

Reducing your potassium intake: information for children and young people

Potassium is a mineral in your blood. If your kidneys are not working well or if you don't have your kidneys anymore, the potassium levels in your blood may become too high. High levels of potassium are very dangerous for you and your heart. This information sheet from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) tells you about the small changes you can make to your diet, which can help manage your potassium levels.

High potassium foods – reduce your intake of these

Potato products

- Potatoes – jacket potatoes, roast, mashed, chips, wedges, manufactured potato products such as hash browns or waffles
- Potato based crisps and snacks (such as Walkers™, Discos™, French Fries™, Hula Hoops™, Quavers™, Pom-Bears™, Squares™, Spirals™)

Fruits and vegetables

- Avocado, Brussel sprouts, green beans, okra, parsnip, plantain, baby spinach, sweet potato, yam, mushrooms
- Baked beans in tomato sauce, tomatoes, tomato-based sauces, spaghetti in tomato sauce, barbecue sauce, tomato purée, tomato paste and juice
- Apricots, bananas, dates, grapes, kiwifruit, mango, melon, nectarines, oranges, peaches, pineapple, plums, rhubarb, strawberries
- Dried fruits: such as apricots, currants, dates, figs, prunes, raisins, sultanas

Cereals and nuts/seeds

- Breakfast cereals which contain bran, dried fruit, nuts or chocolate
- Bhaji, pakoras, nut roast
- Nuts, seeds, oriental and Bombay mix. Note: do not give whole nuts to children under 5 years
- Nut or seed containing spreads, sauces, cereal bars, biscuits, cakes or cereals (such as satay, tahini or peanut butter, baklava)



Dairy products

- Ice cream, yoghurt, milk, cheese, white sauce, custard and milk puddings. Note: you may be limiting these foods already to control your phosphate intake
- Chocolate, drinking chocolate, cocoa

Drinks

- Coffee, fruit juice or high juice squashes, vegetable juice and malted milk drinks such as Horlicks™ or Ovaltine™

Savoury snacks

- Snack pot and packet meals such as Pot Noodle™, Deli Box™, Tesco Everyday Value Flavoured Noodles™, Maggi™ 2-3 minute noodles, Super Noodles™, Sainsbury's Instant Noodles™
- Soups, Bovril™, Marmite™, Vegemite™

Salt substitutes

- Salt substitutes such as LoSalt™, Saxa So-Low™, Morton Lite Salt™, Tesco Reduced Sodium Salt™

Cooking methods that reduce potassium

- Boiling helps to reduce the potassium content. Boil rather than steam, grill or microwave and try to avoid raw vegetables
- Parboil vegetables and potatoes for 5 minutes before using in a stir-fry or curry
- Double boil potatoes: boil potatoes for 10 minutes, throw away water, replace with fresh boiling water and boil for a further 10 minutes until cooked
- Discard cooking water from potatoes or vegetables - do not use it for making gravy, sauces or soups

Foods to eat in moderation

- All fruit and vegetables contain some potassium but it is important to continue to eat these foods as they contain other key vitamins and minerals. Aim to have 3 to 4 small portions of lower potassium fruits or vegetables each day.

1 portion = child's handful

- Fruits that are lower in potassium include: apple, blueberries, blackberries, clementine, satsuma, tangerine, raspberries, tinned pineapple, tinned pear, tinned fruit cocktail, tinned peach in syrup, small pear
- Vegetables that are lower in potassium include: raw red or green peppers, cucumber, sugar snap peas, beansprouts, frozen/canned peas or boiled cabbage, cauliflower, corn on the cob, pumpkin, swede and runner beans



Foods you can eat freely

- Pasta, rice, couscous, bulgur wheat
- Bread, plain bagels, toast, garlic bread, crackers, breadsticks, pitta bread, rice cakes, chapattis, plain or iced biscuits or buns, popcorn, poppadoms, croissants, meringues and biscuits such as sandwich biscuits, shortbread, digestives
- Butter, margarine, oil, honey, jam, marmalade, syrup, sugar, jelly, boiled or jelly sweets

This diet sheet may not be suitable for all children with chronic kidney disease. Please refer to a paediatric dietitian to discuss the particular needs of your child.

Further information and support

- The infoKID website offer information on kidney diseases and their treatments – www.infoKID.org.uk
- The kidskidneydiet app is an interactive educational app for children and families. It is available for Apple devices – visit the Apple Store for details. Note: No version for Android devices is currently available.

We advise all children with Chronic Kidney Disease to avoid Star Fruit

Please note: This information sheet should only be used under the supervision of a medical professional and may not be suitable for every child. Although every care is taken when compiling this information sheet, manufacturers may alter ingredients of foods and drinks without warning. You should always check the ingredients label. This information sheet may include brand names but in many cases, alternatives (including supermarket own brands) may be suitable. Including specific products in this information sheet does not mean we are recommending them.

