University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

Patient Information

Nutrition and Dietetics

Renal Disease - How to increase potassium in your diet

Your blood potassium level is low. This is usually because dialysis is removing more potassium than you are getting from your diet, or because you are feeling unwell, or have a poor appetite. Low blood potassium levels can affect muscle function, especially the heart. Getting the right amount of potassium through your diet is important for heart and bone health and can help reduce the risk of stroke and coronary heart disease.

What is the recommended potassium level?

- Non- dialysis patients: 3.5 - 5.3 mmol/l
- Haemodialysis patients: 4.0- 6.0 mmol/l
- Peritoneal dialysis patients: 3.5 - 5.5 mmol/l

Ideas to increase potassium in your diet:

1. Aim to have at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day.
2. Include at least 1 portion of potatoes each day.
3. Avoid boiling vegetables or potatoes, as this reduces their potassium content.

Boost your Potassium in your diet:

Breakfast ideas:

- **Porridge:** Add nuts, seeds, peanut butter and fresh fruits like banana, mango, apricots, blackcurrants, or dried fruits.

- **Cereals:** Top with dried or fresh fruits.
- **Toast:** Add avocado, peanut butter, chopped tomatoes or cooked mushrooms.
- **Pastries:** Choose chocolate croissants or other pastries with dried fruit.
- **Yogurt:** Top with dried or fresh fruits, nuts or seeds.
- **Cooked breakfast:** Include baked beans, tomatoes, hash browns, or cooked mushrooms in your favourite breakfast.

Lunch and dinner ideas:

- Try grilling, frying, roasting, baking, steaming, stewing, or pressure-cooking potatoes and vegetables instead of boiling.
- Choose baked potatoes, chips, roast potatoes, potato waffles, potato croquettes, sweet potatoes, or a jacket potato with beans.
- Increase the number of potatoes that you eat by having cold potato salad or adding potatoes to meals like curries, omelettes, soups and stews.
- Increase the number of vegetables that you eat by having more salads or ensuring good portions with your meals. Select high-potassium varieties like tomatoes, Brussel sprouts, spinach, mushrooms, beetroot, parsnips, beans (for example baked beans).
- Add pulses like lentils, chickpeas and kidney beans to curries or stews.
- Do you prefer soup? Try mushroom, tomato, leek and potatoes or lentils soups.
- Do you like pasta? Choose tomato-based sauces such as Bolognese, creamy tomato or mushrooms sauces.

Savoury snacks:

- Potato crisps
- Yogurt with muesli, nuts or seeds and fresh fruits
- Fresh vegetables sticks (cucumber, carrot, peppers) with hummus or avocado

Sweet snacks:

- Fresh, dried, or cooked fruits (oranges, bananas, mango, apricots)

- Cakes, pastries or biscuits with dried fruit, nuts, chocolate, coconut sweets or peanut brittle.

Drinks:

- coffee, hot chocolate, fruit juice, fruit smoothies, vegetable juice, or Horlicks.

Remember to include these fluids within your fluid restriction limit.

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At the bottom of the page, you will find a list of high-potassium foods. Try to include some of these in your daily diet to help increase your potassium levels. If your potassium level does not increase, you may need potassium supplements from your doctor or nurse. Alternatively, your doctor may adjust your dialysis treatment (such as by changing the haemodialysis prescription or increasing your peritoneal dialysis sessions.

Please note: Some of the foods listed below are high in sugar and salt and may not be suitable if you have diabetes 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* or chocolate*
Drinks (within your fluid allowance)	• Tomato juice, drinking chocolate*, malted drinks* (like Ovaltine), orange or apple juice and coffee
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	• Cake and biscuits containing dried fruit, nuts*, or chocolate*, such as fruit cake, mince pies, chocolate cake*, carrot cake, coffee and walnut* cake* and chocolate biscuits*
Snacks	• Nuts*, Bombay mix*, dried fruit, seeds*, potato crisps, twiglets and vegetable crisps

Important notice: Foods marked with * are high in phosphate and should be limited if you are following a low phosphate diet.

Warning: Avoid starfruit. It contains a chemical that can be extremely dangerous to people with kidney problems.

Patients with diabetes:
Patients with diabetes should note that some of the snacks and drinks listed above are high in sugar. This is particularly for items in the ‘sweets,’ ‘cakes and biscuits’ and ‘drinks’ sections. If you have any concerns about managing a high potassium diet while also following dietary advice for your diabetes, please contact the renal dietitians. They can provide individualised advice and support, especially if you have a poor appetite.

Your personalised dietary plan, on (date)……..……is:

Include snacks in your diet ……. ☐

Include with your main meals ……..... ☐

Boost your breakfast with potassium high foods like…….....

Include a drink such as ……..

Produced by Coventry Renal Dietitians, UHCW NHS Trust

Contact number: 024 7696 6151

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