

## Facts on Potassium for Children & Adolescents

Potassium (K<sup>+</sup>) 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.

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 to ensure your blood level remain stable. Whilst managing a low potassium diet it is important to encourage healthy food choices and establish a healthy eating pattern during childhood.

**Use the following list as a guide to help manage potassium intake in the diet.**

### FRUIT

- Fruits are generally high in potassium
- Choose small pieces & have 2-3 pieces per day
- 1 serve is ½ cup or one small fruit
- Tinned fruit is generally lower in potassium as long as the juice is drained

Encourage	Occasional	Avoid
Low Potassium		High Potassium
Plums White grapes Berries – blueberries, strawberries, raspberries Apple Pear Passionfruit Rhubarb	Watermelon Mandarin Grapes – green & black Pineapple – canned Peach – canned Nectarine & peach (1 small) Orange (1 small) Kiwi fruit (1)	Banana Rockmelon & honeydew melon Mango Pineapple – fresh Apricots – fresh & tinned Avocado Dried fruit Fruit juice

## VEGETABLES

- Have 4-5 serves per day
- 1 serve is ½ cup of cooked, fresh, frozen vegetables, 1 cup of raw salad or ½ potato
- Frozen vegetables cooked in water will have less potassium than fresh vegetables
- Choose small serves of beans, peas, carrots, pumpkin & potato
- Double boil vegetables in plenty of water - avoid steaming, roasting, frying or microwaving

<b>Encourage</b> Low Potassium	<b>Occasional</b> Have 1 serve per day	<b>Avoid</b> High Potassium
Lettuce Cucumber Carrot Capsicum Celery Snowpeas (10) Mushrooms – raw Zucchini Eggplant Cauliflower Asparagus Onion Fresh or canned beans & peas	Potato/ sweet potato* Pumpkin Parsnip Tomato (1 medium) Tinned tomato Kidney beans Corn	Spinach Baked beans 3 bean mix Dried beans, peas Lentils Artichoke Tomato paste Avocado (1/4) Vegetable juice Vegetable soup

\*POTATOES are particularly high in potassium. Cut into small pieces. Soak in water for ½ hour. Discard the water. Boil until soft in two changes of water. Potato prepared in this way may be stored in the fridge for later use, roasted or fried.

## DAIRY

- All dairy foods are high in potassium
- Have ~2 serves low fat dairy products per day
- 1 serve is 1 cup of milk, ¾ cup of yogurt or 30g (2 slices) of cheese

<b>Encourage</b> Low Potassium	<b>Occasional</b>	<b>Avoid</b> High Potassium
Yellow cheese: cheddar, mozzarella, swiss White cheese: ricotta, cottage (2 tbsp) Cream cheese Oat, Rice & Almond milk Formula – S26, Nan 1	Yoghurt Fruche Custard (made with formula for infants) Regular & Soy milk (1/2 cup)	Condensed or evaporated milk Coconut milk or cream

## BREADS & CEREALS

- Have 5 serves per day
- 1 serve is 1 slice of bread, ½ cup cooked rice/ pasta/noodles, 2/3 cup cereal or 3 crispbreads
- High fibre, grain and wholemeal varieties of breads and cereals are high in potassium
- Avoid bread and cereals with fruit and nuts

<b>Encourage</b> Low Potassium	<b>Occasional</b>	<b>Avoid</b> High Potassium
<b>Breads</b>		
White bread/ roll – of all kinds	White crumpets & pikelets Plain scone English muffin (white)	Wholemeal, multigrain, rye breads Fruit loaf, fruit muffins or scones
<b>Breakfast Cereals</b>		
Oats (1/2 cup cooked) Plain cereals: Special K, Rice Bubbles, Cornflakes Infant cereal	Weetbix (2 biscuits) Nutri-grain	Wholemeal/ bran cereals: Allbran, Just Right Fruit cereals: Sultana Bran, muesli
<b>Rice, Pasta, Noodles, Crispbreads</b>		
Plain (white) pasta, rice, lasagne Rice & egg noodles Cous cous Plain savoury biscuits: Watercrackers (8) Plain rice cakes, Sao, Premium	Barley Wholemeal crispbread (2) Jatz	Wholemeal or brown varieties of pasta in meat/ tomato/ cream based sauces Wholemeal or wholegrain biscuits
<b>Flour</b>		
White flour Corn flour		Wholemeal flour

## MEAT PRODUCTS & ALTERNATIVES

- Have 1 – 2 ½ serves per day
- 1 serve is 65g of cooked meat (beef, lamb, pork), 80g cooked chicken or turkey, 100g cooked fish or 2 eggs

<b>Encourage</b> Low Potassium	<b>Occasional</b>	<b>Avoid</b> High Potassium
<b>Meats</b>		
Eggs Tinned fish, Fish fingers (2x) Beef, lamb, veal, ham	Cooked fish – tuna & salmon	Cooked fish – snapper

Turkey, chicken		
<b>Alternatives</b>		
Tofu Chickpeas (tinned, drained)		Nuts – cashews, peanuts, almonds Lentils and beans Nut spreads i.e. peanut butter Seeds i.e. sunflower and pumpkin

## OTHER FOODS

<b>Encourage</b> Low Potassium	<b>Occasional</b>	<b>Avoid</b> High Potassium
<b>Spreads &amp; condiments</b>		
Jam Honey Margarine	Soy sauce Oyster sauce	Vegemite, Marmite, Promite Nutella, Peanut butter Golden syrup Tomato sauce
<b>Savoury</b>		
Corn chips, popcorn		Potato chips – all varieties Hot chips
<b>Beverages</b>		
Water Cordial	Fruit juice drink (small quantity)	Fruit juice Flavoured milk, milkshakes Drinking chocolate – Milo

## 'TREAT' FOODS

- These foods should only be consumed occasionally
- They are not essential in a healthy diet and most are high in fat, sugar and/or salt

<b>Encourage</b> Low Potassium	<b>Occasional</b>	<b>Avoid</b> High Potassium
Plain lollies e.g. Jelly Beans, boiled lollies, jubes Ice cream toppings Plain sweet biscuits or cake Cream biscuits, scotchfingers Sponge cake Meringues Jelly, water ice blocks Custard	Ice cream	Chocolate Licorice, fudge, coconut ice Toffees & caramels Chocolate flavouring - cocoa Biscuits or cake containing: dried fruit, nuts, coconut, cocoa cheesecake wholemeal or grain varieties

Acknowledgement to the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics at Sydney Children's Hospital for sharing their resource.

**Things I can do to reduce my potassium intake:**

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***Dietitian contact details:***

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