

Potassium-Modified Diet

Potassium is a mineral found in many foods. It helps keep your heart beating at a normal rate and helps your muscles work right. Low potassium levels may lead to muscle weakness and an unusual heartbeat. High potassium levels may lead to muscle weakness, numbness, confusion, and a dangerously low blood pressure; in severe cases it may lead to an irregular heartbeat or a heart attack. The purpose of a potassium-modified diet is to help you reach and maintain a healthy potassium level. Depending on your serum potassium level, you may need to increase or decrease the amount of potassium consumed in your diet to achieve a healthy level.

Indications for use

A high potassium diet may be needed if your potassium gets too low. The most common cause of a low potassium level is an excessive loss of potassium through the urine from a prescription water or fluid pill (diuretic). Vomiting or diarrhea may also contribute to potassium losses in your body, which in turn will require a higher consumption of potassium containing foods.

A low potassium diet may be needed if your potassium gets too high. The most common cause of a high potassium level is impaired kidney function. Adrenal failure, use of ACE inhibitors and type 1 diabetes may also cause potassium levels to rise. If your potassium levels are high, a potassium restriction may be needed to prevent complications.

Special considerations

The degree of potassium modification must be tailored to the individual. Serum potassium levels are checked to monitor and adjust potassium intake.

Many times those who are on a low potassium diet also need to restrict sodium. Although it may seem like a great idea to use low sodium options, food manufacturing companies will often times replace the sodium for potassium. If you are looking for a low sodium option and are on a low potassium diet, you will need to read the nutrition facts label for potassium content. If the potassium amounts are not listed, check the ingredients list and avoid any added potassium. Some common names of added potassium in food include, but are not limited to: Potassium Chloride, Potassium Bicarbonate, Potassium Sodium Tartrate, Potassium Bromate, and Potassium Bisulfite.

If you are on a low potassium diet and routinely consume vegetables that are high in potassium, there are ways to leach out about half of the potassium. Start by peeling and slicing (1/8" - 1/4" slices), then soak the sliced vegetable in 10 times as much water to the amount of vegetable. Soak for a minimum of 2 hours in warm water (if soaked longer outside the refrigerator replace the water every 4 hours) or soak in the refrigerator for 8 to 12 hours. Once soaked, pour out all the water and rinse under warm water for a few seconds. Vegetables will then need to be boiled until tender in five times as much water as vegetable and the water should be discarded.

Dietitian: _____

Phone: _____

Facility: _____



Food list hint: Eating more than 1 portion of a Low and Moderate Potassium Food can make it a High Potassium Food.

FOOD GROUP	LOW AND MODERATE POTASSIUM FOODS	HIGH POTASSIUM FOODS
<p>Milk and Milk Products</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almond milk (less than 150 mg / cup) Boost Breeze or Ensure Active Clear (0 - 45 mg / 8 oz.) Boost Glucose Control (50 - 170 mg depending on the flavor / 8 oz.) Cottage cheese (200 mg / cup), cheese, hard and processed (0 – 100 mg / oz.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Half and half, yogurt, soy milk (over 250 mg / cup) Ice cream (even higher with nuts and chocolate (300 mg / cup)) Milk – Whole, skim, 1%, 2%, chocolate milk or buttermilk (over 350 mg / cup), Nutritional supplements (more than 350 / 8 oz.)
<p>Breads, Grains and Cereals</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breads: White (refined), pumpernickel, sourdough, rye, whole wheat (less than 100 mg / slice or serving) Corn chips Corn or flour tortilla Crackers, Graham crackers, Pretzels Homemade biscuits, Muffins Pancakes, Waffles Rice (brown and white) Rice and corn cereals (less than 150 mg / cup) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Croutons Granola, High bran breads Oatmeal Quinoa (more than 250 mg / cup) Wheat or bran cereals Whole wheat bagels Wild rice
<p>Meat and Other Proteins</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beef, poultry, lamb, veal (3 oz. or 250 - 300 mg) Eggs (50 mg / 1 large) Peanut butter (200 mg / 2 tbsp.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pork, fish, organ meats (3 oz. or 325 mg) Legumes, dried peas and beans (more than 600 mg / 1 cup) Nuts (300 - 400 mg / ½ cup)
<p>Fats and Oils</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Butter or margarine Mayonnaise-type salad dressing Shortening Vegetable oil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creamy soups from concentrate Instant soup mixes Salad dressing: need to read the label for content / portion
<p>Beverages</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All beverages except for those previously made with high potassium foods listed here Coffee if limited to 8 oz. Tea if limited to 16 oz. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot chocolate Alcohol

This handout is meant for use during an appointment with a registered dietitian only and is not intended for use by other clinicians.

