Fast Foods and Processed Foods = Hidden Phosphorus Additives

As kidney patients you have a list of foods you know to avoid because they naturally contain a high level of the mineral phosphorus, which is difficult to remove from the blood even with dialysis. But researchers from MetroHealth Medical Center and Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland have discovered that a great deal of processed and fast food actually contains phosphorus additives which can be just as dangerous!

It has become an increasingly common practice by food manufacturers to include phosphorus additives to processed foods. The additives are used to enhance flavor and shelf life—particularly in meats, cheeses, baked goods, and beverages.

"Calories, fat, and sodium content are required to be listed on nutrition labels, but phosphorus is not," says Catherine Sullivan, M.S., R.D., lead researcher from the Center for Reducing Health Disparities. "This makes it impossible for kidney disease patients to know how much phosphorus they are eating. For example, we discovered that while chicken is often on dialysis patients' 'Safe List' of foods to eat, chicken from fast food and sit down restaurants often contain phosphorus additive."

The researchers found they were able to significantly lower phosphorus levels among advanced kidney disease patients once they were taught to avoid foods containing phosphorus additives. In a three-month comparison study, the group of patients that were taught to avoid additive-containing foods when purchasing groceries or eating at fast food restaurants, had their phosphorus levels decline two and a half times more than the group of patients that had not been taught.