



This resource was developed by Registered Dietitians

Potassium in Your Diet

Potassium is found in many foods, especially vegetables and fruit, so it is easy to eat more than your body requires.

- Too much or too little potassium can cause your heart to beat too fast, too slow or to stop all together.
- Your kidneys remove extra potassium from your body. If your kidneys are not working properly, potassium can build up in your blood.
- Protein-rich foods, dairy foods, breads and cereals and some other foods all contribute potassium to your food intake as well as vegetables and fruit.

Potassium levels:

Normal blood potassium levels for adults are 3.5 to 5.0 mmol/L. **Critical levels for renal patients are 5.5 mmol/L or greater.**

Serving size

The amount of potassium in a serving depends on the volume of the food in a 1/2 cup (125 mL) portion. The same food may be on different potassium lists depending on how it's prepared. For example, 1/2 cup (125 mL) cooked celery contains more potassium than 1/2 cup (125 mL) raw celery because it packs tighter together once cooked. The next few pages list foods as either low, medium or high in potassium based on preparation method or the amount stored in the foods while they grew.

Reducing potassium in foods

While heating does not destroy potassium, cooking a food in large amounts of water allows potassium to move out of the food and into the water. To reduce potassium in your foods:

- Peel vegetables and cut into small pieces. Boil in a large pot of water. Do not reuse cooking liquid in soups or gravies.
- Drain liquid from canned vegetables and fruit.

Example: Potato	Potassium (mg)
Baked, 1 medium	842
Commercial French fries, strips only (10)	367
Homemade French fries, 100 g, 1/2 cup (125 mL)	273
Peeled, cut-up, soaked for 8 hours in 7 times the water, changing the water once	130

Example: Tomato	Potassium (mg)
Paste, 1/4 cup (50 mL)	614
Juice, canned 1/2 cup (125 mL)	265
Raw, 1/2 small	125

How much potassium can I have?

The amount of potassium you can tolerate depends on your body size, the medications you are taking, how well your kidneys function, the amount of urine you make and the quality of your dialysis. This daily total of potassium must be used for all your food groups.

If your blood potassium level is too low:

- Add high potassium fruits and vegetables to your diet. Aim for at least 3 to 4 servings of high potassium food choices every day. Ask your dietitian for further guidance.

If your blood potassium is regularly within the normal range:

- You may be able to include more medium or high potassium choices in your diet within moderation. Check with your dietitian for acceptable quantities.

If your blood potassium level is too high:

- Avoid high potassium vegetables and fruit. Choose 4 to 5 servings of low and medium potassium foods per day.

Other Foods:

- A number of other foods can contribute potassium to your diet, some of these are listed in the high potassium section. If your potassium levels are high you may need to limit these foods as well. Ask your dietitian for advice.

Foods low in potassium...choose _____ servings per day.

Serving sizes are ½ cup (125 mL) unless noted otherwise (less than 135 mg potassium per serving).

Vegetables

- bamboo shoots, canned, drained
- beans, broad
- beans, green/yellow, canned, drained
- cabbage red/green, raw
- carrots, frozen, boiled
- chives
- collard greens, raw
- cucumber
- dandelion greens
- egg plant
- fiddleheads, frozen
- hominy
- jicama
- leeks
- lettuce, all varieties
- mushrooms, raw, canned, drained
- onions, green (2 medium)
- onions, white, raw
- parsley, sprig
- potato, 8 hr soaked
- radish (4 small)
- seaweed, kelp (100 g)
- soybean sprouts
- squash, long (por qua), cooked
- squash, spaghetti
- turnip, raw
- waterchestnuts canned, drained
- winter melon
- wax gourd (100 g)

Fruit

- applesauce
- apricots, canned, drained (3 halves)
- blueberries
- boysenberries
- cherries, canned, drained
- crabapple
- cranberry sauce, juice
- figs, canned, drained (3 medium)
- figs (1 medium)
- fruit cocktail canned, drained
- grapes, red or green (14)
- grape juice
- lemon (1 medium)
- lemonade
- lychee, raw (8)
- passion fruit (1)
- peach nectar
- pears, canned, drained (2 halves)
- pear nectar
- plums canned, drained (2 medium)
- raspberries, raw, canned, drained
- rhubarb, frozen, cooked
- strawberries

Foods medium in potassium...choose _____ servings per day.

Serving sizes are ½ cup (125 mL) unless noted otherwise (between 135 and 215 mg potassium per serving).

