

# Choosing High Potassium Foods

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## Why is potassium important?

Our bodies need potassium every day to stay healthy. Potassium is in many foods, including vegetables and fruits. Eating lots of vegetables and fruits helps to:

- keep blood pressure normal
- keep bones strong
- decrease risk of stroke and kidney stones

## What is a safe blood potassium level?

Your doctor can check your blood potassium level and tell you whether it is normal, high, or low.

If your blood potassium level is high or low, ask your doctor or dietitian if you should change your diet.

## Low blood potassium levels

You may have low blood potassium if you do not eat enough potassium, or take medicine that makes your body get rid of potassium. A very low level of potassium in your body may cause symptoms like heart fluttering or muscle weakness. Talk to your doctor if you have these symptoms.

## Ask your doctor

If you take pills for high blood pressure, or if you have kidney disease, talk to your doctor before you add foods that are high in potassium to your diet. Also, ask your doctor or dietitian if you can use a salt substitute that contains potassium.

## Make it easy to get enough potassium

If your doctor or dietitian has not told you how much potassium you need in a day, follow the guidelines below. Use the food lists on the next page to find high and medium potassium foods you like to eat.

### A high potassium day will include:

- at least two high potassium foods at each meal  
**and**
- at least two medium potassium foods at each meal  
**and**
- eating some high potassium foods at snacks

# High potassium food choices

(200 mg or more of potassium per serving)

Choose \_\_\_\_\_ servings per meal.

Serving sizes are ½ cup (125 mL) unless other amounts are listed.

## Vegetables

- amaranth (Yin Choy)
- artichokes
- bamboo, raw or boiled
- beets, raw or boiled
- beet greens, boiled
- bitter melon pods, boiled
- bok choy, cooked
- broccoli, raw then boiled
- Brussels sprouts
- carrot juice
- cassava, raw
- Chinese radish (lo bok, daikon)
- choy sum
- kohlrabi
- lotus root
- mushrooms, boiled
- pak choi, boiled
- pumpkin
- rapini, boiled
- salisfy
- spinach, frozen or boiled
- squash, winter, (acorn, butternut, hubbard)
- sweet potato
- Swiss chard, boiled
- taro root
- tomato, raw, canned or juice
- tomato paste
- V8 juice®, regular or low salt
- waterchestnuts, raw
- yams, raw, baked or boiled
- parsnips
- peas, black-eyed
- potato, baked, boiled, canned, or microwaved

## Fruits

- apricots, canned
- apricots, dried (6) or raw (3)
- avocado (½)
- banana, 1 small
- cantaloupe
- honeydew melon
- coconut juice
- currants, dried, ⅓ cup (75 mL)
- dates, 5 medium
- figs, fresh, 2 medium
- guava, 1 medium
- kiwi
- nectarine, 1 medium
- orange, 1 medium
- orange juice
- papaya, ⅓ medium
- passion fruit juice
- persimmon, 1 medium
- plantain, raw, cooked
- pomegranate, 1 medium
- prunes, dried, uncooked (4)
- prune juice
- raisins, ¼ cup (60 mL)
- plums, 2 medium
- tangelo, 1 medium

## Milk and Alternatives

- milk or fortified soy beverage, 1 cup (250 mL)
- buttermilk or goat milk, 1 cup (250 mL)
- yogurt, ¾ cup (175 g)
- cottage cheese, 1 cup (250 mL)

## Grain Products

Choose whole grains most often to increase potassium in your diet:

- bran cereal, ⅓ cup (28 g) of All Bran®, or Bran Buds®, or 1 cup (250 mL) of Bran Flakes®
- wheat germ, ¼ cup (60 mL)

## Meats and Alternatives

- beans (kidney, white, soy, lima, navy, pinto, chickpeas), lentils, and split peas, ¾ cup (175 mL)
- nuts (peanuts, almonds, cashews, pistachios, hazelnuts, mixed nuts), ¼ cup (60 mL)
- peanut butter, 2 Tbsp (30 mL)
- turkey, 2½ oz (75 g)
- beef, pork, lamb, veal, 2½ oz (75 g)
- tofu, ¾ cup (175 mL or 150 g)

# Medium potassium food choices

(135 to 199 mg of potassium per serving)

Choose \_\_\_\_\_ servings per meal.

Serving sizes are ½ cup (125 mL) unless other amounts are listed.

## Vegetables

- asparagus, raw, or frozen then boiled
- bean sprouts, raw or cooked
- broccoli, raw, or frozen then boiled
- carrots, boiled
- carrots, baby raw (8)
- cauliflower, raw
- celery
- chayote, boiled
- collard greens
- corn on the cob, 6 inch
- corn, fresh, cooked, canned, creamed or baby
- fennel, raw
- garden cress, raw
- mushrooms, raw
- mustard greens, Chinese, boiled
- peas (green), raw or canned
- peppers (green or red), raw
- spinach, raw
- sui choy, Chinese cabbage
- turnip, frozen then boiled
- zucchini

## Fruits

- apple, raw, 1 medium
- apple juice
- apple pear, ½ medium
- apricot nectar
- casaba melon, raw
- cherries, raw (10)
- gooseberries, raw
- grape juice, bottled
- grapefruit\*
- grapefruit juice\*
- kumquats, raw (5)
- mango, ½ medium
- peaches, raw, canned, frozen
- pear, raw, 1 medium
- pineapple juice
- raspberries
- Saskatoon berries
- strawberries
- watermelon, 1 cup (250 mL)

## Grain products

- whole grain breads, pumpernickel or raisin, 2 slices
- granola, ½ cup (60 g)
- English muffin, whole wheat, 1 whole
- wheat germ, 2 Tbsp (30 mL)

## Meats and alternatives

- chicken, 2½ oz (75 g)

## Tips to help you eat more potassium

- **Eat 7 to 10 servings of vegetables and fruit every day.**
  - 1 serving of vegetables = ½ cup (125 mL) fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables, or 1 cup of salad
  - 1 serving of fruit = ½ cup (125 mL) fresh, frozen, or canned fruit, or 1 medium size fruit
- **Keep the potassium in your food.**

Potassium is lost from fruits and vegetables when they are boiled in liquid. For example, a baked potato has almost twice as much potassium as a boiled potato.

  - Cook vegetables in their skin. Don't peel them.
  - Steam, stir-fry, microwave, bake, or roast vegetables instead of boiling them.
  - If you boil vegetables, use only a small amount of water. Cut the vegetables into big pieces and cook them just until they are ready to eat. Use the cooking liquid in soups and gravies.
  - Eat canned fruit and the juice it was canned in.

### \*Beware of grapefruit

Grapefruit affects how some medicine works. If you take any medicine, ask your pharmacist if you can eat grapefruit or drink grapefruit juice.

## Example of a high potassium day

Try to eat at least two high potassium foods at each meal and at least two medium potassium foods at each meal. Try eating some high potassium foods for snacks as well.

<b>Breakfast</b>		<b>Potassium</b>
Raisin Bran®	1 cup (55 g)	high
1% milk	1 cup (250 mL)	high
Pear	1 medium	medium
Coffee	1 cup (250 mL)	low

### **Lunch**

Chicken sandwich:		
whole grain bread	2 slices	medium
chicken	2½ oz (75 g)	medium
light mayonnaise	1 Tbsp (15 mL)	low
tomato slices	1 slice	low
Yogurt	¾ cup (175 g)	high
Chocolate chip cookie	2	low
Orange juice	½ cup (125 mL)	high

### **Snack**

Dried apricots	6 halves	high
Whole grain English muffin	1 whole	medium
Peanut butter	2 Tbsp (30 mL)	high

### **Supper**

Grilled beef steak	3 oz (90 g)	high
Baked potato in skin	1 medium	high
Sour cream	1 Tbsp (15 mL)	low
Broccoli	1 cup (250 mL)	high
Mushrooms, stir-fried	½ cup (125 mL)	high
1% milk	1 cup (250 mL)	high
Apple	1 medium	medium