

Low Potassium Diet

Nutrition & Dietetics

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Who is this information for?

You should follow the advice in this leaflet if you have kidney failure and you have been advised to follow a low potassium diet.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

What is potassium?

Potassium is a mineral in the body that is filtered by your kidneys. It is found naturally in a wide range of foods and drinks in varying amounts.

Why do I need to follow a low potassium diet?

The kidneys normally remove excess potassium from the body. When your kidneys do not work properly the amount of potassium in your blood can rise. A high potassium level in your blood can have a dangerous effect on your heart.

How do I lower my potassium level?

Dialysis removes some potassium from your blood. However, between sessions potassium can build up again. By following a low potassium diet you can prevent the potassium in your blood becoming too high. Remember that what you eat on dialysis is not removed during the same dialysis session as it takes several hours for food to break down in your stomach and be released in to your blood.

How long should I follow a low potassium diet for?

You should continue to follow this diet long term. You should only stop if you are told to do so by your dietitian or doctor.

What do my blood results tell me?

You should aim for your potassium level to be less than 6.0mmol/l if you are on haemodialysis and less than 5.5mmol/l if you are on peritoneal dialysis or have CKD. Ask your dialysis nurse or dietitian for your blood results.

What will happen if I do not follow the advice in this leaflet?

High potassium levels can cause nausea, muscle weakness or tingling, irregular heartbeat and heart attack.

Not everyone has symptoms when their potassium level is too high so it is important to take note of your blood results and take care with your food choices.

How do I follow a low potassium diet?

Use the information in this leaflet to help you avoid or reduce high potassium foods. Your family should continue to eat a normal diet.

How can your dietitian help?

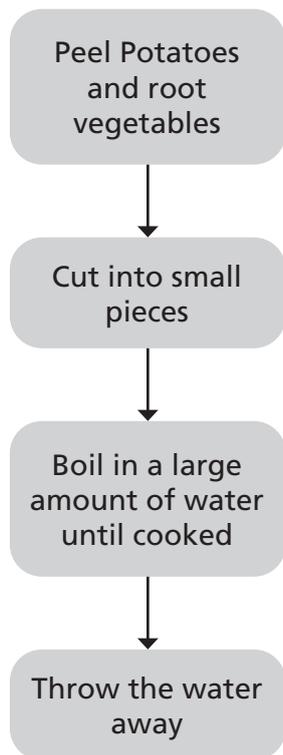
Your blood results will change depending on your diet, how well you are and how well your blood is being filtered by dialysis. Your dietary restrictions are therefore likely to be different from others and change from time to time. Your dietitian is there to provide individual advice for you depending on your appetite and blood results.

What is the general advice I should follow?

- ✗ Do **NOT** use salt substitutes e.g. Lo salt, Pansalt, Saxa So-Low, Solo as these are high in potassium
- ✗ Do **NOT** eat star fruit as it contains a harmful toxin
- ✗ Limit foods which are high in potassium
- ✓ Follow the cooking instructions to leach out some potassium from high potassium foods
- ✓ Eat a variety of foods but in moderation
- ✓ Remember that most foods contain some potassium. The serving size is very important. Keep portions of high potassium foods small
- ✓ Ask your dietitian if you are finding it difficult to follow the advice in this leaflet or if your appetite is small

Cooking Instructions

Potatoes and many vegetables, such as cassava, sweet potatoes, yams and taro, are high in potassium. Some potassium can be leached out by soaking or boiling. To lower the amount of potassium in them it is important to cook them in the following way:



Never use vegetable or potato water for gravy, soup or sauces.

If making curries, stews, soups or casseroles make sure you pre boil your vegetables before you add them towards the end.

Potatoes and vegetables should not be baked, fried, cooked in the microwave, roasted, grilled, steamed or pressure cooked as these methods do not remove the potassium.

Microwaving is suitable for reheating potatoes or vegetables which have been boiled first. You can also microwave other foods.

If stir frying, roasting or frying make sure you par boil the potatoes or vegetables (for 10 minutes) first. Foods cooked in this way should be consumed no more than once per week.

Potatoes

Potatoes (including sweet potatoes) should always be prepared.

