

Eating a Safe Amount of Potassium



ShoalsKIDNEY &
HYPERTENSION
CENTER

Potassium is a mineral found in many foods. The body needs some potassium to keep the heart working normally. But if your kidneys don't work well, potassium can build up in your blood. In rare cases this can be deadly. By controlling the amount of potassium you eat, you can keep a safe level in your blood. The tips on this sheet can help.

Using This Guide

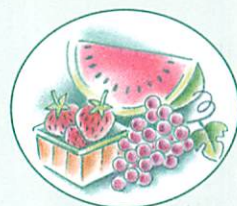
Use this serving guide along with the food list below. Always follow your dietitian's instructions on the number and size of servings to eat. Also, talk with your dietitian before eating foods that aren't on this list.

- ___ daily servings of foods that have high potassium content (250–500mg per serving).
- ___ daily servings of foods that have medium potassium content (150–250mg per serving).
- ___ daily servings of foods that have low potassium content (5–150mg per serving).
- You can substitute food choices in the following way: _____

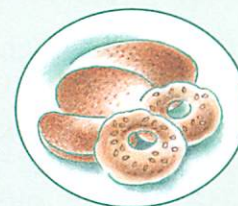
◆ Potassium Content of Some Foods



Vegetables



Fruit



Starches

	Vegetables	Fruit	Starches
High AVOID	Artichokes (1) Bok choy (1/2 cup) Spinach (1/2 cup) Tomatoes (1/2 cup)	Bananas (1) Cantaloupe or honeydew (1/2 melon) Oranges (1) Peaches, fresh (1)	Beans, dried (1/2 cup) Lentils (1/2 cup) Potatoes (1/2 cup or 1 small) Winter squash, yams (1/2 cup)
Medium	Broccoli (1/2 cup) Carrots (1/2 cup) Eggplant (1/2 cup) Peppers (1)	Apples (1) Cherries (1/2 cup) Peaches, canned (1/2 cup) Pears, fresh (1/2 cup)	Bread, pumpernickel (1 slice) Chickpeas, cooked (1/2 cup) Corn, fresh (1/2 cup) Tortillas, corn (4 small)
Low	Asparagus (4 spears) Green beans (1/2 cup) Cauliflower (1/2 cup) Cucumbers (1/2) Lettuce, iceberg (1 cup)	Blueberries (1 cup) Grapefruit (1/2 cup) Grapes (1/2 cup) Strawberries (1/2 cup) Watermelon (1/2 cup)	Bagel, plain (1) Bread, white (2 slices) Oatmeal (3/4 cup) Pasta, plain (1 cup) Rice, white (1 cup)

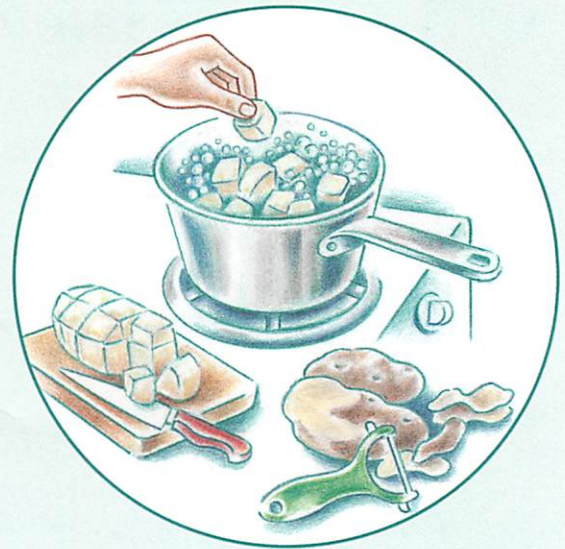
◆ Boil Vegetables to Reduce Potassium

Cooking helps remove potassium from starchy vegetables, such as potatoes. To reduce potassium, boil the vegetables in a large amount of unsalted water. Drain and discard the water before serving.

To Cook Potatoes

Follow the steps below to reduce the potassium content of white potatoes.

- Peel and cut the potatoes into 1/8-inch pieces.
- Place the potatoes in a large amount of unsalted water. Allow to stand for at least 2 hours.
- Drain, rinse, and drain the potatoes again.
- Cook in a large amount of unsalted water.



◆ Watch Out for Hidden Sources of Potassium

The potassium content of a food may change depending on how the food is preserved. Most food labels do not include potassium, so keep these tips in mind:

- Dried fruits are high in potassium. Canned fruits are lower.
- Other foods with high levels of potassium include salt substitutes, lite salts, milk, coffee, and some vegetable juices and powdered drink mixes.



Special Instructions:



The University of Rochester Medical Center's commitment to help Rochester become America's healthiest community by 2020

Purpose:

A low potassium diet helps prevent high blood levels of potassium. When blood potassium levels become too high, muscle weakness, and an irregular heart beat can occur. Limiting potassium in your diet will help keep your blood potassium levels normal.

Facts About Potassium:

Potassium is found in most foods. Fruits, vegetables, nuts, meat and milk are especially high in potassium. You will need to avoid or limit your intake of these foods. If your blood potassium level becomes too high, you will need to be very careful with your diet.

