

## Patient information

### Low Potassium Diet

Therapies – Department of Nutrition and Dietetic

**Name:**

**Date:**

**Dietitian**

## Introduction

### What is Potassium?

Potassium is a mineral that everyone has in their blood. It is important to ensure healthy functioning of muscles, including your heart muscle. It appears naturally in many foods and drinks.

### Why is the amount of potassium in my blood too high?

When your kidneys are not working properly they are unable to get rid of excess potassium out of your body via your urine.

### Is a high level of potassium in my blood dangerous?

It can be. If the level rises too high it may cause dangerous changes to your heart.

### What do I need to do to control my blood potassium level?

You need to follow a low potassium diet at all times in order to keep your blood potassium at a safe level.

Your dietitian will assess your diet and tell you which foods you should avoid or limit. They will also help to plan meals based on the foods you can have.

## **Cooking tips**

Potatoes and vegetables are high in potassium. The way you cook them affects their potassium content. When potatoes and vegetables are cooked in water, they lose a large amount of potassium.

**It is important that they are always cooked as follows:**

- Peel and cut them into small pieces before cooking.
- Boil them only once in a large amount of water. Throw the cooking water away. Do not use it for making gravy, sauces or soups.
- Microwave, pressure cookers, steamers or stir-frying should not be used for cooking potatoes and vegetables from raw but can be used to reheat food.
- Parboil potatoes for ten minutes before making chips or roasting.
- Only have potatoes at one meal a day. A portion is four – five new potatoes or equivalent size per meal. Rice and pasta are lower in potassium and can be used instead.
- Other starchy foods similar to potato can be used e.g. sweet potato and yam. The portion sizes are two medium sweet potatoes or one yam the size of a medium potato.
- Avoid potato products that have not been cooked as previously described e.g.
  - Instant mash and ready meals such as fisherman's pie or cottage pie
  - Chip shop chips
  - Oven chips / roast potatoes (shop bought)
  - Jacket potatoes
  - Potato croquettes / waffles
  - Potato crisps
  - Potato curry / soups / salad

<b>Foods allowed – these are lower in potassium</b>	<b>Foods to avoid – these are high in potassium</b>
<p><b>Cereals/Bread</b>  Porridge oats, Weetabix, Shredded Wheat, Shreddies, Cornflakes, Special K, Rice Krispies, Ricles, Frosties  Pancakes, pastry croissants, crumpets, pikelets, pitta bread, white/brown/wholemeal/granary bread, sago, tapioca, semolina, flours, naan (plain and garlic), chapatti.  Rice, pasta, polenta, cous cous, egg noodles, rice noodles</p>	<p><b>Cereals/Bread</b>  All Bran, Branflakes, Muesli, Ready Brek, Raisin Split, Sultana Bran, Mini Bix and all cereals with chocolate, cocoa, coconut, dried fruit or nuts. Biscuits containing nuts and chocolate, keema and peshwari naan, pain au chocolat, pain aux raisins  poppadoms, filled ravioli and tortellini, tinned spaghetti, quinoa</p>
<p><b>Dairy products</b>  Milk within allowance .....per day – this can be cows, almond, rice or soya milks.  Yoghurt, cheese, butter, margarine, cream, milk substitutes e.g. Coffee Compliment, Coffee Mate, coffee whitener  Eggs  Crème Fraiche</p>	<p><b>Dairy products</b>  Evaporated, condensed milk and dried milk powder. Coconut milk.</p>
<p><b>Meat and Fish</b>  Beef, lamb, pork, chicken, turkey, venison, mutton, kangaroo, ostrich, duck, goose  Cod, haddock, pollock, sole, hake, plaice, river cobbler, mullet, sardines, anchovies, herrings, kippers, pilchards, whitebait, crab, prawns, scampi, trout, mussels, clams, monkfish, crayfish, sea bass, taramasalata, fish paste, fish roe</p>	<p><b>Meat and Fish</b>  Ready meals containing potato, beans or pulses.  Venison, pheasant, rabbit, grouse, goat</p>
<p><b>Nuts, pulses and meat substitutes</b>  Quorn, tofu. If you are vegetarian, you may be able to eat some nuts and pulses. Your dietitian will help you with this.</p>	<p><b>Nuts, pulses and meat substitutes</b>  Beans e.g. baked beans, red kidney beans, black-eyed beans, butter beans, lentils, pulses, nuts and seeds, any type of nut butter i.e. peanut, cashew. Creamed coconut. Hummus, tahini</p>
<p><b>Sugars, preserves and confectionary</b>  Jam, honey, syrup, marmalade, lemon curd. Sugar, sweets e.g. boiled sweets, mints, marshmallows, chewing gum, Turkish Delight, fruit pastilles, jellies, wine gums, Frutella, Chewits, Starburst. Cough sweets e.g. Tunes, Locketts, Soothers.  Artificial sweeteners</p>	<p><b>Sugars, preserves and confectionary</b>  Chocolate, toffee, liquorice, fudge, marzipan and chocolate spread.</p>