Potatoes contain a lot of potassium.

Have potatoes no more than once per day. A suitable portion is 2-3 egg sized potatoes (150g or 5oz). At other meals have bread, rice, chapattis, cereal, pasta or noodles.

Chips and potato products from chip shops, restaurants and takeaways are not suitable because the potatoes will not have been boiled first.

Avoid oven chips, hash browns, potato croquettes, tinned potatoes, waffles, fritters, potato wedges, instant mashed potato, pakora, potato bhajia and paratha.

Jacket potatoes are not suitable as the potassium cannot get out during cooking.

**Top Tip: To make roast potatoes or chips at home, boil the potatoes for 10 minutes before roasting or frying.
BUT REMEMBER you should not have these any more than once per week and you should avoid them if your potassium has been high (more than 6mmol/L).**

Fruit

Fruit is an important part of a balanced diet and should be eaten daily. However, fruit contains potassium so you should have no more than 2 portions of lower potassium fruit per day. A portion is approximately a handful e.g 1 apple, 1 pear.

Lower Potassium Fruit

Fresh fruit

Apples	Pear	1/2 grapefruit
10 Cherries	Mangos (x2 slices)	1/3 tin of fruit cocktail
Clementine	Small peach	10 grapes
Mandarins	Lemon or lime	10 Gooseberries
Tangerines	1 slice pineapple	Passion fruit x2
Satsuma	10 green olives	

Small portion raspberries, blackberries, blueberries strawberries, cranberries. (= 3oz or 90g - 100g)

Avoid rhubarb or apricot fillings in pies, crumbles, flans or tarts.

Tinned fruit: Avoid tinned apricots, prunes and rhubarb. Remember to drain off and discard syrup or juice.

High Potassium Fruits

The fruits listed below are high in potassium and should be avoided.

Fresh fruit (high in potassium)

Banana	Guava	Nectarines
Apricot	Gooseberries	Oranges
Avocado	Greengages	Papaya
Blackcurrants	Medium kiwi fruit	Paw Paw
Dates	Melon (Galia,	Pomegranate
Damsons	Cantaloupe,	Prunes
Figs	Honeydew,	Rhubarb
Lychees	Watermelon)	

Star fruit should be avoided

Tinned fruit

Apricots
Prunes
Rhubarb

Foods containing dried fruit e.g.

Fruit cake	Christmas cake
Christmas pudding	Fig rolls
Eccles cake	Malt loaf
Muesli	Mince pies
Raisin Wheats	Sultana bran
Garibaldi biscuits	Fruit and fibre

Avoid all fruit and vegetable juice

e.g. orange, apple, tomato, grape, pomegranate

Dried fruit

e.g. Sultanas, Raisins, Figs, Dates, Apricots, Prunes, Currants

Vegetables

Vegetables are an important part of a balanced diet and should be eaten daily. However, vegetables contain potassium so you should have no more than 2 portions per day and you should choose from the lower potassium vegetables. You should follow the cooking instructions at the front of the leaflet for all vegetables.

Lower Potassium Vegetables:

Carrot	Curly Kale	Onions	Pickled beetroot
Cauliflower	Spring greens	Mixed vegetables	Alfalfa / Cress
Broccoli	Swede	Pumpkin	Bean sprouts
Runner beans	Leeks	Water chestnuts	Chicory
Cabbage	Peas	Cucumber	Sweet corn
(green / red)	Marrow	1 small tomato	Lettuce
Butternut	Half pepper	¼ Aubergine	Celery
Squash	Radish		Water Cress
Broad Beans	Water Cress		

High potassium vegetables should be avoided or consumed in very small amounts.

High Potassium Vegetables:

Artichoke	Chinese	Tomatoes	Water cress
Bamboo shoots	cabbage	Beetroot	Turnip
Baked Beans	Raw carrots	Mange tout	Sweet potato
Butternut	Mushrooms	Yam	Fennel
squash	Parsnips	Okra (Opt for	Plantain
Black beans	Spinach	canned okra	Radish
Brussel sprouts	Gourd Karela	to reduce	Aubergine
Courgette	Celery	potassium	
	Broad Beans	content)	

Dairy Foods

Milk is high in potassium and is limited to half a pint (250ml) per day.

