



**Following a low potassium diet:  
a guide for young people**

# Contents

1. Why do I need to lower my potassium intake?	Page 3
2. Steps to lower potassium intake	Page 3
3. Medications	Page 7
4. Food tables	Page 9



1. Why do I need to lower my potassium intake?

2. Steps to lower potassium intake



Potassium is a very important mineral that occurs naturally in the body. We get the potassium our body needs from the food we eat. Our kidneys maintain the right balance of potassium by keeping in the potassium that we need for good health and getting rid of excess potassium in the urine. As your kidney function is impaired, the potassium levels in your blood will build up. This may cause your muscles, such as your heart, and your nervous system to not work properly.

## Step 1.

### Limit the intake of high potassium foods and drinks with low nutritional value

Many foods contain potassium. To make sure that you have a balanced diet which contains enough fiber, vitamins and minerals, it is important to look at the foods you are eating. Try not to have foods that are high in potassium and have a low nutritional value. These foods don't contribute to a healthy diet and should be avoided as much as possible.

#### High nutritional value foods and drinks

- Milk and milk products
- Potatoes and other starchy roots and tubers
- Vegetables
- Pulses
- Dried fruit
- Cereals (grains) and cereal products
- Fruit and fruit products
- Meat
- Nuts
- Fresh homemade vegetable soup



#### Low nutritional value foods and drinks

- Potato crisps (chips)
- Chocolate
- Coffee<sup>†</sup>
- Custard
- Ice cream
- Fruit juices
- Vegetable juices
- Canned vegetable soup
- Salt substitute (KCl)
- Alcohol\*



\*Alcohol can be a source of potassium. We advise against underage drinking.

<sup>†</sup>Children under the age of 12 years should not have caffeine-containing drinks.

Discuss this with your dietitian.

Use the table below to help you choose alternative lower potassium foods and drinks.

High potassium foods and drinks	Alternative lower potassium foods and drinks
 <b>Potatoes (all types)</b>	 <b>Pasta, rice, couscous, noodles</b>
 <b>Cow's milk</b>	 <b>Plant-based milk drinks such as soy, rice, oat drinks, low protein milk substitutes</b>
 <b>Breakfast cereals with chocolate or dried fruit</b>	 <b>Plain, honey coated or sugar coated breakfast cereals</b>
 <b>Potato crisps and other snacks containing potato</b>	 <b>Corn or rice snacks, sweetened popcorn</b>
 <b>Chocolate biscuits</b>	 <b>Plain, jam filled or wafer biscuits</b>
 <b>Chocolate cake, fruit cake</b>	 <b>Plain cake filled with cream or jam, jam tarts, doughnuts, plain scones</b>
 <b>Fruit juices, hi juice squash</b>	 <b>Lemonade, squash, cordials</b>
 <b>Instant coffee and coffee essence†</b>	 <b>Tea (black, green† or herbal)</b>
 <b>Chocolate spread, peanut butter</b>	 <b>Marmalade, jam, honey</b>
 <b>Chocolate, marzipan, liquorice, toffee, fudge</b>	 <b>Boiled sweets, jellies, mints, marshmallows</b>
 <b>Ketchup</b>	 <b>Mayonnaise</b>

†Children under the age of 12 years should not have caffeine-containing drinks.

See pages 9-15 for a guide to which foods and drinks are high and lower in potassium.

Your dietitian will help you with any changes you may need to make to your diet

## Step 2.

# Read packaging labels - avoid potassium additives

It is important to choose fresh foods rather than processed foods. Potassium additives may be added to processed foods for a number of reasons, e.g. as a preservative, sweetener, emulsifier, stabilizer, thickener or gelling agent. They can more than double the potassium content of a food.

Look for "potassium" as a part of an ingredient name in the ingredients list of processed foods. This indicates the presence of potassium additives that should be avoided. Manufacturers may also list the E-numbers of potassium containing additives.

Manufacturers are not required in all countries to list potassium on the ingredients/nutrients lists. In general ready to eat, processed and 'fast food' contains more potassium than fresh food. Salt substitutes are often high in potassium. If anyone in your family uses a salt substitute, you must make sure that you don't have it.

Takeaway foods can contain high amounts of potassium. Discuss lower potassium alternatives with your dietitian.