Vegetables

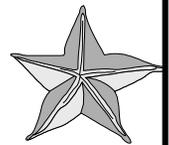
- asparagus
- beans, green, yellow fresh, boiled
- bean sprouts, mung
- beets, canned, drained
- broccoli, frozen, raw
- cabbage, boiled
- carrots, canned, drained
- cauliflower, raw, boiled
- celery, raw
- chayote
- collard greens, frozen, boiled
- corn, canned, creamed, baby
- corn-on-the-cob (3 inch cob)
- garden cress, raw
- hairy squash (moqua)
- kale, frozen, raw
- mustard greens, boiled
- okra, raw
- onions, white, boiled
- peas, green, canned, drained, frozen
- pea pods, boiled, raw, frozen
- peppers
- salisfy, boiled
- snow peas, raw
- spinach, raw (1 cup or 250 mL)
- squash, crookneck
- squash, summer, boiled
- turnip, cooked
- tofu, raw, soft
- tomato, raw, cooked
- zucchini, raw

Fruit

- apple (medium)
- apple juice
- applepear (½ medium)
- apricots, raw (2 small)
- apricot nectar
- blackberries
- casaba melon
- cherries, raw (10)
- gooseberries
- kiwi (½ medium)
- kumquats (4 medium)
- mango (½ medium)
- peaches, canned, drained (2 halves)
- peaches (1 medium)
- pineapple, raw, canned, drained
- pineapple juice
- pear (1 small)
- pummelo (3 medium sections)
- raspberries, frozen
- rhubarb, raw
- saskatoon berries
- tangerine, mandarin, clementine (1 small to medium)
- watermelon (1 cup or 250 mL)

Caution:

Do not eat or drink
Starfruit and starfruit juice are
poisonous to dialysis patients!



Grapefruit and grapefruit juice
interact with many
medications.



Foods high in potassium ... choose _____ servings per day.

Serving sizes are ½ cup (125 mL) unless noted otherwise (more than 215 mg potassium per serving).

Vegetables

- amaranth (yin choy)
- artichokes, cooked
- bamboo, raw, boiled
- beets, fresh, boiled
- beet greens, boiled
- bitter melon
- bok choy (Chinese celery)
- broccoli, boiled
- broccoli, Chinese (Gailian)
- brussel sprouts, raw, boiled, frozen
- carrots, raw (1 medium), juice
- cassava
- celery, boiled
- chard, Swiss, boiled
- choy sum
- corn-on-the-cob (6-inch cob)
- fennel, raw, bulb
- gai choy, boiled (Chinese mustard greens)
- kohlrabi
- lo bok, daikon (Chinese radish)
- lotus root, raw cooked, seeds
- mushrooms, fresh, boiled
- pak choi, boiled
- parsnips, boiled
- peas, black-eyed, cooked
- potato, baked with skin (1)
- potato, canned, drained, boiled, microwaved
- potato chips/fries (10)
- pumpkin
- rapini, boiled
- salisfy, raw
- shanghai bok choy, boiled
- soybeans, cooked
- spinach, frozen, boiled
- squash, winter, boiled or baked
- sui choy (Chinese cabbage)
- sweet potato
- taro root
- tofu, raw, firm
- tomato, canned, juice
- tomato, paste (¼ cup or 50 mL)
- tomato, stewed
- V8® juice
- waterchestnuts, raw
- wolfberry (gow gay)
- yams, baked, boiled
- yard long bean
- zucchini, boiled

Fruit

- apricots, raw (3)
- avocado (⅓)
- banana (1 small)
- breadfruit (¼ small)
- cantaloupe (¼)
- cherimoya
- coconut, juice
- currants, dried (⅓ cup or 75 mL)
- dates (5 medium)
- durian
- figs (2 medium)
- guava (1 medium), juice
- honeydew (¼)
- jackfruit, raw, canned
- nectarine (1 medium)
- orange (1 medium), juice
- papaya (⅓) medium, juice
- passion fruit juice
- persimmon, Japanese (1 medium)
- plantain, raw, cooked
- pomegranate (1 medium)
- prickly pear (1 medium)
- prunes (4)
- prune juice
- raisins
- red plums (2 medium)
- tangelo (1 medium)

Caution: Discuss use of these foods with your dietitian.

Grain Products:

- bran cereal (1 cup or 250 mL) = 350 mg

Milk Products

- milk (1 cup or 250 mL) = 380 mg
- buttermilk (1 cup or 250 mL) = 370 mg
- goat's milk (1 cup or 250 mL) = 500 mg
- condensed milk (1 cup or 250 mL) = 1135 mg

Meat and Alternatives

- beans such as kidney, white, soy, lima, navy, pinto, (1 cup or 250 mL) = 1000 mg
- chick peas (1 cup or 250 mL) = 480 mg
- lentils (1 cup or 250 mL), cooked = 730 mg
- nuts (½ cup or 125 mL) = 500 to 1033 mg

Other Foods

- chocolate chips (1 cup or 250 mL) = 1100 mg
- molasses (½ cup or 125 mL) = 2400 mg
- salt substitutes with potassium (⅓ tsp or 0.5 mL) = 528 mg