



Patient Dietary Advice – Following a low potassium diet for people with chronic kidney disease and diabetes

Managing your chronic kidney disease and diabetes effectively will require you to make dietary changes. The purpose of this leaflet is to help reduce any confusion and to clarify contradictory information that you may have received.

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 5.5mmol/L; a level higher than 6mmol/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 can I reduce my potassium level?

- Peel all potatoes and then cook both the potatoes and vegetables in water. After cooking, throw away the cooking water - **Do not use** to make gravy or stock.
- Preboil potatoes and vegetables before roasting or adding to soups, stews, stir-fries and curries.
- Many tinned varieties of vegetables and pulses have a lower potassium content, such as green beans, mushrooms, chickpeas and lentils.
- Do not use salt substitutes such as LoSalt, Morton salt substitute etc., as potassium is used as a key ingredient. Use other flavourings such as herbs, spices, garlic or pepper instead.

What about my diabetes?

- It is still important to keep your blood glucose levels well controlled.
- Eat regular meals and include a small portion of starchy foods at each meal. Choose slowly absorbed starchy food, such as porridge, pitta bread, pasta or basmati rice.
- If you are overweight, try to reduce your weight.
- Reduce your intake of high fat foods, such as pastry and fried foods.
- Cut down on salt and alcohol as this will help to control your blood pressure and your weight.

Reduce your intake of foods high in potassium and sugar

Reduce intake	Better choices
<p>Fruits: Banana, avocado, blackcurrants, dates, all dried fruit, rhubarb, plums, fruit juices</p>	<p>Fruit: 1-2 portions daily Apples, pears, blueberries, satsumas, peaches and tinned fruit ensuring that the juice is drained</p>
<p>Vegetables: Fried, roasted or chipped vegetables unless pre-boiled Potato wedges, hash browns, waffles, instant mash Stir fried, steamed and microwaved vegetables Spinach, mushrooms, tomato puree, beetroot, pak choi, okra, plantain, breadfruit, callaloo and taro</p>	<p>Vegetables: 2-3 portions daily Choose boiled vegetables Broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, green beans, peas, frozen mixed vegetables, leeks, peppers, cucumber, swede</p>
<p>Cereals and breads Cereals containing bran, dried fruits, nuts and chocolate such as muesli, Fruit & Fibre, granola, All Bran and high sugar cereals such as Frosties, Coco Pops etc. Bread containing nuts, seeds or dried fruit</p>	<p>Cereals and breads Porridge, Ready Brek, Weetabix, Shredded Wheat, cornflakes, Rice Crispies Pasta, rice, noodles, couscous, quinoa Wholemeal bread, 50:50 or white bread</p>
<p>Dairy products Condensed, evaporated milk and dried milk powders, chocolate ice cream and mousses</p>	<p>Dairy products All types of cream, crème fraiche, rice or oat milk</p>
<p>Snacks Cakes and biscuits which contain chocolate, dried fruit or nuts. Seeds, potato crisps, nuts, bombay mix and Twiglets</p>	<p>Snacks: limit if overweight Plain biscuits, cream crackers, crispbreads, plain popcorn, breadsticks, rice based snacks, pretzels, corn or maize snacks e.g. Wotsits, Doritos</p>
<p>Sweets All types of chocolate, fudge, liquorice</p>	<p>Sweets Sugar free sweets</p>
<p>Drinks Coffee, cocoa, Horlicks, Ovaltine, drinking chocolate, fruit juices, vegetable juices, fizzy drinks, cider, wine and beer</p>	<p>Drinks Water, herbal tea, sugar-free squash, diet fizzy drinks, spirits</p>
<p>Miscellaneous Marmite, golden syrup</p>	<p>Miscellaneous Lightly spread jam, marmalade, lemon curd</p>

How should I treat hypos?

Recommendations	Unsuitable
3-4 Dextrose tablets (5g per tablet)	Orange juice
or 1 ½ Glucogel (10g tube)	Chocolate
or 4 jelly babies or 4 jelly beans	Biscuits

If you do not feel better after 15 minutes (or your blood glucose level is still below 4mmol/L), repeat **ONE** of these treatments. When you start to feel better and if you are not able to eat a meal, eat some starchy food, such as 2 plain biscuits or crackers or a slice of bread.