**INGREDIENTS:** ENRICHED FLOUR (WHEAT FLOUR, NIACIN, REDUCED FAT, MONONITRATE [VITAMIN B1], POLYDEXTROSE, CITRIC ACID), CORN STARCH, MODIFIED CORN STARCH, (WITH TBHQ), SALT, DRIED CREAM, CALCIUM CARBONATE, CORNSTARCH, LEAVENING **POTASSIUM SORBATE, POTASSIUM NITRATE**, DISTILLED MONOGLYCERIDES, HYDROGENATED

## Potassium additives

Preservatives		Sweeteners		Emulsifiers, stabilisers, thickeners and gelling agents	
E202	Potassium sorbate	E950	Acesulfame K	E402	Potassium alginate
E212	Potassium benzoate	E954	Saccharin	E470a	Fatty acid salts
E224	Potassium metabisulphite				
E228	Potassium hydrogen sulphite				
E249	Potassium nitrite				
E252	Potassium nitrate				
E283	Potassium propionate				
Others					
E261	Potassium acetate	E357	Potassium adipate	E536	Potassium ferrocyanide
E326	Potassium lactate	E501	Potassium carbonates	E555	Potassium aluminium silicate
E332	Potassium citrates	E508	Potassium chloride	E577	Potassium gluconate
E336	Potassium tartrates	E515	Potassium sulphates	E622	Monopotassium glutamate
E337	Sodium potassium tartrate	E522	Aluminium potassium sulphate	E628	Dipotassium guanylate
E340	Potassium phosphates	E525	Potassium hydroxide	E632	Dipotassium inosinate
E351	Potassium malate				

### Step 3.

## Adjust cooking methods to reduce the potassium content of foods

### If your potassium level is high

Adjust your cooking methods to reduce the amount of potassium in foods.

- Before cooking potatoes, remove the skin and cut them into small pieces.
- Then boil the potatoes in a large amount of water. This helps the potato lose some of its potassium.
- Pour the water away.
- Now boil the potatoes in fresh water and again pour away the water once the potatoes are cooked. This lowers the potassium content even further.
- Don't use the water for making gravies or sauces – always pour the water away.



Try to avoid frying, stir frying, cooking in a tajine, steaming, using a pressure cooker and boiling potatoes with the skin on. These methods don't reduce the potassium content.

Cooking food in a microwave oven only reduces the potassium content by a small amount. Food may be reheated in a microwave, but stir well after heating to avoid 'hot spots' which may burn your mouth.



### 3. Medications

Some medications contain potassium.

Your medical team will look at your current medications and will make adjustments, if necessary.



## Notes

My dietitian is: .....

Telephone: .....

Email: .....

## 4. Food tables

The following tables show the amount of potassium in foods. Your dietitian will let you know how many servings of each of the foods in the red, orange or green categories you can have each day.

..... red foods

..... orange foods

..... green foods

### Potassium content of fruit

■ High potassium

■ Moderate potassium

■ Lower potassium

Food	Portion size
<b>FRUIT (edible weight, medium size and fresh unless stated otherwise)</b>	
Apple	100g (1)
Apricot, semi-dried	20g (3)
Apricot	80g (2)
Avocado	75g (½)
Banana	80g (1 small)
Blackberries	40g (8)
Blueberries	45g (2 Tbsp)
Cherries	40g (10)
Clementine	50g (1 small)
Dates, dried	30g (2)
Fig, semi-dried	40g (2)
Fruit cocktail, canned in juice/syrup	30g (1 Tbsp)
Grapefruit	80g (½)
Grapes	60g (12)
Kiwi fruit	60g (1)
Lychees, raw, flesh only	20g (2)
Mandarin	50g (1 small)
Mandarins, canned in syrup	50g (2 Tbsp)
Mango	75g (½)
Melon, honeydew	200g (1 slice)
Nectarine	90g (1)
Olives, no stones	30g (10)
Orange	120g (1 small)
Passion fruit	30g (2)
Peach	110g (1)
Pear	100g (1)
Pineapple	80g (1 large slice)
Pineapple, canned in juice/syrup	45g (2 slices)
Plum	55g (1)
Prunes, semi-dried	30g (4)
Raisins/sultanas, dried	30g (1 Tbsp)
Raspberries	60g (15)
Satsuma	50g (1 small)
Strawberries	80g (7)
Tangerine	50g (1 small)
Watermelon	120g (10 balls)

## Potassium content of vegetables and pulses

■ High potassium

■ Moderate potassium

■ Lower potassium

Food	Portion size
<b>VEGETABLES AND PULSES (LEGUMES)</b>	
Asparagus, steamed	75g (3 spears)
Aubergine, fried in oil, including skin	65g (¼ medium)
Baked beans, canned in tomato sauce	80g (2 Tbsp)
Beansprouts	20g (1 Tbsp)
Beetroot, boiled	35g (1 small)
Black eye beans, dried, boiled	40g (1 Tbsp)
Broad beans, boiled	60g (1 Tbsp)
Broccoli, boiled	40g (1 Tbsp)
Brussels sprouts, boiled	40g (1 Tbsp)
Butter beans, dried, boiled	35g (1 Tbsp)
Butternut squash, baked	40g (1 Tbsp)
Cabbage, green, boiled	40g (1 Tbsp)
Cannellini beans, canned, reheated	30g (1Tbsp)
Carrot, boiled	40g (1 Tbsp)
Cauliflower, boiled	40g (1 Tbsp)
Celery	12g (½ stick)
Chickpeas, dried, boiled	40g (1 Tbsp)
Courgette, boiled	40g (1 Tbsp)
Cucumber	40g (6 slices)
Gherkins	35g (1)
Houmous	30g (1 Tbsp)
Leek, boiled	40g (1 Tbsp)
Lentils, red, split, dried, boiled	40g (1 Tbsp)
Lettuce, average	20g (2 leaves)

Tbsp, rounded tablespoon.

