

Potassium Management in Kidney Disease

- ▶ Potassium is a mineral in your body. It helps nerves, muscles and the heart work properly.



- Healthy kidneys remove potassium from your body. When your kidneys don't work as well, potassium levels may become high.
- Signs of high potassium are tingling in your toes and fingers, muscle weakness, and irregular heartbeat.
- There are different ways to help you manage your potassium level.
- Your dietitian along with your healthcare team will help you.

What can I do if my potassium level is too high?



- 1. Choose fresh foods more often.** Your body absorbs less potassium from fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Processed foods, juices, soups and sauces are more likely to affect your potassium level.
 - Eat a balanced diet. Include a variety of vegetables and fruits, whole grains, and protein foods like tofu, legumes, eggs, meat, poultry and fish.
- 2. Enjoy protein foods in moderation.** Eating too much protein can raise your potassium level. Replace some of your meats with plant-based proteins like lentils or legumes. Talk to your dietitian about how much protein is right for you.

3. Limit Additives: Some packaged foods have potassium additives which are easily absorbed by your body. Potassium additives are often used as salt substitutes or as preservatives. Look for the word “potassium” in the ingredient list. Eat less processed or packaged foods to limit potassium additives.



Examples of potassium additives:

- Potassium chloride
- Potassium lactate
- Potassium phosphate
- Potassium citrate

Read the ingredient list on the package.
See the example below:

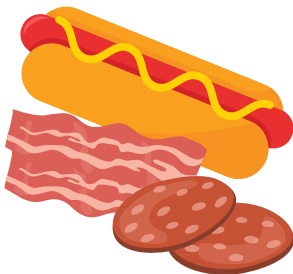
Precooked Chicken Breast Strips

Nutrition Facts	
Serving size	4 Pieces (100g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	110
<small>% Daily Value*</small>	
Total Fat 1.5g	2%
Saturated Fat 0.4g	2%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 45mg	15%
Sodium 390mg	17%
Total Carbohydrate 1g	0%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Total Sugars 0g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 22g	44%
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 10mg	0%
Iron 0.5mg	2%
Potassium 950mg	20%

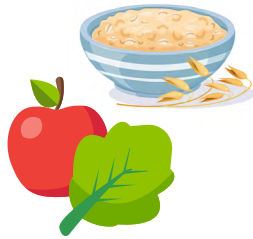
*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Ingredients: Chicken breast, water, **potassium lactate**, canola oil, soy protein, modified corn starch, dehydrated chicken flavour, sodium phosphate, salt, sodium diacetate, dehydrated garlic, dehydrated onion, sea salt.
Contains: soy.

Here are some examples of foods that may contain potassium additives:



- Processed meats (e.g. ham, hot dogs, bacon, deli meats, vegetarian meat substitutes)
- Electrolyte beverages (e.g. Gatorade™)
- Salt substitutes (e.g. No Salt™)
- Powdered drink mixes
- “Low Sodium” processed foods (e.g. low sodium deli meats, vegetable juice, canned soups, pickles, ketchup and cheese)



4. Boost your fibre intake by eating whole grains, fruits, vegetables and legumes to keep bowel movements regular. Regular bowel movements can remove excess potassium from the body.

- Exercise to help prevent constipation.
- Drink the recommended amount of fluid. Choose water most often and avoid high potassium beverages like juice.
- Ask your healthcare team about safe bowel medications.



5. Cooking methods. You can reduce the amount of potassium in some foods using the following methods.

- **Boiling twice (“double boiling”):** In lots of water, boil peeled and cut higher-potassium root vegetables (e.g. potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams), then drain the water. Add fresh water and boil again, then drain water and rinse before using. This reduces potassium by about 50%. This is the most effective way to reduce potassium.
- **Draining:** Drain and rinse all canned vegetables and legumes prior to using.
- **Soaking:** In lots of water, soak dry legumes (beans, chickpeas, lentils, split peas, etc.) at room temperature for up to 8 hours, then drain water and rinse legumes before cooking. For higher-potassium root vegetables, after peeling and cutting up, soak in lots of water for 2-4 hours and drain water before cooking.
- **Boiling:** In lots of water, boil higher-potassium root vegetables for 5-10 minutes, then drain water and rinse vegetables before eating. You can do this in advance for vegetables that you might add to soups or stews.



6. Be active every day. Exercise can help lower potassium levels.

7. Keep blood sugars in your target range if you have diabetes. Higher blood sugars can cause potassium levels to rise.



8. If you are on dialysis, stay for your whole run to help remove potassium from your blood.

Examples of High Potassium Foods

These foods are most likely to affect your potassium level. Limit these foods if your potassium level is high. Talk to your dietitian about your food choices.

Minimally processed or whole foods	Processed	Processed with potassium additives
 <p>Potatoes (unless double boiled)</p>	 <p>Chocolate bars</p>	 <p>Salt substitutes</p>
 <p>Tomato sauce</p>	 <p>Tomato-based soups</p>	 <p>Processed meats/ Ham / Hot dogs</p>
 <p>Dried fruits</p>	 <p>Fruit/vegetable juices</p>	 <p>Low sodium dill pickles</p>
 <p>Coconut water/ Coconut milk</p>	 <p>Chocolate milk</p>	 <p>Low sodium canned soups</p>
 <p>Dairy products/ Soy milk (Limit to 1 cup/day)</p>	 <p>Potato chips</p>	 <p>Low Sodium V8 Juice</p>
 <p>Coffee (Limit to 2 cups/day)</p>	 <p>French fries</p>	 <p>Breaded strips/ Nuggets</p>



***Note:** Natural health products may have added potassium (e.g. Glucosamine). Talk to your healthcare team to make sure they are safe for you to take.