

# POTASSIUM

A healthy potassium level is 3.5 -5.5 mg/dL

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.

***Potassium is found in many foods, especially, milk, fruits, vegetables, nuts and dried beans***



**Milk**



**Nuts**



**Tomatoes**



**Beans**



**Bananas**



**Potatoes**

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.

Double boiling method recommended per "Leaching Potassium from Tuberous Root Vegetables." Jerrilynn D. Burrowes, PhD, RD, CDN. Renal Nutrition Forum, Summer 2007, Vol. 26 No.3 [www.renalnutrition.org](http://www.renalnutrition.org)

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

**Low Potassium 150 mg or less**  
(2 servings per day)

apple juice  
apple sauce  
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 (½ cup shredded)  
mushrooms  
onion: green, red, yellow, white  
peppers, sweet or hot  
radishes  
turnips  
water chestnuts

**Medium Potassium 151-200 mg**  
(2 servings per day)

apple, raw (1 large)  
apricots, raw (2 medium)  
cherries, raw (16 medium)  
figs, raw (2 medium)  
grapefruit juice  
grapefruit (½ medium)  
peach, raw, 1 medium  
pear, raw (1 medium)  
pineapple juice  
plums, raw (2 medium)  
asparagus (4 spears)  
beets  
broccoli  
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)



**High Potassium 201 mg or more**  
(1 serving per day)

avocado (½)  
banana (½)  
dried fruits: figs, apricots (2 halves)  
dates, prunes (5), raisins (4 Tablespoons)  
kiwi (small)  
mango  
melons: cantaloupe (¼ medium)  
casaba (¾ 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