Milk used on cereals, in drinks, milk puddings (e.g. tinned milk puddings), sauces (e.g. white sauce) yoghurts and custard should be included in this allowance. You can use half water and half double cream as a milk substitute, this could be used for breakfast cereals.

If you have oat or rice milk you can have 3/4 of a pint (375ml) per day.

One carton of yogurt or fromage frais may be used instead of 1/3 pint of milk (170ml).

Ice cream contains milk so only have a small amount.

Cream, clotted cream, soured cream, crème fraiche, butter, ghee, margarine, fats and oils are suitable but care must be taken if you are trying to lose weight.

Avoid evaporated milk, condensed milk, Coffee Mate and sterilized milk drinks (e.g. Nesquik) because these are high in potassium.

Meat, Fish and Alternatives

Meat, poultry, fish, beans and pulses are important to provide you with protein. These foods can be eaten freely unless otherwise advised by your dietitian. Eggs are also a good source of protein and you can have up to 5 per week unless advised otherwise by your dietitian.

Vegetarian Diet

If you follow a vegetarian diet it is important to include pulses. If using dried beans, peas or lentils it is best to soak them, boil them in plenty of water (throw the water away) and then use in your dish or opt for tinned (and drained) lentils and pulses.

Quorn, Tofu, textured vegetable protein and Soya are suitable options when following a low potassium diet. They are low fat alternatives to meat or fish and good sources of protein for a vegetarian diet.

Soup

(Fresh, tinned, packet, pouch, homemade)

Soup is made from the water from vegetables and is very high in potassium. It is best to avoid soup and find an alternative.

Cereals and Grains

Any cereals which do not contain chocolate, cocoa, coconut, dried fruit, nuts or bran are suitable e.g.

Rice	Flour
Pasta	Baking Powder
Sago	Bicarbonate of Soda
Noodles	Oats
Tapioca	Yorkshire pudding
Ground Rice	Semolina
Pancakes	Cornflour
Pastry	Millet
Breakfast Cereals	Porridge (Not instant or sachets)
Cheerios	Weetabix
Shredded Wheat	Puffed Wheat
Shreddies	Cornflakes
Special K	Rice Krispies

Avoid potato flour.

Do not eat cereals containing nuts, coconut, dried fruit, chocolate or cocoa e.g.

Fruit and fibre	Raisin splitz	Muesli
Saltana Bran	Raisin wheats	

Also avoid All Bran, Bran Flakes, Bran, Cream of Tartar and Gram Flour. You can use rice or corn flour as alternative.

Bread

Most bread and bread products are suitable e.g.

White, brown or wholemeal bread	Tortilla
Crisp breads (avoid rye crisp bread)	Crumpets
Bread sticks	Muffins
Cracker bread	Chapatti
Naan bread	Plain Roti
Garlic bread	Croissants
Prawn crackers	Rice Cakes
Crackers	

Avoid fruit bread, malt bread and bread with seeds or nuts.

Crisps And Snacks

Snacks made from maize, wheat, rice or corn are suitable if they are not consumed too often (remember these are high in salt and fat) e.g.

Tortilla chips	Pretzels
Nik Naks	Wheat Crunchies
Corn crisps	Prawn crackers
Popcorn	Snack-a-jacks

Many snacks may contain potassium chloride so it is important to check the ingredients list and avoid this.

Potato snacks should be avoided e.g. Crisps, Hula hoops, Potato Puffs, Chip Sticks, Quavers.

Nuts should be avoided e.g. peanuts, cashews, pecans, almonds, hazelnuts, coconut, marzipan, peanut butter, marzipan.

Twiglets, Oriental mix, Bombay mix should be avoided.

Cakes, Biscuits, Pastries, Puddings and Desserts

Many cakes, biscuits, pastries and desserts are suitable if you are on a potassium restriction but care should be taken with these foods if you have diabetes or if you are trying to lose weight.