<b>Foods allowed – these are lower in potassium</b>	<b>Foods to avoid – these are high in potassium</b>
<b>Drinks</b> One cup of coffee per day or Camp Coffee, all types of tea, milk as allowance, cordial and squash, fizzy drinks, soda, tonic, mineral water. Mocktails – choose ones that are not fruit juice based, but soda or lemonade based.	<b>Drinks</b> Cocoa, malted drinks e.g. Horlicks and Ovaltine, drinking chocolate, Complan, Build-Up, fresh fruit juice, Hi juice cordial. Mocktails using fruit juice as a base.
<b>Alcohol</b> Remember some medicines do not mix with alcohol. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure. Spirits, sherry, white wine, sparkling wine e.g. Champagne, Cava, Lambrusco, Prosecco. Cocktails using soda or lemonade as a base.	<b>Alcohol</b> Red wine, beer, lager, cider, port, stout. Cocktails using fruit juice as a base
<b>Cakes, biscuits and snacks</b> Most are suitable providing they do not contain chocolate, cocoa, dried fruit, coconut or nuts. Plain/jam sponge, Madeira, cherry cake, cream horn, doughnut, apple slice, Danish pastry, lemon meringue pie, meringue, plain scones, plain biscuit, shortbread, non-salted popcorn, bread sticks, oat cakes, rice cakes, melba toast, water biscuits.  <b>Some corn and maize snacks are low in potassium; however, we suggest that you check the product ingredients list for “potassium” as it varies between brand and even flavour. See potassium additives section for more details</b>	<b>Cakes, biscuits and snacks</b> Malt bread, banana loaf, chocolate cake and biscuits, fruit cake, date and walnut loaf, coconut cake, Eccles cake, fruit scones, Chelsea buns, Bakewell tart, all potato crisps which also includes Quavers, French Fries and Pombears, Twiglets. Lentil and chickpea based snacks. Corn and maize snacks that have “potassium” listed on the ingredients
<b>Miscellaneous</b> Garlic, herbs, spices, vinegar, mayonnaise, salad cream, tartare sauce, horseradish, mustard Tomato ketchup, brown sauce and BBQ sauce should be used in small amounts e.g. 1teaspoon Meat based soups e.g. chicken noodle, oxtail, chicken. Miso. Cooking oils – including coconut oil	<b>Miscellaneous</b> Salt substitutes e.g. Losalt, Selora, Bovril, Marmite. Vegetable or pulse based soups e.g. Lentil, bean, tomato, mushroom Guacamole, salsa
<b>Fruit and vegetables</b> For suitable fruit and vegetables allowed see the portion list at the back of this booklet for full details	<b>Fruit and Vegetables</b> Banana, melon (honeydew, cantaloupe and galia), dried fruit, blackcurrants, Sharon fruit, papaya, plantain, avocado

## Potassium Additives

When following a low potassium diet it is important to be aware of hidden sources of potassium in your food, such as potassium additives.