## Potassium content of vegetables and pulses

■ High potassium

■ Moderate potassium

■ Lower potassium

Food	Portion size
<b>VEGETABLES AND PULSES (LEGUMES)</b>	
Mushrooms, fried in oil	40g (4 medium)
Okra, boiled	30g (6 medium)
Onion, fried in oil	25g (1 Tbsp)
Onion, raw	60g (1 small)
Parsnip, boiled	40g (1 Tbsp)
Peas, boiled	30g (1 Tbsp)
Peppers, green, raw, sliced	30g (3 rings)
Peppers, red, yellow, raw, sliced	30g (3 rings)
Plantain, boiled	50g (¼ medium)
Pumpkin, boiled	40g (1 Tbsp)
Radishes	20g (2)
Red kidney beans, canned, reheated	30g (1Tbsp)
Runner beans, boiled	30g (1 Tbsp)
Spinach, boiled	40g (1 Tbsp)
Swede, boiled	40g (1 Tbsp)
Sweetcorn, kernels canned in water, drained	30g (1 Tbsp)
Sweet potato, boiled	40g (1 Tbsp)
Tomato	65g (1 small)
Tomato, cherry	15g (1)
Tomato, canned	100g (¼ can)
Turnip, boiled	40g (1 Tbsp)
Turnip tops, boiled	50g (1 Tbsp)
Watercress	15g (1 Tbsp)
Yam, boiled	60g (1 small egg-sized)

Tbsp, rounded tablespoon.

## High potassium foods with alternative lower potassium foods

■ High potassium

■ Moderate potassium

■ Lower potassium

Food	Portion size
<b>MILKS AND DAIRY PRODUCTS</b>	
Almond drink	100ml
Rice drink	100ml
Soya milk, unsweetened	100ml
Fromage frais, fruit flavor	60g (1 small pot)
Ice cream, vanilla, soft scoop*	60g (1 scoop)
Cow's milk, whole	100ml
Custard, canned*	100g (3 Tbsp)
Yogurt, whole milk, fruit	125g (1 small pot)
<b>POTATOES</b>	
Potatoes, new, boiled, with skin	60g (1 small egg-sized)
Potatoes, old, baked in jacket, flesh only, no skin	100g (1 small)
Potatoes, chips, cut fine, fast food*	75g (small portion)
Potatoes, old, mashed with butter	45g (1 Tbsp)
Potatoes, old, roast	60g (1 small egg-sized)
<b>CEREAL (GRAIN) AND CEREAL PRODUCTS</b>	
Couscous, raw	15g (1 Tbsp)
Noodles, egg, fine, boiled	160g (1 cup)
Pasta, white, dried, boiled	90g (3 Tbsp)
Polenta, raw	10g (1 Tbsp)
Rice, white boiled	80g (2 Tbsp)
Rice, brown, boiled	80g (2 Tbsp)
Risotto, plain	40g (1 Tbsp)
Semolina, raw	15g (1½ Tbsp)
Tapioca, raw	15g (1½ Tbsp)
Bread, white	40g (1 thick slice)
Bread, brown	40g (1 thick slice)
Bread, whole meal	40g (1 thick slice)

Tbsp, rounded tablespoon.

