



## Patient Dietary Advice – Following a Low Potassium Diet

### What is potassium and why do I need to control it?

Potassium is a mineral found in many foods. Potassium helps to regulate muscle contraction, nerve signals and fluid balance in the body. Healthy kidneys remove excess potassium from the body when you pass urine. Too much or too little potassium in the blood can lead to an irregular heartbeat and muscle weakness.

### What should my potassium level be?

Your potassium level will be measured when you have your bloods taken. Your potassium level should be between 3.5 and 5.3 mmol/L; a level higher than 6 mmol/L is considered to be **unsafe**. Only follow a low potassium diet if you have been advised to do so by your doctor or dietitian.

### How do I control my potassium level?

Potassium is found naturally in a variety of foods and drinks. It may also be used as a food additive (potassium chloride) to replace salt in reduced salt products. The following tips can help you to reduce your potassium intake:

#### Avoid foods and salt substitutes that contain potassium chloride

Examples of additives and salt substitutes that are high in potassium		
Potassium chloride – Check food labels or ingredient lists for foods containing this.		
Salt substitute (others may exist)	Lo-Salt	Morton salt substitute
	Saxa So-Low	Nu-salt

#### Choose cooking methods that reduce the amount of potassium in your food

The way we cook vegetables and potatoes affects the potassium content. By boiling your vegetables you will be able to remove some of the potassium out into the water. Do not use the water in any sauces or gravies.

- Cut vegetables and potatoes in to small pieces and boil in a large volume of water
- Pre-boil vegetables before adding to soups and stews, stir fries, curries or roasting
- Avoid cooking vegetables in the microwave or steaming (the potassium content is higher)

## Reduce your intake of foods high in potassium

Reduce intake	Better choices
<p><b>Fruits:</b>  <b>Limit fruits to two small portions per day</b>            Restrict bananas, avocado, rhubarb, apricot, kiwi, dried fruit, coconut and blackcurrants</p>	<p>Apples, pears, canned fruit, satsumas, peaches, nectarines, berries, lemon/lime</p>
<p><b>Vegetables:</b>            Fried, roasted or chipped vegetables unless pre-boiled            Potato wedges, hash browns, waffles, instant mash            Stir fried, steamed and microwaved vegetables            Mushrooms, tomato puree, spinach            Potato pakoras, okra, callaloo, breadfruit, taro and plantain</p>	<p><b>Limit vegetables to 2-3 servings per day.</b>  <b>Limit salad to 1 side salad per day</b> (in place of a vegetable portion)            Choose boiled vegetables            Cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, corn, cucumber, green beans, peas, peppers, swede, frozen mixed vegetables            Fresh herbs and spices</p>
<p><b>Bread and cereals and grains:</b>            Bread containing dried fruit            Cereal containing bran, nuts, chocolate or dried fruit (All bran, muesli, fruit loaf)</p>	<p>Wholemeal, 50:50 or white bread            Cereals not containing bran, nuts, chocolate or dried fruit (Weetabix, porridge, rice crispies)            Pasta, rice, noodles, quinoa, couscous</p>
<p><b>Dairy and alternatives:</b>  <b>Limit dairy milk (all types) to 1/2 pint per day</b> (this includes yoghurt, custard and milk puddings)            Avoid almond, condensed and evaporated milk</p>	<p>Oat and rice milk            Hard and soft cheese, cream cheese, cottage cheese            Cream, crème fraiche</p>
<p><b>Snacks:</b>            Fruit and nut snack bars            Nuts and seeds (all types)            Potato pulse and vegetable crisps/snacks, Twiglets            Bombay mix</p>	<p>Corn or maize based snacks (Sunbites, Wotsits, tortilla chips, Monster Munch)            Rice based snacks            Breadsticks, pretzels, cream crackers, crispbreads, unsalted and candied popcorn</p>
<p><b>Sweets:</b>            Confectionary, nougat, biscuit and cakes containing chocolate, dried fruit and nuts            Solid chocolate bars, fudge, toffee, liquorice</p>	<p>Mints, boiled, chewy or jelly sweets, marshmallow, Turkish delight (without nuts)            Plain biscuits and cake (without dried fruit, nuts and chocolate)</p>
<p><b>Drinks:</b>            Coffee, malted drinks, fruit juice, smoothies            Hot chocolate, Bovril, beer and wine</p>	<p>Tea, herbal tea, Camp coffee,            Squash/cordial drinks, flavoured water, carbonated drinks and spirits</p>
<p><b>Miscellaneous:</b>            Nut butters, Marmite</p>	<p>Jam, marmalade, honey, lemon curd, golden syrup</p>

