



Patient education: High-potassium diet (The Basics)

Written by the doctors and editors at UpToDate

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Why do I need a high-potassium diet?

Potassium is a mineral found in many foods. The body needs the right amount of potassium to work well. If you do not have enough potassium in your blood, you can have problems like muscle weakness, irregular heartbeat, or kidney problems. The medical term for low potassium is "hypokalemia."

Your body can lose too much potassium if:

- You have had a lot of vomiting or diarrhea.
- You take a medicine called a "diuretic" – These medicines make you urinate much more than usual.

Hypokalemia is usually treated with potassium supplements. But what you eat can also affect your potassium level. Learn how much potassium is in the food you eat. Read food labels carefully to see if they list how much potassium is in a serving. Reading the labels helps you make healthy food choices.

Follow your doctor's instructions about how much potassium to eat.

What can I eat and drink on a high-potassium diet?

All kinds of foods can have potassium in them. Some have more potassium than others ([table 1](#)).

- Grains – Whole-grain breads, wheat bran, granola, granola bars.
- Fruits – Apricots, avocado, bananas, coconut, melons, kiwi, mango, nectarines, oranges, orange juice, papaya, plantains, pomegranate (and juice), dried fruits (apricots, dates, figs, prunes, raisins), prune juice, yams, grapefruit, grapefruit juice.

- Vegetables – Bamboo shoots, baked or refried beans, beets, broccoli (cooked), Brussels sprouts, cabbage (Chinese), carrots (raw), chard (cooked), greens (except kale), kohlrabi, mushrooms (white, cooked), potatoes (white and sweet), yams, parsnips, pickles, pumpkin, rutabaga, sauerkraut, spinach (cooked), squash (acorn, butternut, Hubbard), tomato, tomato sauce, tomato juice, vegetable juice cocktail, beets, artichokes, okra.
- Dairy – Milk and milk products, buttermilk, yogurt.
- Lean meats, poultry, seafood, and proteins – Clams, sardines, scallops, lobster, whitefish, salmon (and most other fish), ground beef, sirloin steak (and most other beef products), refried beans, tofu, adzuki beans, legumes (lentils, pinto beans, kidney beans, black beans, navy beans), nut butter, nuts, most seeds.
- Other foods and drinks – Imitation bacon bits, salt substitutes, "lite" salt made with potassium, chocolate, salt-free broth, molasses, nutritional supplements (sample brand names: Ensure, Boost), coconut water.

What foods and drinks should I avoid on a high-potassium diet?

There are no foods to avoid on this diet.

What else can I do to increase the potassium in my food?

Some tips to help keep the potassium in the foods you eat:

- Eat fresh fruits and vegetables whenever possible.
- Think about how you store or cook your foods. Both freezing and boiling lower the amount of potassium in a food.
- Rinse foods to clean them instead of soaking them in water. Soaking foods in water lowers the amount of potassium.
- Cook foods with as little water as possible. Use the water that the food was cooked in to cook other foods, because it contains a lot of potassium.
- Choose salt substitutes and low-sodium foods. These often use potassium to replace the salt.

More on this topic

Patient education: Hypokalemia (The Basics)

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This topic retrieved from UpToDate on: Mar 28, 2024.

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Topic 142968 Version 1.0

GRAPHICS

Some foods that are high in potassium

Fruits	Vegetables	Proteins	Other
▪ Avocado ▪ Bananas ▪ Coconut ▪ Cantaloupe and honeydew melons ▪ Dates ▪ Dried fruits ▪ Figs ▪ Kiwi ▪ Mango ▪ Nectarines ▪ Oranges and orange juice ▪ Prunes and prune juice ▪ Raisins	▪ Artichokes ▪ Baked beans ▪ Beets ▪ Broccoli ▪ Brussels sprouts ▪ Cabbage (raw) ▪ Carrots (raw) ▪ Chard ▪ Olives ▪ Potatoes (white and sweet) ▪ Pickles ▪ Pumpkin ▪ Rutabaga ▪ Squash (acorn, butternut, hubbard) ▪ Tomatoes and tomato juice	▪ Black beans ▪ Clams ▪ Ground beef ▪ Kidney beans ▪ Lobster ▪ Navy beans ▪ Pinto beans ▪ Salmon ▪ Sardines ▪ Scallops ▪ Steak ▪ Whitefish	▪ Chocolate ▪ Dairy products ▪ Granola ▪ Milk ▪ Peanut butter ▪ Soups that are salt-free or low-sodium ▪ Soy milk ▪ Sports drinks ▪ Tomato sauce ▪ Wheat bran and bran products ▪ Whole-grain bread ▪ Yogurt

The foods on this list are high in potassium. People who need to follow a low-potassium diet should **avoid or limit** these foods.

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