Cakes	Biscuits	Puddings / desserts
Victoria sponge	Digestive	Trifle
Jam sponge	Rich Tea	Cheesecake
Cherry cake	Marie	Pancake
Fruit pie	Arrowroot	Lemon meringue pie
Madeira cake	Lincoln	Pavlova
Doughnut	Shortbread	Yogurt
Cream horn	Cream Crackers	Fromage frais
Apple slice	Water Biscuits	Semolina
Danish pastry	Ginger Biscuits	Tapioca
Plain scone	Cream / jam filled biscuits	Fruit pie / crumble
Meringue		Syrup sponge

Avoid cakes, biscuits pastries or desserts which contain chocolate, cocoa, nuts, dried fruit, coconut, evaporated or condensed milk e.g.

Chocolate Cake	Chocolate biscuits	Chocolate mousse
Christmas cake	Garibaldi biscuits	Christmas Pudding
Banana Cake	Fig Rolls	Banoffee Pie
Date and Walnut cake	Nut biscuits	Chocolate Pudding
Coffee Cake	Amoretti biscuits	Chocolate sauce
Eccles Cake	Baklava	Banana Split
Mince Pies	Bread and butter	Malt loaf pudding
Coconut cake	Gajar Halwa	Fruit cake
Mango Pulp	Ras Malai	Kulfi

Sweets and Treats

The following foods are suitable if you are on a potassium restriction but care should be taken with these foods if you have diabetes or if you are trying to lose weight.

Peppermints	Marshmallows	Lockets
Mints	Turkish Delight	Tunes
Skittles	Wine Gums	Barley Sugars
Starburst	Fruit Pastilles	Boiled sweets
Tooty fruities	Jelly tots	Candy tots
Jelly Babies	Fruit bonbons	Jalebi

These foods are high in potassium and should be avoided or eaten in very small amounts.

Chocolate	Toffee	Chocolate spread
Fudge	Caramel	Jaggery
Marzipan Sweets	Treacle	Carob
Sugared Almonds	Molasses	Aggala
Chocolate Brazils	Liquorice	Barfi

Condiments

Many condiments are suitable when you are on a low potassium diet.

Mayonnaise	Piccalilli	Jam	Honey
Salad Cream	Mustard	Redcurrant jelly	Marmalade
Vinaigrette	Horseradish	Tartar sauce	Lemon curd
Vinegar	Mint Sauce	Chutney	Mango chutney
Pepper	Herb Cubes	Pickle	Gravy granules

The following are high in potassium and should be avoided:

Tomato relish	Tomato sauce	Marmite
Tomato ketchup	Tomato puree	Tahini
Nut butters	Pesto	Instant soups

Herbs and Spices

Herbs, curry spices, coriander, chilli, garlic and ginger can be used as required. Turmeric is high in potassium and should be consumed in moderation. If you use a lot of herbs and spices in your cooking or use them regularly speak to your dietitian who can advise you on suitable choices.

Drinks

The following drinks are allowed within your fluid allowance:

Water (tap / bottled)	Squash / cordial
Flavoured water	Tonic Water
Tea/ lemon tea	Soda Water
Fizzy drinks e.g. Lemonade, Lucozade	Spirits e.g. whisky, rum, brandy, vodka
Ginger beer	

Always check with your doctor if it is safe for you to drink alcohol.

The drinks below are high in potassium and should be avoided:		
Coffee	Fruit Juice	Beer
Hot chocolate / cocoa	Ribena	Cider
Oxo / Bovril	High Juice	Ale
Bournvita	Vegetable Juice	Lager
Build up	Lassi	Port / Sherry
Complan	Nutriment	Wine
Malted drinks (Ovaltine / Horlicks)		Alcopops
Milkshake (e.g. Nesquik)	Fruit punch	

Things to remember

It is the total potassium content of your diet that is important rather than individual foods. By taking care of your diet you can ensure that the potassium in your blood is at the right level.

Notes

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This diet sheet was given to you by:

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact one of the renal dietitians.

Telephone: 01902 695335
 between 8.30am to 5:00pm
 (excluding weekends and bank holidays)

Nutrition and Dietetic Department
 New Cross Hospital
 Wolverhampton
 WV10 0QP

Further information about following a low potassium diet can be found online at:
www.kidney.org.uk/help-and-info/medical-information-from-the-nkf-/medical-info-factsheets-potassium

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。