Potassium Restricted Diet

If you have a medical condition that may cause high potassium levels, it is very important to limit foods rich in potassium from your daily diet. When blood potassium levels become too high, it can lead to muscle weakness, irregular heart beat, and in severe cases, death. Limiting potassium in your diet can help keep your blood potassium levels normal.

Talk to your doctor or dietitian to learn how much potassium you should have each day. A potassium restricted diet is often 2,000 milligrams (mg) or less per day.

About potassium

- Potassium is found in most foods. Fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, peanut butter and milk are very high in potassium.
- Food labels may help you limit potassium. Read food labels, pay attention to serving sizes and eat small portions. Look for the word “potassium” in the ingredient list and under the % Daily Value (DV). Remember, just because the food does not list potassium, this does not mean it is potassium free.

Avoid these fruits and vegetables high in potassium

While this is not a full list of all fruits and vegetables that should be limited or avoided, it may help you get started. Avoid all foods that have more than 200 mg of potassium per serving or more than 6% of the Daily Value (DV) per serving.

** Most beans are high in potassium. Read the food label for exceptions.

- Apricots (raw)
- Artichokes
- Avocado
- Banana
- Beans**, such as baked, black and refried
- Beets
- Broccoli (cooked)
- Brussel sprouts
- Cantaloupe
- Carrots (raw) and juice
- Chickpeas
- Coconut water
- Dates
- Dried fruit, such as prunes and raisins
- Honeydew melon
- Kiwi
- Kohlrabi
- Legumes
- Lentils
- Mango
- Mushrooms (boiled and canned)
- Nectarine
- Okra
- Orange
- Orange juice
- Papaya
- Parsnips
- Plantain
- Pomegranates and pomegranate juice
- Potato (non-leached) including French fries and potato chips
- Prunes and prune juice
- Pumpkin
- Spinach
- Split peas
- Sweet potato (non-leached)
- Swiss chard
- Tangelo
- Tomatoes, pastes, sauce and juice
- V8 vegetable juice
- Winter squash, such as acorn and butternut
- Yams (non-leached)
Limit these fruits and vegetables

Eating several low potassium foods can be the same as eating a food high in potassium. **Foods low potassium have less than 200 mg of potassium per serving** or less than 6% of the Daily Value (DV) per serving.

Limit these fruits and vegetables to 4 servings per day. One serving equals ½ cup unless listed differently.

- Apple and apple juice (1 medium)
- Applesauce
- Apricots (canned)
- Asparagus (6 spears)
- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Boysenberries
- Broccoli (raw or cooked from frozen)
- Cabbage
- Carrots, cooked
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Cherries (12 Cherries)
- Corn (frozen or ½ ear)
- Cranberries
- Cucumber
- Eggplant
- Fruit cocktail
- Grapefruit and grapefruit juice
- Grapes
- Green beans
- Kale
- Lettuce
- Mandarin oranges (canned)
- Mushrooms (fresh)
- Onion
- Parsley
- Peaches (canned or 1 small fresh)
- Pears (canned or 1 small fresh)
- Peas
- Peppers
- Pineapple
- Pineapple juice
- Plums (1 medium)
- Radishes
- Raspberries
- Rhubarb
- Strawberries
- Tangerine (1 medium)
- Watermelon (1 cup)
- Yellow Squash
- Zucchini

Other foods to limit or avoid

- Bran and foods made with it
- Chocolate (up to 1.5-2.0 oz per day)
- Coffee (up to 8 oz)
- Granola
- Ice Cream
- Liver
- Milk (all types, limit to 1 cup a day)
- Molasses (up to 1 Tbsp)
- Nuts and Seeds (up to 1 oz)
- Peanut butter (up to 2 Tbsp)
- Tea (up to 16 oz)
- Tempeh
- Yogurt

Tips to lower potassium

- Avoid drinking or using the liquid from canned products and juices from cooked meats as they are a concentrated source of potassium.
- When buying canned fruits, look for “lite syrup” on the label. Drain all liquid off canned fruits.
- Choose foods that contain less than 200 mg of potassium per serving.
- Never use salt substitutes that contain potassium. Use herbs and spices instead.
Leaching¹

Potatoes (white and sweet) as well as carrots, beets and winter squash can be leached before cooking to remove some of the potassium. Peel the potato or other vegetable and cut into small pieces, such as chopped, thin slices or grated. Cover completely with a large amount of water.

- Boiling method (best method): Boil for at least 10 minutes. The potassium will be reduced by at least half by cooking, but will still have 100 to 200 milligrams in a ½ cup serving.
- Soaking method: Soak potatoes or other vegetables in a large amount of water at room temperature for 4 hours or overnight. Drain the water off and then cook.

A ½ cup serving of leached vegetables is the same as one serving of a high potassium vegetable.

For more information

To learn more about high potassium, visit the National Kidney Foundation at www.kidney.org.