### What are potassium additives?

Potassium additives are chemicals that are added to a large number of processed foods during manufacturing. These foods include instant noodles and corn and maize savoury snacks.

Potassium additives could increase your potassium intake.

### How do I know which foods contain potassium additives?

It is important to look at the food label of processed foods. The ingredients list on the packaging will name the additives either by name; compare products, and wherever possible choose those without potassium additives.

Common potassium additives are

- Potassium sorbate (E202)
- Potassium benzoate (E212)
- Potassium metabisulphite (E224)
- Potassium nitrite (E249)
- Potassium nitrate (E252)
- Potassium propionate (E283)
- Potassium alginate (E402)
- Potassium acetate (E261)
- Potassium lactate (E326)
- Potassium citrate (E332)
- Potassium tartrate (E336)
- Potassium phosphate (E340)
- Potassium gluconate (E577)
- Potassium malate (E351)
- Potassium adipate (E357)
- Potassium carbonate (E501)
- Potassium chloride (E508)
- Potassium hydroxide (E525)
- Potassium ferrocyanide (E538)

## Fruit and Vegetable Allowances

Fruits and vegetables have differing potassium contents. The following lists detail the portion sizes, which provide the same amount of potassium for each fruit and vegetable.

To help you control your intake, you should aim for a maximum of .....portions per day. The dietitian will help you to control this by giving you allowances.

\_\_\_\_\_ fruit portions per day (see table)

\_\_\_\_\_ vegetable / salad portions per day (see table)

**Potatoes are not included in these portion sizes. You can eat one portion of potatoes per day (see cooking tips section).**

### Smoothie maker/juicers

Smoothies are an easy way of eating fruit but can be high in potassium. Use the portion sizes as a guide and do not exceed your allowances of fruit and vegetables as listed above. Yoghurts, water or cordials are low potassium liquids that can be used to thin the smoothie instead of fresh fruit juice.

**Fruit Portions** – all fruit can be raw unless otherwise stated. Tinned fruit should be drained of juice.

apples	1 medium	mango	½ small
apples	3 tbsp stewed	nectarine	½ fresh
apricot	1 medium	orange	1 small
blackberries	20 fruits	passion fruit	5 fruits
blueberries	1 cup	peaches	1 medium
clementines, tangerines, mandarins, satsumas	2 medium	peaches	3 tbsp
cherries	20 fruits	pears	1 small
damsons	4 stewed	pears	3 halves tinned
figs	1 ½ fruits	pineapple	1 slice fresh
fruit pie filling	2 small individual pies or equivalent from large pie	pineapple	5 rings tinned
fruit cocktail	4 tbsp	plums	2 small
gooseberries	2 tbsp, raw	pomegranate	75g or ½ a fruit
gooseberries	3 tbsp stewed	prunes	12 fruits tinned
grapefruit	½ fresh	raspberries	20 fruits
grapefruit	6 tbsp tinned	rhubarb	2 tbsp stewed
grapes	15 fruits	rhubarb	4 tbsp tinned
guava	1 small	strawberries	8 fruits
kiwi	1 small	strawberries	5 tbsp tinned
lychees	14 fruits	watermelon	1 small slice
mandarins	5 tbsp tinned		

