

Controlling potassium (K⁺)

Potassium is needed for your heart, nerves and muscles to work properly. Healthy kidneys keep the level of blood potassium in a very narrow range, by removing excess potassium in urine.

If your kidneys are not working properly, potassium may build up in your blood. There are usually no symptoms of a high potassium level. Regular blood tests will check your potassium level.

High levels of potassium are **very dangerous**, and may cause your heart to beat irregularly and even stop beating.

Careful attention to your diet will help to reduce high potassium levels.

Potassium has no smell or taste, and is found in many foods.

Foods which are high in potassium, as listed below, should be **avoided** when your levels are high.

WHAT FOODS ARE HIGH IN POTASSIUM?

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

All fruits and vegetables are high in potassium, if you eat large amounts.

Eat **no more than TWO (2) serves** of fruit each day (1 serve is a piece of fruit the size of a small apple or orange, ½ cup tinned fruit (drained), or ½ cup juice).

Eat **no more than FOUR (4) SMALL serves** of vegetables each day (1 serve is ½ medium sized potato, ½ cup of cooked vegetables, or 1 cup salad vegetables).

To reduce potassium in fruits & vegetables:

- ◆ limit high potassium fruits and vegetables

HIGH POTASSIUM FRUITS to limit

- ◇ apricots, banana, mango, peach, pineapple, nectarine, custard apple, dried fruit, kiwi fruit, orange/orange & mango/pineapple juice

HIGH POTASSIUM VEGETABLES to limit

- ◇ artichoke, avocado, baked beans, soybeans, kidney beans, hot chips, parsnip, potato, pumpkin, sweet potato, spinach, tomato, potato salad, vegetable juice, tomato juice

Smart Food Preparation

- ◆ peel all fruit and vegetables where possible
- ◆ chop vegetables into small pieces
- ◆ boil vegetables well - do not microwave, steam or stir fry.
- ◆ drain the juice from tinned or stewed fruit

OTHER HIGH POTASSIUM FOODS

◇ treacle, molasses, golden syrup	◇ potato crisps, hot chips
◇ Vegemite	◇ yoghurt
◇ Nuts, peanut butter	◇ milk or soy milk : have less than 1 cup (250mL) each day
◇ seeds - sunflower, pumpkin	◇ evaporated or condensed milk
◇ dried fruit and nut mixes	◇ percolated coffee
◇ cocoa	◇ red wine
◇ chocolate, chocolate chips	◇ fruit cake
◇ coconut milk or cream, fresh coconut	◇ <i>All Bran, Bran Plus</i> , muesli or cereal with a lot of dried fruit and nuts
◇ heavy grain breads	◇ salt substitutes
◇ Worcestershire sauce	◇ tomato soup, tomato sauces, tomato paste
◇ canned or homemade vegetable soups	
◇ liquorice	

Note: Nutrition information panels on packaged foods no longer display potassium. This does not mean a food is free of potassium.

Your potassium levels should be checked by regular blood tests.