

WHAT IS POTASSIUM?

Potassium is a mineral that is found in many foods. It keeps the heart beating regularly and allows the nerves and muscles to work properly.

WHY SHOULD I REDUCE POTASSIUM IN MY DIET?

Normally, the level of potassium in your body is balanced by eating foods that contain potassium and getting rid of excess potassium in the urine. However, some people with chronic kidney disease cannot get rid of enough potassium in their urine because their kidneys do not work well.

HOW DO I CUT DOWN ON POTASSIUM?

Almost all foods contain some potassium, so the key is to limit or avoid foods that have a high potassium content and substitute these with low-potassium containing foods. The following list can help identify which foods are better for your kidneys:

Foods that are HIGH in Potassium:

Grains - Whole-grain breads, wheat bran, granola

Beverages - Sports drinks (i.e. Gatorade), instant breakfast mix, soy milk

Snack Foods - Peanut butter, nuts/seeds, chocolate

Fruits - Apricots, avocado, bananas, cantaloupe, mango, oranges, orange juice, papaya, plantains, pomegranate, prunes, raisins, tomato and tomato-based products

Vegetables - Artichoke, bamboo shoots, beans/legumes, broccoli, brussels sprouts, deep-colored and leafy green vegetables (such as spinach or swiss chard), olives, mushrooms, potatoes, pickles, pumpkin, squash

Dairy - Milk and milk products, buttermilk, yogurt

Condiments - Imitation bacon bits, salt substitutes

Foods that are LOW in Potassium:

Grains - Foods prepared with white flour (i.e. pasta, bread), white rice, crackers

Beverages - Lemonade, fruit punch, drink mixes (i.e. Kool-Aid), tea, coffee

Snack Foods - Angel or yellow cake, pies or cookies without chocolate or nuts

Fruits - Apples, blackberries, blueberries, cherries, cranberries, grapes, grapefruit, peaches, pineapple, raspberries

Vegetables - Asparagus, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, corn, cucumber, eggplant, iceberg lettuce, onions, green peas, green peppers, radish, water chestnuts

Dairy - Cheddar/swiss/mozzarella cheese, cottage cheese

General Tips:

- Read food labels: Potassium content is not required by law to be listed on the food label under “Nutrition Facts”, so be sure to check the ingredient list. If potassium chloride is in the ingredient list, it has a high potassium content. Also, a product marked as “low sodium” may have potassium added.
- Potatoes may be included in your diet if prepared in the following manner:
 - Peel and cut potatoes into small pieces.
 - Soak potatoes in a large amount of water for at least 24 hours, discarding and adding fresh water frequently or soak overnight.
 - Discard water, add fresh water and bring to a boil. Simmer 30 minutes and drain.
 - The cooked potatoes can be served as is or can be mashed or oven-browned.

Please contact our office at 314-548-0265 with any questions or if you would like to schedule an appointment with a renal dietician.