your blood vessels. This is called **vascular calcification**. Sometimes calcium sticks to fats or minerals that are already built up in your blood vessels. Over time, this could block the flow of blood through your arteries and lead to a heart attack or stroke!



Blood flows easily through normal arteries

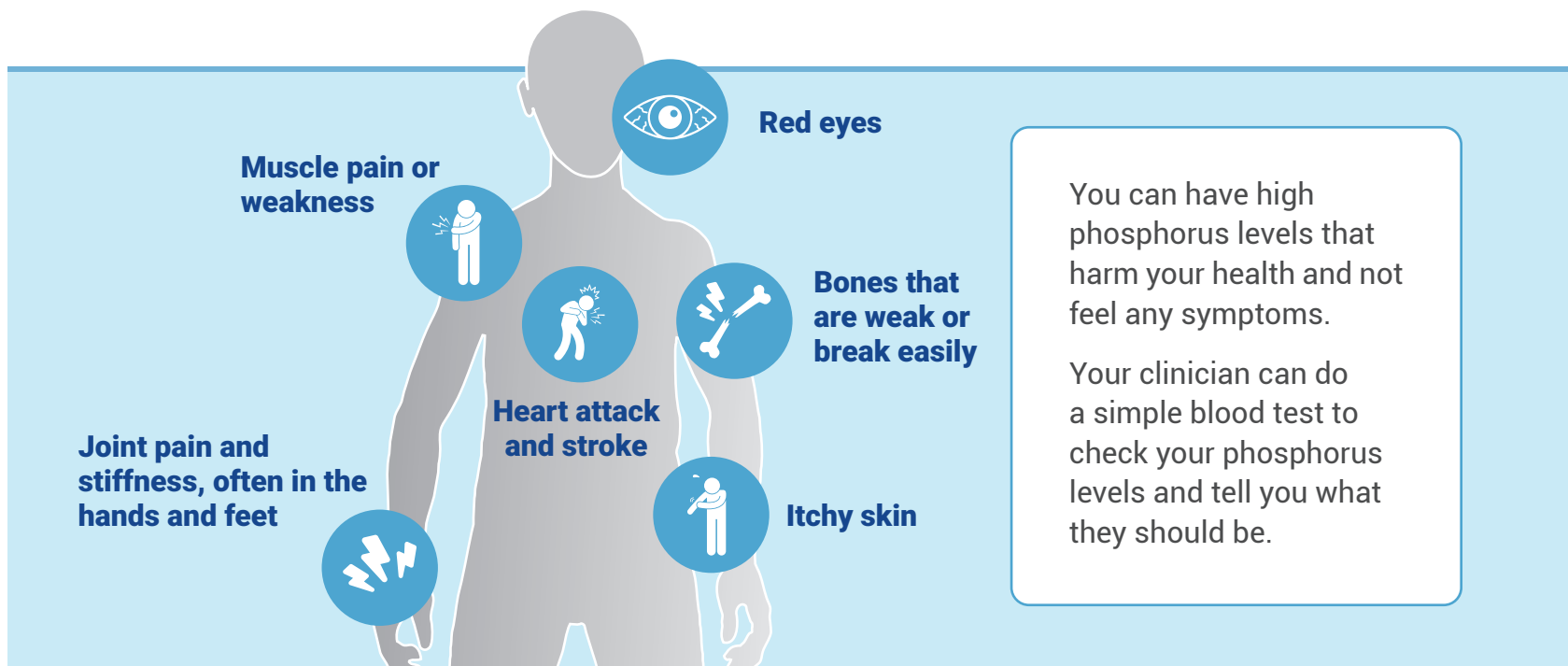


Calcium builds up in arteries and can block blood flow

## Learn more

Visit [kidneyfund.org/hyperphosphatemia](https://www.kidneyfund.org/hyperphosphatemia)

## What can too much phosphorus in my blood do to my body?



**Red eyes**

**Bones that are weak or break easily**

**Itchy skin**

**Heart attack and stroke**

**Muscle pain or weakness**

**Joint pain and stiffness, often in the hands and feet**

You can have high phosphorus levels that harm your health and not feel any symptoms.

Your clinician can do a simple blood test to check your phosphorus levels and tell you what they should be.

## How can I control my phosphorus levels?

Dialysis, medicine, and a healthy meal plan can **all work together** to prevent high phosphorus.

### Follow your doctor's instructions for your dialysis treatments

Do not skip or shorten your dialysis treatments. Complete each treatment as instructed.



### Take your phosphate binder as prescribed

Your doctor may prescribe a medicine called a phosphate binder, which works like a magnet. It pulls extra phosphorus out of the food you eat to prevent it from building up in your body.



### Follow a healthy meal plan that is low in phosphorus

Ask your doctor or dietitian how much phosphorus you should eat and drink each day. They can help you create a meal plan that is right for you.



Taking these steps to **control your phosphorus levels** will help you feel your best and **keep your heart and bones healthy!**

Visit [kidneyfund.org/kitchen](https://www.kidneyfund.org/kitchen) for low-phosphorus recipes and food guides

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