How to Follow a Low Potassium Diet:

- Avoid salt substitute because it has potassium.
- Use only herbs and spices or seasoning mixes that do not contain potassium
- Limit fruits and vegetables to 4 servings (1/2 cup each) a day
- Limit milk to 1/2 cup a day. This includes all types of milk, buttermilk, yogurt and ice cream.

Limit These High Potassium Fruits to One Serving a Day:

- 1/2 medium Banana
- 3/4 cup Mandarin Oranges
- 3/4 cup Blackberries
- 1/2 cup Orange Juice
- 1 cup Boysenberries
- 1 medium Orange
- 12 each Cherries
- 1 medium Peach
- 1 medium Pear
- 2 each Figs
- 2 medium Plums
- 3 each Prunes
- 1 cup Prune Juice
- 2 tbsp. Raisins
- 3 each Prunes, dried
- 1/2 Grapefruit
- 1 cup Raspberries
- 1 medium Kiwi fruit
- 1 1/4 cup Strawberries
- 1 cup Mulberries
- 1 1/4 cup Watermelon

Completely Avoid These Very High Potassium Fruits:

- Apricots
- Avocado
- Cantaloupe
- Honeydew Melon
- Nectarines
- Plantain
- Tangelos

Limit These High Potassium Vegetables to One Serving (1/2 cup) A Day:

- Asparagus
- Beets
- Brussels sprouts
- Collard greens
- Corn
- Cowpeas
- Dandelion greens

- Kale
- Mixed vegetables
- Mushrooms
- Parsnips
- *Potato (leached)
- Pumpkin
- Spinach
- Tomato juice
- Tomatoes, canned
- Turnips
- Zucchini

*Potatoes (white and sweet) should be leached before they are cooked. Peel the potato and cut into small pieces. Cover completely with water. Soak in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours. Drain well and cook in fresh water. Leaching potatoes will remove much of the potassium.

Completely Avoid These Very High Potassium Vegetables:

- Artichokes
- Butter beans
- Dried peas, beans, lentils
- Potatoes—baked, commercial French fries and chips
- Sweet potatoes
- Swiss chard
- Tomato paste / puree
- Winter squash
- Yams

Completely Avoid These Very High Potassium Foods:

- Chocolate candy or beverages
- Molasses
- Nuts



Potassium Diet

Eating a Safe Amount

Potassium is a mineral found in many foods. The body needs some potassium to keep the heart working normally. But if your kidneys don't work well, potassium can build up in your blood. In rare cases this can be deadly. By controlling the amount of potassium you eat, you can keep a safe level in your blood.

Food List and Suggested Serving Size

Check with your dietitian's instructions on the number and size of servings to eat. Also, talk with your dietitian before eating foods that are not on this list. You can find potassium in vegetables, fruit and starches. The following is a list of food choices available.



FOODS LOW IN POTASSIUM

STARCHES

Bread, white (2 slices)
Oatmeal (3/4 cup)
Pasta, plain (1 cup)
Bagel, plain (1)
Rice, white (1 cup)

FRUITS

Blueberries
(1 cup)
Grapefruit (1/2 cup)
Strawberries (1/2 cup)
Watermelon (1/2 cup)
Grapes (1/2 cup)

VEGETABLES

Asparagus (4 spears)
Green Beans (1/2 cup)
Cauliflower (1/2 cup)
Lettuce, iceberg (1 cup)
Cucumbers (1/2)

❖ Daily servings of foods that have low potassium content (5—150mg per serving).

FOODS MEDIUM IN POTASSIUM

Bread, pumpernickel (1 slice)
Peas, cooked (1/2 cup)
Corn, fresh (1/2 cup)
Tortillas, corn (4 small)

Apples (1)
Cherries (1/2 cup)
Peaches (canned (1/2 cup)
Pears, fresh (1/2 cup)

Broccoli (1/2 cup)
Peppers (1)
Carrots (1/2 cup)
Eggplant (1/2 cup)

❖ Daily servings of foods that have medium potassium content (150—250mg per serving).

FOODS HIGH IN POTASSIUM

Beans, dried (1/2 cup)	Bananas (1)	Artichokes (1)
Lentils (1/2 cup)	Cantaloupe (1/2 melon)	Spinach (1/2 cup)
Potatoes (1/2 cup or 1 small)	Peaches, fresh (1)	Bok choy (1/2 cup)
Yams, Winter squash (1/2 cup)	Oranges (1)	Tomatoes (1/2 cup)

- ❖ Daily servings of foods that have high potassium content (250—500mg per serving)

REDUCE POTASSIUM by Boiling Vegetables

Cooking helps remove potassium from starchy vegetables, such as potatoes. To reduce potassium, boil the vegetables in a large amount of unsalted water. Drain and discard the water before serving.

How To Cook Potatoes

Follow the steps below to reduce the potassium content of white potatoes.

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- ❖ Drain, rinse, and drain the potatoes again.
- ❖ Cook in a large amount of unsalted water.

Watch Out for Hidden Sources of Potassium

The potassium content of a food may change depending on how the food is preserved. Not all food labels include potassium; so keep these tips in mind:

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- ❖ Other foods with high levels of potassium include salt substitutes, lite salts, milk, coffee, and some vegetable juices and powdered drink mixes.

