Potassium is needed for your muscles to work, including your heart. Healthy kidneys keep the right amount of potassium in the blood to keep your heart beating at a steady pace. Potassium levels can rise between dialysis sessions affecting your heartbeat. Eating too much potassium can cause an irregular heartbeat that could result in death.

If your potassium level gets too high or too low this is very dangerous and you may experience weakness, nausea, tingling in your toes and fingers, diarrhea, difficulty breathing, and even cardiac arrest.

To control the potassium level in your blood, you need to choose foods and beverages wisely. While you can still eat your favorite foods, you need to know if they are high in potassium so you can limit how much you eat.

Canned fruits are lower in potassium than fresh fruits if the syrup is not consumed.

There are many other sources of potassium such as bran and bran products, chocolate, granola, milk, molasses, nutritional supplements, nuts and seeds, peanut butter, salt-free broth, yogurt, and snuff/chewing tobacco.

Check the labels on salt substitutes, because while they are great at lowering sodium intake, they do contain potassium and should be avoided.

Products labeled “low sodium” or “low salt” usually have potassium added, so check the label carefully. Some “low sodium” food products (such as soup) do not have potassium listed because the law does not require it. Once investigated, it is discovered that the potassium content is high. Be sure to speak with your dietitian if you are unsure of a food and its nutrient level.

Speak with your dietitian about your individual needs
### How To Reduce Potassium Amounts

**You can reduce the amount of potassium in potatoes and other root vegetables by using this process:**

- Peel and thinly slice vegetables.
- Using twice the amount of water per the amount of vegetables, place the vegetable slices in room temperature water.
- Bring the water to a boil.
- Drain the water and rinse the vegetables.
- Place the vegetable slices in clean, room temperature water that is twice the amount of water to vegetables.
- Bring the water to a boil.
- Cook until tender.
- Drain and prepare as desired.

**Fruits and Vegetables (All Portions are ½ Cup Unless Otherwise Noted)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Potassium 150 mg or less (2 servings per day)</th>
<th>Medium Potassium 151-200 mg (2 servings per day)</th>
<th>High Potassium 201 mg or more (1 serving per day)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>apple juice</td>
<td>apple, raw (1 large)</td>
<td>avocado (½)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apple sauce</td>
<td>apricots, raw (2 medium)</td>
<td>banana (½)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>berries: blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, gooseberries, raspberries, strawberries (5 medium) cranberries cranberry juice figs, canned fruit cocktail grapes, canned or raw (15 small) grape juice lemon or lime juice (1 medium) nectars: peach, pear, or apricot mandarin oranges peaches, canned pears, canned pineapple, raw or canned plums, canned rhubarb tangerine (2 ½” diameter) watermelon (1 slice 10” diameter, ½” thick) bamboo shoots bean sprouts beans, green and wax cabbage celery (1 stalk) cucumber eggplant hominy leek lettuce: romaine, iceberg, leaf, spinach, endive, watercress (1/2 cup shredded) mushrooms onion: green, red, yellow, white peppers, sweet or hot radishes turnips water chestnuts</td>
<td>grapefruit juice grapefruit (½ medium) peach, raw, 1 medium pear, raw (1 medium) pineapple juice plums, raw (2 medium) asparagus (4 spears) beets broccolli brussel sprouts (6-8 sprouts) carrots, raw (1 small) corn (canned or 1 small ear) greens: collard, mustard, kale, dandelion, beet, turnip mixed vegetables okra peas, green summer squash: yellow crookneck, white scallop, zucchini tomato (2 thin slices)</td>
<td>dates, prunes (5), raisins (4 Tablespoons) kiwi (small) mango melons: cantaloupe (¼ medium) casaba (¼ medium) nectarine (1 medium) orange (1 medium or 2 ½” diameter) orange juice papaya pomegranate (1 whole) prune juice tangelo or minneola (1 medium) artichoke dried beans and peas: kidney beans, lima beans, garbanzo (chick peas), navy, pinto, black-eyed peas pumpkin rutabaga spinach sweet potato or yam tomato, canned, sauce, juice unsalted tomato juice unsalted vegetable juice winter squash: acorn, butternut, hubbard, spaghetti marinara, spaghetti sauce V-8 juice Mushroom, portabella</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Resources include:** USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 21 Bowes & Church Food Values of Portions Commonly Used, 17th Ed. Pennington, JA Lippincott, 1998