

POTASSIUM

Potassium is needed for your muscles to work, including your heart. Healthy kidneys keep the right amount of potassium in the blood to keep your heart beating at a steady pace. Eating too much potassium can cause an irregular heartbeat that could result in death.

A healthy potassium level is 3.5 -5.5 mg/dL. If your potassium level gets too high or too low this is very dangerous and you may experience weakness, nausea, tingling in your toes and fingers, diarrhea, difficulty breathing, and even cardiac arrest.



To control the potassium level in your blood, you need to choose foods and beverages wisely. While you can still eat your favorite foods, you need to know if they are high in potassium so you can limit how much you eat.

Potassium is found in many foods, especially, milk, fruits, vegetables, nuts and dried beans. Canned fruits are lower in potassium than fresh fruits if the syrup is not consumed. There are many other sources of potassium such as bran and bran products, chocolate, molasses, nutritional supplements, yogurt, and snuff/chewing tobacco.

Check the labels on salt substitutes and products labeled “low sodium” or “low salt” as they usually have potassium added. While they are great at lowering sodium intake, they should be avoided due to containing potassium. Be sure to speak with your dietitian if you are unsure of a food and its nutrient level.

HOW TO REDUCE POTASSIUM AMOUNTS

You can reduce the amount of potassium in potatoes and other root vegetables by using this process:



- Peel and thinly slice vegetables
- Using twice the amount of water per amount of vegetables, place the vegetable slices in room temperature water
- Bring the water to a boil
- Drain the water and rinse the vegetables
- Place the vegetable slices in clean, room temperature water that is twice the amount of water to vegetables
- Bring the water to a boil
- Cook until tender then drain and prepare as desired

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

(All portions are ½ cup unless otherwise noted:)

Low Potassium 150 mg or less
(2 servings per day)

- apple juice
- apple sauce
- berries (5 medium)
- cranberries
- cranberry juice
- figs, canned
- fruit cocktail
- grapes, canned or raw (15 small)
- grape juice
- lemon or lime juice (1 medium)
- mandarin oranges
- peaches, canned
- pears, canned
- pineapple, raw or canned
- plums, canned
- tangerine (2 ½" diameter)
- watermelon (1 slice 10" diameter, ½" thick)
- green beans
- cabbage
- celery (1 stalk)
- cucumber
- eggplant
- lettuce (1/2 cup shredded)
- mushrooms
- onion
- peppers

Medium Potassium 151-200 mg
(2 servings per day)

- apple, raw (1 large)
- apricots, raw (2 medium)
- cherries, raw (16 medium)
- figs, raw (2 medium)
- grapefruit juice
- grapefruit (½ medium)
- peach, raw, 1 medium
- pear, raw (1 medium)
- pineapple juice
- plums, raw (2 medium)
- asparagus (4 spears)
- beets
- broccoli
- brussel sprouts (6-8 sprouts)
- carrots, raw (1 small)
- corn (canned or 1 small ear)
- greens: collard, mustard, kale, dandelion, beet, turnip
- mixed vegetables
- okra
- green peas
- summer squash
- tomato, raw (2 thin slices)



High Potassium 201 mg or more
(1 serving per day)

- avocado(½)
- banana (½)
- dried fruits: figs, apricots (2 halves)
- dates, prunes (5), raisins (4 Tablespoons)
- kiwi (small)
- mango
- melons: cantaloupe (¼ medium)
- orange (1 medium or 2 ½" diameter)
- orange juice
- papaya
- pomegranate (1 whole)
- prune juice
- artichoke
- dried beans and peas
- pumpkin
- spinach
- sweet potato or yam
- tomato, canned
- tomato, sauce, juice
- winter squash
- spaghetti sauce
- vegetable juice
- Mushroom, Portobelo

Resources include: USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 21 Bowes & Church Food Values of Portions Commonly Used, 17th Ed. Pennington, JA Lippincott, 1998

SPEAK WITH YOUR DIETITIAN ABOUT YOUR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS.