Ottawa Cardiovascular Centre









POTASSIUM MODIFIED EATING PLAN

This nutrition fact sheet will help you change the potassium in your diet to meet the needs of your health condition.

Potassium is a mineral found in the body's blood and cells. It is needed for normal muscle and nerve function. Potassium levels are usually well balanced by our kidneys but may rise or fall if factors throw this balance off.

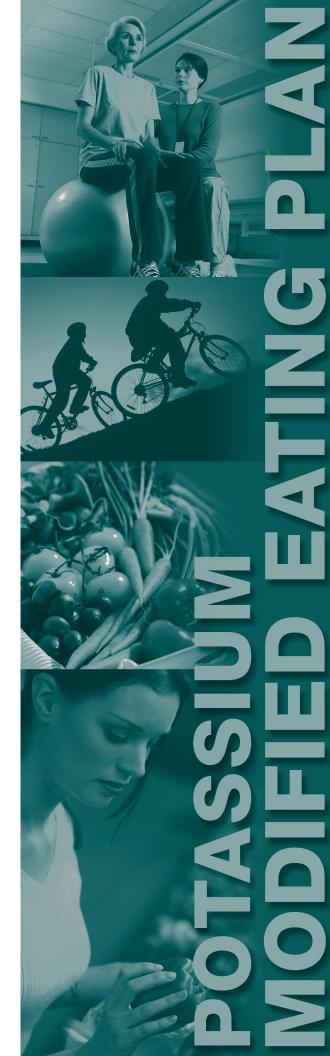
Hypokalemia: is the condition of having low blood levels of potassium. Symptoms of hypokalemia include muscle weakness, muscle aches and cramps, palpitations or "flutters" in the chest and abnormal heart rhythms. Causes include loss of potassium from the body because of vomiting, diarrhea, use of medications that increase potassium loss or change in proper kidney function. A diet high in potassium or potassium supplements may be used as treatment.

Hyperkalemia: is the condition of having high blood potassium. There may be no symptoms of hyperkalemia particularly with slowly rising potassium. Vague nausea, fatigue, muscle weakness or tingling may be noted. Slow heartbeat or heart stoppage are serious symptoms of very high potassium. Causes include poor kidney function, diseases of the adrenal gland and medications. A diet low in potassium is recommended for mild cases. Medical intervention is required for more sever cases.

Potassium and High Blood Pressure

- Increasing the potassium in your diet may reduce high blood pressure.
- The DASH Eating Plan for lowering blood pressure provided a high daily intake of potassium: 4700 mg per day.
- Potassium is found in all four food groups in Health Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating, especially in the vegetables and fruit group. Include a variety of foods rich in potassium each day.
- Some blood pressure medications commonly known as "water" pills (diuretics) alter the body's ability to regulate potassium. Talk to your doctor, dietitian or pharmacist to understand your medications. Ask if potassium based salt substitutes are safe for you to use in moderation.

More details on the DASH Eating plan are available in the Eating Plan for Hypertension nutrition fact sheet – on the web at www.ottawacvcentre.com



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To **increase potassium**, choose foods high in potassium and steam, stir fry, microwave or bake your foods. To **decrease potassium**, choose foods low in potassium and boil or poach your foods. Consult with a Registered Dietitian for more detailed information on foods and their potassium content.

FOODS HIGH IN POTASSIUM

FOODS LOW IN POTASSIUM

Vegetables and Fruit - many are high potassium

- Vegetables: leafy greens (chard, beet greens, spinach), sweet potato, tomato, potato, avocado, beets, okra, vegetable juice, pumpkin, parsnips, brussel sprouts, cooked mushrooms, winter squash
- Fruit: papaya, melon (honeydew & cantaloupe), prunes & juice, mango, figs (dried), dates, nectarine, orange & juice, kiwi, banana, pear (fresh), apricot (canned or fresh)
- Vegetables: sweet pepper, cabbage (raw), green or was beans, Chinese cabbage, water chestnuts (canned), peeled cucumber, lettuce, alfalfa sprouts
- Fruit: raspberries, canned pears, apple sauce, cranberries and cranberry juice cocktail, lemon, grape juice, blueberries
- Limit vegetables and fruit listed under "high potassium foods" especially tomatoes, potatoes, citrus fruit, bananas.
- Avoid juices including orange, prune, grapefruit, pineapple, tomato and vegetable juice

Grain Products

- All 100% bran cereals, gingerbread, granola cereal, bran flakes cereals, aats, porridge (cooked)
- Whole grains are often higher in potassium than refined or "white" grains
- Choose "white" refined grain products white bread, rice, cream of wheat

Milk and Alternatives

- Yogurt, plain or fruit flavored, malted milk or Ovaltine made with milk, Chocolate milk, buttermilk, milk.
- · Cheese: Colby, Swiss, cheddar,
- Cream: table and sour cream

Meat and Alternatives

- Cooked pinto beans, lentils, kidney beans, navey beans, blacked beans, pumpkin and squash seed kernels, cooked chickpea kernels, almonds (dry roasted), peanuts, peanut butter, tofu, fish, pork, and beef.
- Poultry, walnuts, pecans, egg whole and whites, lamb

Fats and Oils

Not a significant source of potassium

 Most choices are low in potassium. Choose oils as a heart healthier option.

Sweets

· Black strap and standard molasses

White sugar, hard candies, jam, honey, corn syrup, gelatin.
 All in moderation.

Snack Foods

- Mixed nuts, snack foods made with whole grains
- Choose white refined baked goods in moderation

Beverages

- Juices orange, prune, grapefruit, pineapple, tomato, vegetable, sports beverages
- Carbonated beverages, lemonade, water
- Avoid juices including orange, prune, grapefruit, pineapple, tomato and vegetable juice to reduce potassium intake.

Other Nutrition Fact Sheets Available:

Eating Plan for Hypertension Eating Plan for Cholesterol

Eating Plan for Congestive Heart Failure

Eating Plan for Type 2 Diabetes

Waisting Away - Healthy Weight Management

Please visit www.cvtoolbox.com for more information

Potassium Modified Eating Plan, August 2010

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