

**Nutrition and Dietetic Department**

**Low Potassium Diet**

**You should only follow a low potassium diet if you have**

**been advised by your healthcare professional to do so.**

**What is potassium?**

Potassium is a mineral found naturally in most foods and is needed as part of a healthy balanced diet. It is required to make sure your nerves and muscles work properly, including your heart.

**Why do you need to follow a low potassium diet?**

The amount of potassium in your blood is normally controlled by your kidneys. When your kidneys are not working properly the potassium level in your blood can become too high. Too much potassium in the blood can be dangerous as it can affect your heartbeat.

**Controlling your potassium level**

Potassium is found in many foods and drinks including fruits, vegetables, potatoes, milk and some snack foods. You may not need to avoid all high potassium foods, just reduce the amount of these foods you eat and consume them in moderation. Ask your doctor, nurse or dietitian for more detailed advice as they will have access to your blood test results showing how well controlled your potassium level is.

**A balanced diet**

Following a low potassium diet for a long time can make it difficult to maintain a well-balanced diet. You may find the information in this leaflet difficult to follow if you have a poor appetite or if you are already following a special diet for another condition. Ask to see the Dietitian as they can support you with this and provide you with personalised advice.

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|  | **Food to avoid or limit** | **Suitable alternatives** |
| **Fruit** | **Avoid**  Avocado, bananas, blackcurrants, coconut, dates, figs, oranges, apricots.  All dried fruit e.g. raisins, sultanas, currants, dried apricots, prunes etc.  **Starfruit** can cause dangerous side effects in people with kidney problems therefore it is recommended that you avoid this | All other fruits. Maximum of 3 portions per day.  **A portion is 80g or** **about a handful** e.g. one small apple, one clementine or about 10 grapes. |
| **Vegetables** | Vegetables which have not been boiled e.g. steamed, microwaved, raw.  Avoid using vegetable water to make gravy or soups.  **Avoid**  Fresh boiled beetroot, sundried tomatoes, tomato puree, dried mushrooms. | Maximum 3 servings of vegetables per day. (**One serving = 80 g or a heaped serving spoon**).  Ensure vegetables are boiled rather than steamed or microwaved. Par-boil vegetables before adding to casseroles/stir fries/roasting.  One small bowl salad can be eaten a day in place of a portion of vegetables. |
| **Potato and**  **other starchy foods** | Jacket potatoes  Takeaway, oven or microwave chips.  Manufactured potato products e.g. potato waffles, potato wedges, hash browns and instant mash.    Unboiled sweet potato, yam, cassava or taro. | Boiled potatoes, sweet potatoes, yam, cassava or taro.  Boil potatoes first and then roast or fry.  Have no more than 2-3 egg sized potatoes each day.  Pasta, rice, noodles, pastry, crackers, breads, crumpets, muffins. |
| **Breakfast**  **cereals** | Bran cereals e.g. All Bran, Grape Nuts.  Cereals containing nuts or dried fruit e.g. Muesli. Chocolate cereals. | Cereals free from nuts, dried fruit and chocolate e.g. Cornflakes, Weetabix,  Porridge, Shredded wheat, Rice Krispies etc. |
| **Milk and milk products** | Your recommended milk intake is 300 ml (½ pint) a day.  A small bowl custard/milk pudding or 120g/5oz pot yoghurt can be eaten in place of 200ml (1/3 pint) milk from your milk allowance. | Rice milk  Oat milk  Cream (all types), Crème fraiche  All types of cheese. |
| **Cakes and**  **biscuits** | Cakes and biscuits containing dried fruit, nuts or chocolate  e.g. fruit cake, malt loaf, shortbread, Garibaldi. | All other cakes and biscuits  e.g. digestives, rich tea, ginger, shortbread, iced/jam/cream biscuits, sponge cake, doughnuts, jam tarts. |

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|  | **Foods to avoid or limit** | **Suitable alternatives** |
| **Drinks** | Coffee, drinking chocolate, cocoa, malted drinks (Horlicks,  Ovaltine), fruit juice, vegetable juices, high juice squash and fruit smoothies. | Water, tonic/soda water, flavoured water, tea, Camp coffee, cordials, squash and fizzy drinks, e.g. lemonade, Lucozade. |
| **Snack foods** | Chocolate, toffee, liquorice, fudge, nuts and seeds  Potato crisps and potato snacks e.g. Hula Hoops, Quavers, vegetable crisps, Bombay Mix, Twiglets.  Snacks containing dried fruit, nuts or chocolate. | Boiled sweets, chewy sweets, fruit pastilles, marshmallows, mints, Turkish Delight,  Maize/corn based snacks, rice based snacks e.g. Wotsits, tortilla chips, rice cakes  Popcorn, breadsticks, pretzels |
| **Miscellan-eous** | Tomato ketchup, brown sauce, salt substitutes e.g. Lo-salt,  So-Lo, Low Sodium salt  Black treacle, mincemeat, peanut butter, chocolate spread, Marmite and Bovril. | Herbs, spices, pepper, vinegar, mayonnaise, salad cream, French dressing, stock cubes, and gravy granules.  Jam, marmalade, honey, lemon curd and golden syrup. |

**Cooking tips**

To lower potassium levels in vegetables and potatoes, it is important that they are cooked in the following way:

* Always peel potatoes before cooking
* Cut potatoes and vegetables into small pieces
* Avoid baking, frying and steaming raw vegetables unless these are par-boiled first
* Vegetables and potatoes should not be cooked in the microwave however it can be used to re heat foods



 

It is important to remember that each person has different dietary needs with their own individual blood results. The dietitian will provide specific advice tailored to your own individual needs if this is required.

**Meal ideas**

**Breakfast**

Cereals: Shredded wheat, puffed rice, Rice Krispies, Weetabix, porridge

Toast: All types of bread except granary, rolls, croissants, muffins and crumpets with margarine or reduced fat spread

Cooked breakfast once a week: Poached, fried, boiled or scrambled egg (maximum 2 eggs) with 2 rashers of bacon and ¼ tin baked beans

**Light meals/snacks**

Cheese and crackers (not rye crackers)

Sandwiches with fillings such as plain roast meat, tuna mayonnaise or egg and cress

Omelette with onion, ham or cheese

Breadsticks, pitta and hummus with salad (from vegetable allowance)

**Main meals**

Roast beef, lamb, pork, chicken or turkey served with boiled/mashed or pal boiled roast potatoes, boiled vegetables. Add a Yorkshire pudding, dumplings, stuffing, apple, mint or horseradish. Remember to include gravy in your fluid allowance.

Cottage/Shepherd’s pie

Cauliflower cheese with vegetables or salad

Spaghetti Bolognese or lasagne with garlic bread

Curry with rice

Meat/fish pie with parboiled chips

Fish in breadcrumbs with mashed potatoes, vegetables and parsley sauce (milk from fluid allowance)

**Desserts**

Yoghurt

Fruit pie or crumble

Meringue with fruit and cream

Canned fruit

Sorbet or ice cream

Milk pudding

Custard

Pancakes with syrup and one portion of fruit

Remember to include the relevant foods as part of your daily fruit, vegetable, milk and fluid allowances.

**Contact Information**

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