



Following a low potassium diet: a guide for families

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1. Why do I need to lower my child's 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 child's kidney function is impaired, the potassium levels in their blood will build up. This may cause their muscles, such as the heart, and the nervous system to not work properly.

2. Steps to lower potassium intake

Step 1

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

Many foods contain potassium. To make sure that your child has a balanced diet which contains enough fiber, vitamins and minerals, it is important to look at the foods they are eating. Try not to give 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
- Custard
- Ice cream
- Fruit juices
- Vegetable juices
- Canned vegetable soup
- Salt substitute (KCl)



* Whole nuts should not be given to children under 5 years of age

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

* It is not advised to give rice milk drinks to young children

† 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 child's diet

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 child's potassium level is high

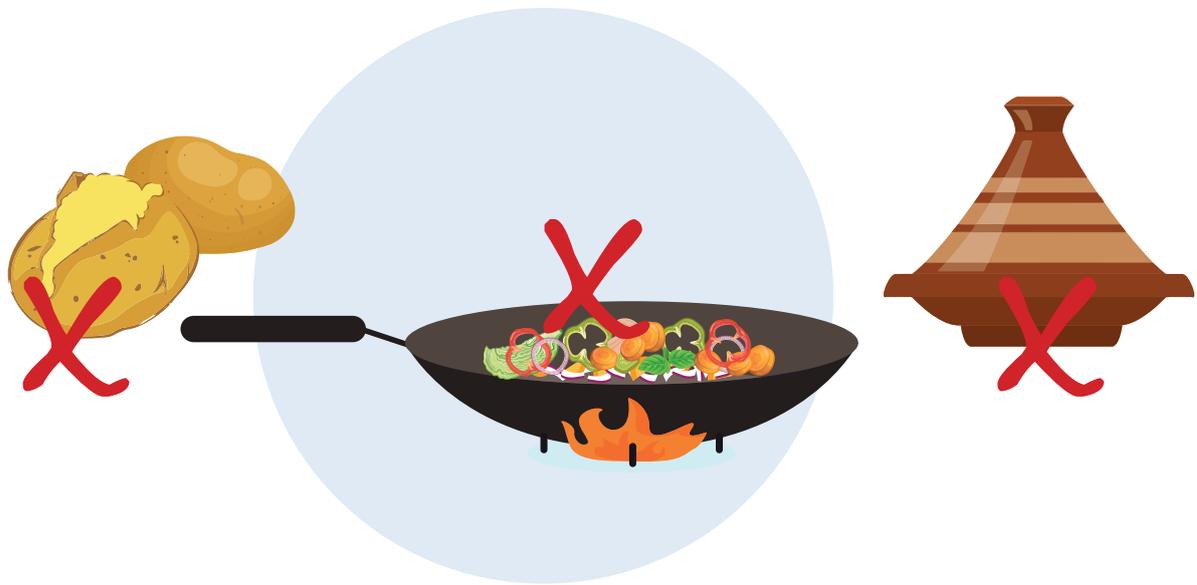
Adjust your cooking methods to reduce the amount of potassium in foods.

- 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 child's mouth.



3. Medications

Some medications contain potassium.

Your medical team will look at your child's 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 your child can have each day.

..... red foods orange foods green foods

Potassium content of fruit

■ High potassium

■ Moderate potassium

■ Lower potassium

Food	Portion size
FRUIT (edible weight, medium size and fresh unless stated otherwise)	
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)

Tbsp, rounded tablespoon.

Potassium content of vegetables and pulses

■ High potassium

■ Moderate potassium

■ Lower potassium

Food	Portion size
VEGETABLES AND PULSES (LEGUMES)	
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
VEGETABLES AND PULSES (LEGUMES)	
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
MILKS AND DAIRY PRODUCTS	
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)
POTATOES	
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)
CEREAL (GRAIN) AND CEREAL PRODUCTS	
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
CEREAL (GRAIN) AND CEREAL PRODUCTS	
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)
NUTS AND SEEDS	
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
MEAT, CHICKEN, FISH	
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)
HERBS AND SPICES	
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)
MISCELLANEOUS	
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 foods with alternative lower potassium foods

■ High potassium

■ Moderate potassium

■ Lower potassium

Food	Portion size
DRINKS	
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,† herbal)	100ml (1 cup)

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



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