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Introduction

What is potassium and why is it important?

Potassium is a mineral which is found naturally in many foods. It is important to ensure healthy functioning of muscles, including your heart muscle.

Why is my potassium level high?

Normally, any excess potassium is removed by the kidneys in the urine. Unfortunately as your kidneys are not working well, the potassium level in your blood has risen.

Why is a high potassium level a problem?

A high potassium level or a sudden large increase in your potassium level can be dangerous, as it can stop the heart from beating.

How can I reduce the level of potassium in my blood?

- **Low potassium diet** – The dietary advice given depends on your blood results and medical condition
- **Dialysis (if necessary)**
- **Avoid constipation**

How long will I have to follow this diet?

It will depend upon your treatment. Some people will need to follow this diet long term, others will only need to follow it for a short while. Therefore it is important to see your dietitian regularly to review your diet.

• What can I eat?

This booklet is a guide to help you identify foods which are high in potassium. You are not aiming to avoid all foods containing potassium. A few simple changes to your diet can help to reduce potassium levels in your blood.

Cooking methods



The way in which food is cooked can affect its potassium content. When potatoes, yams, sweet potatoes and vegetables are boiled in water they lose some potassium.

Tips

- Boil all potatoes, yams, sweet potatoes and vegetables in large amounts of water until cooked and discard the water;
- Avoid using vegetable water for gravy, sauces, curries or casseroles;
- When making curry or stew, firstly par-boil the potatoes and vegetables. Then discard the water and add the vegetables/potatoes to the stew/curry;
- When making a stir fry, try to make sure that all vegetables are par-boiled;
- Ensure all vegetables are cut into small pieces before boiling;
- Do not microwave, pressure cook or steam vegetables or potatoes.

You can re-heat vegetables that have already been boiled.



Potatoes

The daily allowance is 3 egg sized, (150g/6oz).

All potatoes should be peeled and **boiled** before they are chipped, roasted or sautéed.

Alternatively you may choose a portion of boiled yam or sweet potato, instead of potato, or 100g/4oz boiled plantain.



Choose

Boiled potatoes
Mash potatoes
Homemade chips
Homemade roast potatoes
Pasta
Rice
Noodles
Couscous
Maize
Corn meal



Avoid

Frozen/ oven/ retail chips
Instant mash
Jacket potatoes
Microwave chips
Oven chips
Potato flour
Manufactured potato products
e.g. hash browns, waffles, wedges

4.

Carbohydrate (Starchy food)

Most breads and cereals are good choices as they are low in potassium.



Choose

Bread
All types including white, brown and granary



Avoid

Any bread or cereals with added fruit, nuts and chocolate as these will significantly increase the potassium content

Breakfast Cereals

Weetabix, branflakes, cornflakes, porridge oats (not instant), shredded wheat, special K

All bran / bran

Flours

Plain, self raising, corn flour, arrowroot, sago, tapioca

Powdered starchy vegetables

5.

Vegetables and Salads

All vegetables contain potassium but some can be eaten in moderation. The daily allowance for vegetables/salads is 2 portions. A portion of vegetables is approximately 2 tablespoons (85g/3oz)

Note

- Half a tin of plum tomatoes can be used per portion to flavour dishes, the juice should be thrown away.
- All vegetables when used in composite dishes should be par-boiled, and the water thrown away.



Choose

Mange tout,
Green/french beans
Peas,
Bean sprouts
Broccoli,
Cabbage
Carrots,
Cauliflower
Courgette,
Leeks
Lettuce,
Marrow
Mixed vegetables
Onions,
Peppers
Pumpkin,



Choose

Spring greens
Swede
Sweetcorn
Asparagus (3 spears)
Aubergine (1/4)
Celery (2 sticks)
Cucumber
Radish
Tomato (1 small or 4 cherry)



Avoid

Ackee
Artichoke
Beetroot
Brussel Sprouts
Celeriac
Drumstick
Fennel
Karela
Mushroom
Okra
Parsnip
Spinach
Tomato puree



Fruit

All fruits contain potassium but some can be eaten in moderation.

Your daily allowance is 2 portions.



Choose

Apple
Apricot (2)
Blackberries
Blueberries (20)
Cherries (14)
Clementine's (2)
Grapes (15)
Kiwi Fruit
Kumquats (14)
Lychees (8)
Nectarine / Peach
Olives (10)
Orange (small)
Passion Fruit
Pear (small)
Pineapple (2 small slices)
Plums (2)
Raspberries (15)
Satsuma
Strawberries (8)
Tinned Fruit 120g/small tin -
Juice drained



Avoid

Avocado
Bananas
Blackcurrants
Coconut
Damson
Dried Fruit
Elderberries
Figs
Grapefruit
Greengages
Guava
Loganberries
Mango
Melon
Papaya
Paw-paw
Pomegranate
Redcurrants
Rhubarb
Sharon Fruit



NB Starfruit can be toxic for kidney patients therefore it should be avoided at all times

Meat, fish and alternatives

Meat and fish contain a moderate amount of potassium. However because they are an important source of protein, they are not restricted on a low potassium diet.

