Managing Potassium for Children & Adolescents

Potassium (K+) 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. 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.

**Ways to lower potassium in your blood:**

- Eat less of the foods that are high in potassium
- Eat enough energy for growth and body maintenance to avoid weight loss
- Ensure you diet contains plenty of fibre rich foods to prevent constipation.

**What foods are high in potassium?**
Potassium has no smell or taste, and is found in many foods, of which plant foods are the highest. Foods which are high in potassium, as listed on the table below, should be avoided when your levels are high.

Your dietitian will give you a guide on how many serves of fruit and vegetables to eat every day.

**Try to include additional LOW potassium** vegetables and fruit such as apple, pear, strawberries, green beans, beetroot, cucumber, capsicum and lettuce to ensure an adequate vitamin, mineral and dietary fibre intake.
## What foods are HIGH in potassium?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruits and vegetables</th>
<th>Other foods</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Fruit juice, apricots, avocado, banana, custard apple, rock melon, mango, pineapple, nectarine, peach, dried fruit</td>
<td>- Potato crisps, hot chips</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Vegetable juice, potato, pumpkin, sweet potato, tomato, baked beans, chickpeas, kidney beans, parsnip, spinach, artichoke.</td>
<td>- Tomato sauces, tomato paste</td>
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**Reduce potassium in fruit and vegetables by preparing as follows:**

- **Peel** all fruit and vegetables
- **Drain** the juice from tinned/stewed fruit
- **Chop** vegetables into small pieces
- **Double boil** vegetables (do not microwave, steam or stir fry): bring to boil in plenty of water, discard water and add fresh water then boil again until cooked.

- Nuts, peanut butter, seeds (sunflower, pumpkin)
- Vegemite
- Dried fruit and nut mixes, fruit cake
- Cocoa, chocolate
- Liquorice
- Cow’s milk, soy milk, yoghurt, custard, evaporated or condensed milk (limit amount)
- Coconut milk or cream, fresh coconut
- Heavy grain breads, dark rye bread
- Commercial and homemade vegetable soups
- Cereals with a lot of dried fruit, nuts and bran
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.

Things I can do to improve my potassium levels:

1. 

2. 

3. 

For further information contact your Dietitian/Nutritionist:

Name: ___________________________

Contact number: ___________________