**1 tbsp = approximately 40g**

## Vegetable portions – boiled unless otherwise stated

asparagus	3 spears (60g)	marrow	4 tbsp (140g)
aubergine	6 slices/ 1/3 fried (90g)	mange tout	3 tbsp (95g)
beetroot	8 slices pickled (80g)	mixed veg	3 tbsp (130g)
beansprouts	10 tbsp stirfried	mushrooms	8 small raw (40g)
broad beans	1½ tbsp (80g)	olives	15 fruits (170g)
broccoli	2 florets (75g)	onions	1 small (raw)
brussel sprouts	4	okra	6 fingers (35g)
butternut squash	1½ tbsp (baked) (55g)	pak choi	50g – stir fried or steamed
cabbage (green)	2 tbsp (85g)	parsnips	1 tbsp (45g)
cabbage (red)	3 tbsp (120g)	peppers	½ pepper (raw or cooked)
carrots	3 tbsp (95g)	peas (garden)	2 tbsp (70g)
carrots	1 small raw	peas (mushy)	3 tbsp / ⅓ of a tin (90g)
cauliflower	7 florets (75g)	peas(petit pois)	4 tbsp (120g)
celery	2 sticks (70g)	pumpkin	4 tbsp (185g)
courgette	2 tbsp (75g)	rocket	50g - fresh
cress	No restriction	radish	8 (65g)
cucumber	16 thin slices/ 2 inch piece (100g)	runner beans	3 tbsp (135g)
curly kale	3 tbsp (100g)	spinach (mature)	2 tbsp (70g)
corn on the cob	1 small	sweetcorn	3 tbsp (90g)
Corn (babycorn)	8 babycorn (90g)	spring onion	6 stems (60g)
coleslaw	2 tbsp (100g)	swede	5 tbsp (180g)
fennel	1 tbsp raw (35g)	tomato	1 small or 4 cherry
green beans	1 tbsp (50g)	tomato	1 tbsp puree or 2 tbsp tinned
leeks	1 stem/ 3 tbsp (105g)	turnip	2 tbsp (80g)
Iceberg lettuce	No restriction	watercress (raw)	2 tbsp (70g)

## **Salad Ideas**

Each of these recipes can count as one portion from your fruit and vegetable allowance.

**Mixed Salad** – Lettuce leaves, half a tomato, or two cherry tomatoes, three slices of cucumber and one slice of beetroot or onion.

**Coleslaw** - Two tablespoons of raw shredded cabbage, two tablespoons of raw shredded carrot, one slice of onion and small amount of mayonnaise to mix.

**Red Salad** - Three slices of beetroot, one tablespoon of peas or sweetcorn, two tablespoons of grated carrot.

**Green Salad** – Lettuce leaves, three rings of green pepper, one spring onion and mix with French dressing.

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## **Discussion points:**

This page may be used to help with meal suggestions or document the dietary changes you have discussed with the dietitian during your appointment.



**Please Note:**

People with kidney problems should avoid Star Fruit. This has been known to cause neurological problems when eaten by people with a reduced kidney function.

**If you have diabetes some of the foods mentioned in this diet sheet may not be suitable due to the high sugar content. Please discuss with your Dietitian.**

**Additional support and resources**

To support you making your dietary changes, additional dietary information is available. Please ask your dietitian if you would like any of these.

- **Eating out with CKD**
- **Dietary myths**
- **“K” word cookbook**
- **Build yourself up**
- **Festive foods**

**PatientView – [www.patientview.org](http://www.patientview.org)**

PatientView shows your latest test results, letters and medicines, plus info about diagnosis and treatment. Set up alerts, monitor symptoms and download your records. You can view PatientView from anywhere you want and share your information with anyone you want. You can ask any Renal Healthcare Professional in clinic to help you sign up for this service.

**CaMKIN – [www.kinet.site](http://www.kinet.site)**

CaMKIN (Cheshire and Merseyside Kidney Information Network) is an online community run by renal patients for renal patients, their families and carers. It provides information, blogs, recipes and opportunities for social events, with the main aims of reducing isolation and increasing support to you as a person with kidney disease. A closed Facebook group is also available, search CaMKIN.

**National Kidney Federation - [www.kidney.org.uk](http://www.kidney.org.uk)****Think Kidneys – [www.thinkkidneys.nhs.uk](http://www.thinkkidneys.nhs.uk)****Kidney Care – [www.kidneycareuk.org](http://www.kidneycareuk.org)**

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## Further Information

### Renal Dietitians

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**Please include your dietitians name in subject box of email**

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