Avoid adding fruit or nuts to main dishes.

Beans and Pulses

A portion of cooked beans or pulses can replace a portion of meat or fish for example, baked beans, dahl, chickpeas.

If you are a vegetarian continue having beans and lentils as usual.



8.

Dairy Products

Dairy products are an important source of calcium but contain potassium. They should be taken in moderate amounts.

An equivalent of 1/2 pint (300ml) milk may be taken daily. Milky puddings and yoghurts must be counted within this allowance. Soya milk and products made from soya should also be included in your milk allowance.



Choose

Rice milk freely
within fluid restriction



Avoid

Coconut milk
Condensed milk
Dried milk
Evaporated milk



Eggs and cheese can be eaten as usual on a low potassium diet, but may need to be restricted if on a low phosphate diet. If you are unsure please consult your dietitian.

9.

Salt Substitutes

Most renal patients need to follow a no added salt diet. If you need more information on this please ask your dietitian.

*Salt substitutes for example Selora, Lo Salt and Pan salt are all made from potassium salts and **must not be used**.

Choose pepper, herbs and spices to flavour dishes.

*Foods that are processed are high in salt as are soya sauce, MSG (Mono Sodium Glutamate) and stock cubes e.g. Maggi and Knorr. Keep these foods and seasoning to a minimum.



Sweet Snacks



Choose

Biscuits

Ginger nut
Jam/ cream filled biscuits
Plain biscuits e.g. Digestive,
Rich Tea, Shortbread

Cakes/ Desserts

Cake e.g. sponge,
Cheesecake*, Doughnut
Jam tart, Jelly, Custard*
Meringue, Swiss roll, Trifle
Plain ice cream*
Crème Caramel

Sweets

Boiled, Chewy
Fruit gums and pastilles,
Jellies, Marshmallows, Mints,
Sherbert, Turkish Delight

Asian sweets

Aggala, Asmi, Gulab jamun
Halva, Jalebi, Payasan
Shandesh, Zarda



Avoid

Biscuits

Biscuits containing nuts/
chocolate/ dried fruit

Cakes/ Desserts

Cakes/ desserts
containing nuts/
chocolate/ dried fruit

Sweets

Fudge
Liquorice
Peanut brittle
Sesame snacks
Toffee

Asian sweets

Sweets containing
evaporated or condensed
milk/ nuts/ dried fruit/
dried milk/ coconut milk/
gram flour

Chocolate

All standard chocolate
bars

*These foods may need to be limited if you are on a low phosphate diet. Not all the above foods are suitable for people with diabetes. Please check with your dietitian if you are unsure.



Savoury Snacks



Choose

Bread sticks
Cream crackers
Crisp breads
Monster Munch
Papadums*
Prawn crackers
Pretzels
Rice cakes
Skips
Tortilla chips
Water biscuits
Wotsits



Avoid

All manufactured potato products e.g.
Crisps / French Fries
Nuts
Oatcakes
Quavers
Rye crisp breads
Seeds
Twiglets
Vegetable Crisps

Drinks



Choose

Tea
Herbal tea
Fruit squash (not high juice)
Fizzy drinks
Coffee (1 weak cup
filter coffee per day)



Avoid

Brita filtered water
Chocolate drinks
Complan or Build up drinks
Fruit juice
Hi-Juice fruit squash
Instant coffee
Malted drinks
Nourishment
Nutrament
Ribena
Smoothies
Vegetable juice

Alcohol



Choose

All spirits
Vermouth
Liqueurs
Sherry
Port Shandy



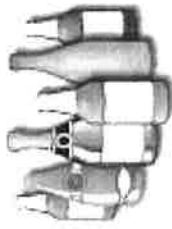
Avoid

Ale
Bitter
Cider
Stout
Guinness
Red Wine

If you drink white wine and/or lager, please discuss with your dietitian.

Note: All alcohol should be taken in moderation. It is advised that men should not drink more than 3 - 4 units of alcohol per day, and women should drink no more than 2 - 3 units of alcohol per day.

Avoid foods marked with * if you are on a low phosphate diet.



Eating out ideas



Starters

Garlic bread
Sesame chicken
or toast
Garlic prawns*
Pasta dishes

Main Course

Plain meat, fish, soya, tofu,
beans or lentils.
Pasta or rice dishes/ naan/ chapatti
Small portion of vegetables or salad
Boiled or mashed potatoes

Dessert

Crème caramel
Mousse or ice cream*
Jelly
Trifle
Plain sponge pudding and cream
A portion of fruit from daily
allowance may be eaten either as
fruit salad or as a fruit pudding. e.g.
lychees, apple crumble

Drinks

Tea
Water
Fizzy drink
Shandy
Gin/Whisky/Vodka/Rum
White Wine limit to ___ glasses

* These foods may need to be avoided or limited if you are on a low phosphate diet.

If you need further information on eating out, please ask your dietitian.

Additional notes