

Potassium

What is potassium?

Potassium is a major mineral in your body. It is one of the electrolytes measured in your blood. Some important functions of potassium include maintaining fluid balance, muscle contractions (including the heart), and promoting cellular growth (such as rebuilding muscle).

What makes potassium levels either too high or low?

Certain medications can make potassium levels either too high or too low, and this may cause changes in kidney function. The normal range for potassium is 3.7 – 5.2 mEq/L. Your potassium level was _____ mEq/L on _____.

What can I do to correct my potassium level?

Potassium needs vary from person to person. Changing your diet can normalize potassium levels. Your daily estimated potassium need is _____ mg. The guidelines below can help you make food choices to best meet your goals.

- Your potassium level is low. **Each day eat 4 to 5 servings of potassium rich foods, selected from the foods listed on the high potassium list.** This will help to increase the level of potassium in your blood.
- Your potassium level is high. **Avoid the foods in the high potassium foods list. Choose foods from the low potassium foods list.** This will prevent potassium levels from accumulating in your blood due to diet.

High Potassium Foods (≥ 250 - 500 mg or 6.5 - 13 mEq)

Protein	Fruit	Vegetables	Beverages
Bass (3 oz)	Apricots (3)	Artichokes (1)	Apricot nectar (1 c.)
Beef (3 oz)	Avocados (¼)	Beans/lentils (½ c.)	Carrot juice (¾ c.)
Buffalo (3.5 oz)	Bananas (1)	Dark, leafy greens (½ c.)	Milk (1 c.)
Clams (3 oz)	Dates (5)	Mushrooms (1 c.)	Orange juice (½ c.)
Elk (3.5 oz)	Figs (3)	Parsley (3 oz)	Pineapple juice (1 c.)
Halibut (3 oz)	Kiwi (1)	Parsnips (½ c.)	Prune juice (½ c.)
Ham (3 oz)	Nectarines (1)	Pecans/Pistachios (1 oz)	Tomato juice (½ c.)
Lobster (3 oz)	Oranges (1)	Potatoes (½ c.)	V-8 juice® (½ c.)
Pork (3 oz)	Peaches (fresh) (1)	Pumpkin (½ c.)	Coconut water (1 c.)
Salmon (3 oz)	Prunes (1)	Soybeans (½ c.)	
Snapper (3 oz)	Raisins (¼ c.)	Spinach (½ c.)	
Sunflower seeds (3 oz)		Tomato sauce (¼ c.)	
Trout (3 oz)		Tomatoes (1)	
Wheat germ* (3 oz)		Winter squash/Yams (½)	
			Other
			Salt substitutes such as: Morton Lite® salt, Mrs. Dash®, etc.

Medium Potassium Foods (150 - 250 mg or 4 - 6.5 mEq)

Protein	Fruit	Vegetables	Beverages
Almond butter (2 Tbsp.)	Apple (1)	Beets (½ c.)	Apricot nectar (½ c.)
Almonds, Cashews and Walnuts (1 oz)	Cantaloupe (½ c.)	Broccoli (½ c.)	Grape juice, canned (½ c.)
Canadian bacon (2 slices)	Cherries (½ c.)	Brussel sprouts (½ c.)	Grapefruit juice (½ c.)
Chicken and lamb (3 oz)	Fruit cocktail (½ c.)	Carrots (½ c.)	Pineapple juice (½ c.)
Cod (3 oz)	Honeydew (½ c.)	Celery (½ c.)	Soymilk (¾ c.)
Cottage cheese (1 c.)	Papaya (½ c.)	Eggplant (½ c.)	
Crab (3 oz)	Peaches, canned (½ c.)	Mixed vegetables (½ c.)	
Ice cream (½ c.)	Pears, fresh (1)	Mushrooms (½ c.)	
Oysters (3 oz)	Plums (2)	Okra (3 pods)	
Peanut butter (2 Tbsp.)		Peppers (1)	
Peanuts (¼ c.)		Potato chips(10)	
Pudding (½ c.)			
Tofu (½ c.)			
Yogurt milk or soy (4 oz)			

Low Potassium Foods (5 - 150 mg or 0.1 - 4 mEq)

Protein	Fruit	Vegetables	Beverages
All hard cheeses (4 oz)	Applesauce (½ c.)	Asparagus (4 spears)	Apple juice (½ c.)
Bologna (1 slice)	Blackberries (½ c.)	Bean Sprouts (½ c.)	Cranberry juices (1 c.)
Cream cheese (4 oz)	Blueberries (½ c.)	Cabbage (½ c.)	Gatorade® (1 c.)
Salami (1 slice)	Grapefruit (½ c.)	Cauliflower (½ c.)	Grape juice, frozen (1 c.)
Sardines (2)	Grapes (½ c.)	Corn (½ c.)	Lemonade/limeade (1 c.)
Shrimp (10 large)	Pears, canned (½ c.)	Cucumber (½)	Peach nectar (½ c.)
Egg (1)	Pineapple (½ c.)	Green beans (½ c.)	Pear nectar (1 c.)
Fish stick (1)	Plums, canned (½ c.)	Lettuce (1 c.)	Powerade® (1 c.)
Pecan halves (¼ c.)	Raspberries (½ c.)	Onions (½ c.)	
Bacon (2-3 slices)	Rhubarb, cooked (½ c.)	Peas (½ c.)	
Scallops (3.5 oz)	Strawberries (½ c.)	Radishes (5)	
	Tangerines (1)	Rutabagas (½ c.)	
	Watermelon (½ c.)	Soaked potatoes (½ c.)	
		Summer squash (½ c.)	
		Turnips (½ c.)	

**Not all of the foods on this list are allowed on the Immunosuppressed Patient Diet. If you have questions about foods on this list, please contact your dietitian.*

All pastas, breads, rice and crackers are low potassium. If there are foods you enjoy that are not on these lists, ask your dietitian about their potassium content.

Resources

National Institute of Health, Medline Plus: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002413.html>

This education resource was intended to be given as part of a nutrition consult by an SCCA registered dietitian. Questions? Ask an SCCA dietitian at nutrition@seattlecca.org.