FOOD GROUP	LOW AND MODERATE POTASSIUM FOODS	HIGH POTASSIUM FOODS
<p>Fruits</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples (fresh, sauce, juice) • Apricot nectar • Blackberries • Blueberries • Cherries • Cranberries & cranberry juice • Figs • Fruit cocktail • Gooseberries • Grapefruit (1/2 fruit) • Grapes & grape juice • Lemon & lemon juice • Mandarin oranges • Papaya nectar • Peaches (fresh, canned, nectar) • Pears (canned, or nectar) (0 - 100 mg / ½ cup) • Pineapple • Plums • Raisins • Raspberries • Rhubarb • Strawberries • Tangerine • Watermelon (101 - 200 mg / ½ cup) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apricots (canned, dried, or fresh) • Banana (1 med) • Cantaloupe • Coconut • Dates • Figs • Honeydew melon (1 cup) • Kiwifruit • Mango • Nectarine • Oranges (fresh & juice) • Papaya • Pears, fresh (201 - 350 mg / ½ cup) • Prunes and prune juice are especially high in potassium (over 400 mg)
<p>Vegetables</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alfalfa sprouts • Asparagus • Bamboo shoots (canned) • Bean sprouts • Broccoli • Cabbage • Cabbage (cooked) • Carrots • Cauliflower • Celery • Chard • Collards • Corn • Cucumber • Eggplant • Endive • Escarole • Green beans • Green peas • Green pepper • Iceberg lettuce • Kale • Mushrooms (raw, canned or fresh) • Mustard greens • Onions • Radishes • Sauerkraut • Snow peas • Spinach • Squash • Turnip greens • Turnips (101-200 mg per ½ cup) • Water chestnuts • Watercress (0-100 mg per ½ cup) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artichoke • Avocado • Baked potatoes • Bamboo shoots • Beet greens • Beets • Brussels sprouts • Celery cooked • Chard cooked • Chili pepper • Chinese cabbage • Kohlrabi • Mushrooms (cooked, fresh) • Okra • Parsnips • Pumpkin • Rutabagas • Spinach cooked • Sweet potatoes • Tomato • Tomato juice • Tomato paste (over 400 mg) • Vegetable juice (201-350 mg / ½ cup) • Winter squash (over 400 mg)

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FOOD GROUP	LOW AND MODERATE POTASSIUM FOODS	HIGH POTASSIUM FOODS
<p>Sweets and Desserts</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cake** • Corn syrup • Crisps • Gelatin • Gumdrops • Hard candies • Honey • Ice pops • Jam • Jelly • Jelly beans • Marshmallows • Pies** • Pumpkin • Sugar <p>** Except cake or pies made with high potassium foods, such as chocolate, banana cream, or pecan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any chocolate • Banana or nut filled dessert • Ice cream • Pumpkin
<p>Miscellaneous</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornstarch • Dill pickles (1 pickle – 60 mg) • Herbs and spices • Liquid nondairy creamer (80 mg / ½ cup) • Nondairy frozen dessert or topping • Nondairy powdered creamers (Coffee Mate) (16 mg / 1 tsp) • Vanilla and other flavorings • Vinegar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBQ sauce • Chili sauce • Chocolate • Dark brown sugar • Dijon mustard • French fries • Ketchup • Licorice • Low sodium baking powder • Maple syrup • Meat extracts • Molasses • Nuts • Packaged sauce mixes • Potato chips • Salt substitutes • Seeds • Soy sauce • Steak sauce • Sweet and sour sauce • Sweet pickles • Teriyaki sauce • Worcestershire sauce

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