\*Low nutritional value foods

## High potassium foods with alternative lower potassium foods

■ High potassium

■ Moderate potassium

■ Lower potassium

Food	Portion size
<b>CEREAL (GRAIN) AND CEREAL PRODUCTS</b>	
Breakfast cereal, cornflakes, fortified	20g (3 Tbsp)
Breakfast cereal, Swiss style muesli or crunchy/crispy style muesli, with nuts, unfortified	30g (2 Tbsp)
Breakfast cereal, porridge made with water, fortified	135g (3 Tbsp)
Breakfast cereal, porridge made with whole milk, fortified	135g (3 Tbsp)
Breakfast cereal, puffed wheat, honey coated, fortified	20g (3 Tbsp)
Breakfast cereal, wheat biscuits, fortified	20g (1 biscuit)
Breakfast cereal with chocolate	30g (2 Tbsp)
Breakfast cereal, wheat and multigrain, chocolate flavored, fortified	30g (2 Tbsp)
Cake, sponge, jam and butter cream*	60g (1 slice)
Cake, sponge, chocolate fudge*	60g (1 slice)
Cake, sponge, fruit, plain*	60g (1 slice)
Cookie (biscuit), digestive, half coated with chocolate*	17g (1)
Cookie (biscuit), semi-sweet*	14g (2)
Cookie (biscuit), short, sweet*	20g (2)
Cream crackers	10g (1)
Crispbread	10g (1)
<b>NUTS AND SEEDS</b>	
Almonds	13g (6 whole)
Brazil nuts	10g (3 whole)
Cashews/hazel nuts	10g (10 whole)
Peanuts	13g (10 whole)
Peanut butter, smooth	12g (thinly spread on 1 slice of bread)
Walnuts	20g (6 halves)
Pumpkin seeds	20g (1 Tbsp)
Sunflower seeds	16g (1 Tbsp)
Sesame seeds	8g (1Tbsp)
Chia seeds dried	6g (1Tbsp)
Hemp seeds	7g (1Tbsp)
Poppy seeds	7g (1Tbsp)
Pine nuts	15g(1Tbsp)
Tahini paste	19g (1 tsp)

Tbsp, rounded tablespoon.

\*Low nutritional value foods

## High potassium foods with alternative lower potassium foods

■ High potassium

■ Moderate potassium

■ Lower potassium

Food	Portion size
<b>MEAT, CHICKEN, FISH</b>	
Burger, beef, commercial, grilled, average*	35g (1 patty)
Chicken/lamb/beef/pork, roasted, meat only	50g (1 thick slice)
Chicken nuggets*	70g (4)
Cod, steamed/microwaved, flesh only	60g (½ medium fillet)
Cod in batter, baked	60g (½ small fillet)
Salmon, baked/grilled, flesh only	50g (½ medium fillet)
<b>HERBS AND SPICES</b>	
Basil (dried, ground; fresh), coriander leaves (fresh), coriander seeds, dill (dried; fresh), dill seeds, marjoram (dried), mint (dried; fresh), oregano (dried, ground; fresh), parsley (fresh), rosemary (fresh; dried), sage (dried, ground; fresh), tarragon (dried, ground), thyme (dried, ground; fresh)	1g (1 tsp)
Chervil (dried), coriander leaves (dried), parsley (dried)	1g (1 tsp)
Cardamom (ground), cinnamon (ground), cloves (dried), cumin seeds, curry powder, fennel seeds, ginger (fresh; ground), nutmeg (ground), pepper (black; white), saffron	2g (1 tsp)
Chilli powder, paprika, pepper cayenne (ground), turmeric (ground)	2g (1 tsp)
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	
Candy (boiled sweets)	5g (1 piece)
Potato crisps*	25g (1 small bag)
Tortilla chips*	25g (1 small bag)
Corn snacks*	25g (1 small bag)
Twiglets*	25g (1 small bag)
Chocolate, plain*	50g (1 small bar)
Chocolate, milk*	50g (1 small bar)
Coffee, instant, powder*†	2g (1 tsp)
Drinking chocolate, powder*	6g (1tsp)
Cocoa, powder*	6g (1tsp)
Yeast extract	1g (thin scraping on 1 slice of bread)
Margarine	5g (1 tsp)
Butter	5g (1 tsp)
Oil	10g (1 Tbsp)
Jam/marmalade	15g (1 Tbsp)
Honey	15g (1 Tbsp)
Molasses	15g (1 Tbsp)
Sugar	5g (1 tsp)
Vinegar	15g (1Tbsp)
White sauces	15g (1 Tbsp)
Tomato-based sauces	15g (1 Tbsp)
Salt substitutes	1g (1 tsp)

Tbsp, rounded tablespoon.

\*Low nutritional value foods

†Children under the age of 12 years should not have caffeine-containing drinks

## High potassium drinks with alternative lower potassium drinks

■ High potassium

■ Moderate potassium

■ Lower potassium

Food	Portion size
<b>DRINKS</b>	
Water, fizzy drinks, fruit cordials and squashes	150ml (1 glass)
Hi juice squashes	150ml (1 glass)
Apple juice	150ml (1 glass)
Orange juice	150ml (1 glass)
Carrot juice	150ml (1 glass)
Tomato juice	150ml (1 glass)
Tea (black, green <sup>†</sup> , herbal)	100ml (1 cup)

†Children under the age of 12 years should not have caffeine-containing drinks



Enhancing Lives Together  
A Nestlé Health Science Company

Trademark of Societe des Produits Nestle SA  
©2021 All rights reserved. Societe des Produits Nestle SA

[www.myrenalnutrition.com](http://www.myrenalnutrition.com)

We would like to thank Vitaflo (International) Ltd who have provided support and funding for the artwork and production of this booklet.

All information correct at the time of print