

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

Renal Disease - Low potassium snacks and drinks for people who have diabetes

This information should only be used by patients with a high potassium level and should only be followed with supervision from a dietitian.

If you or your relatives would like to buy snacks or drinks use this list to check that you choose the right ones.

Avoid potassium containing food additives:

Many processed foods contain potassium additives which manufacturers add to improve the texture, lifespan or reduce the salt content of foods. These additives are absorbed very efficiently by your body and can significantly raise your potassium levels, more so than naturally occurring potassium in other foods. Avoiding additives can therefore help control your potassium levels.

Look for 'potassium chloride', 'potassium lactate', 'potassium phosphate' or 'potassium citrate' on the labels of processed foods such as low salt products, meat, vegetarian meat alternatives, processed cheese, soups and powdered drink mixes such as hot chocolate and malted drinks.

It is beneficial to get your 5 a day of fruit and vegetables from 'lower potassium' options as this can help to manage your overall acid balance and therefore potassium levels and is also beneficial to overall health. Aim to have 2 fruits and 3 vegetables per day.

If you would like to have any food or drinks not on the list, check with your Dietitian first.



Patient Information

Food item	High potassium foods to reduce	Low potassium foods to try
Drinks	Coffee, Drinking chocolate, Horlicks, Instant white teas, Fruit juice, High Juice squash, Milkshakes and Smoothies.	Milk - limit to ½ pint per day or dairy free alternatives. Tea, Low calorie, diet or sugar free squashes and fizzy drinks, Tap or mineral water, Flavoured water, Slimline tonic water or bitter lemon. Barley cup
Note: ordinary fizzy pop or squash can still be used to treat hypos.		
Fruit	Apricots, bananas, oranges, blackcurrants, redcurrants, rhubarb, avocado, figs, dates, mango, melon, dried fruit, coconut, pomegranate, prunes, gooseberries, guava and sharon fruit.	Maximum of 2 portions per day Apple, plum, satsuma, tangerine, pear, grapes (15 only) tinned fruit - always discard the juice/syrup from tinned fruit.
Savoury snacks * to have in moderation as these are generally high in salt	Potato crisps, nuts, seeds, Bombay mix, twiglets, vegetable crisps	Wheat/corn/rice based snacks such as: Skips, Wotsits, Doritos, Tortilla Chips, Wheat Crunchies, Nik Naks, plain no salt popcorn, Cheddars, Snack a Jacks, rice cakes.

Patient Information

Food item	High potassium foods to reduce	Low potassium foods to try
Sweets	Chocolate, Diabetic chocolates, Toffee, fudge, liquorice, peanut brittle, coconut ice and nougat.	Sugar free mints or sweets can be taken in moderation but can have a laxative effect.
Cakes and biscuits	Any cakes or biscuits with dried fruit, nuts or chocolate.	Plain cakes and biscuits, biscuits for example, rich tea, digestive, plain sponge and cream crackers

Some of the low potassium foods listed may need to be limited if you are trying to lose weight.

High blood sugar levels can also cause your potassium to increase.

Warning - Star fruit contains a chemical which can be extremely dangerous to people with kidney problems. These should be avoided.

Produced by Coventry Renal Dietitians, University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire: Contact number: 024 7696 6151

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