

Nutrition and Dietetics

Renal Disease - How to increase potassium within your diet

Currently your blood level of potassium is low. This is usually because dialysis is removing more potassium than you are taking in through your diet. This can also happen when you are feeling unwell, or when your appetite is poor. Low blood potassium levels can affect muscle function, especially the heart.

What is the recommended potassium level?

- Non- dialysis patients 3.5 - 5.5 mmol/l
- Haemodialysis patients 4.0- 6.0 mmol/l
- Peritoneal dialysis patients 3.5 - 5.5 mmol/l

Ideas to increase potassium in the diet:

Aim to have a minimum of 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day

- Mix dried fruit into cereal or have as a snack between meals
- Have a glass of fruit juice, fruit smoothie or vegetable juice with meals**
- Have fruit as a snack between meals, for example a banana or orange
- Try vegetable soup/stew**

**Remember to include these fluids within your fluid restriction



Patient Information

Have at least one portion of potatoes per day

- Use baked potatoes, chips, or roast potatoes instead of boiled potatoes
- Increase the amount of potatoes you eat by having cold potato salad or adding potatoes into meals; such as into a curry or an omelette

Avoid boiling vegetables/potatoes (this reduces potassium content)

- Try grilling, frying, roasting, baking, steaming, stewing or pressure cooking

Over the page is a list of high potassium foods - try to include some of these foods into your diet daily to help increase your blood level of potassium. If your blood levels of potassium do not increase, you may need potassium supplements from your doctor or nurse, or your doctor may change you to a higher potassium dialysis prescription.

Please note some of the foods listed are high in sugar and salt and may not be suitable if you have diabetes and/or high blood pressure.

Food category	High Potassium – eat more of these
Fruit All fruit contains potassium	Avocado, banana, blackcurrants, coconut, figs, grapefruit, guava, mango, melon, orange, papaya & rhubarb, pomegranate, gooseberries, redcurrants Dried fruit including dates, sultanas, raisins, dried apricots, dried figs, prunes,
Potatoes and starchy foods	Baked / jacket potatoes, instant mash*, roast potatoes, chips & frozen potato products* Plantain & sweet potato
Vegetables All vegetables contain potassium	Baked beans, mushrooms, parsnip, tomatoes, Brussel sprouts, okra & spinach, artichoke, beetroot, butternut squash, tinned tomatoes, parsnips, pak choi, swiss chard, soya beans, aduki beans, pinto beans
Breakfast cereals	Muesli Any cereals containing fruit /nuts* /coconut*/chocolate*
Drinks within your fluid allowance	Tomato juice, drinking chocolate*, malted drinks* e.g. Ovaltine, orange or apple juice & coffee

Patient Information

Sweets	Chocolate*, fudge*, coconut ice*, chocolate Brazil nuts or peanuts*, peanut brittle*, chocolate raisins* Cereal or chocolate bars containing fruit, nuts* or coconut*
Cakes / biscuits	Any cake and biscuits containing dried fruit / nuts* / chocolate* for example fruit cake, mince pie, chocolate cake*, carrot cake, coffee and walnut* cake*, chocolate biscuits*,
Snacks	Nuts*, Bombay mix*, dried fruit, seeds*, potato crisps, twiglets, & vegetable crisps

Foods marked with * throughout this information leaflet are high phosphate and should be limited if following a low phosphate diet.

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