

# Texas Children's Hospital

## *Caring for Your Child's Health*

### Potassium and Your Diet

Potassium is a mineral the body needs for normal cell and muscle function. Normally, if there is too much potassium in the blood it is removed by the kidneys. If the kidneys are not able to remove the potassium it will build up in the blood and affect heart contractions. This can be serious and can even cause the heart to stop. Dietary potassium is sometimes restricted in people with kidney or heart problems.

The body's main source of potassium is the food we eat each day. Remember, almost all foods contain

some potassium. The serving size can affect whether the foods have low, medium or high levels of potassium. A large portion of a low-potassium food can turn it into a high-potassium food. To keep your blood potassium level within normal ranges be sure to use the foods and food portions specified by a dietitian. Below is a list of foods that have high, medium and low amounts of potassium. *Please take note of the type of food item as there are differences between potassium content of cooked, raw, canned and dried foods as well as juices.*

Foods	High K+ (201-350mg)	Medium K+ (101-200mg)	Low K+ (1-100mg)
Milk/milk products (1/2 cup unless indicated; same as the size of a tennis ball)	More than measurement of products listed in the medium column	<b>Milk:</b> whole, low-fat, skim, flavored, buttermilk, condensed and evaporated (1/4 cup), dry powdered (2 tablespoons); cream cheese (3 tablespoons); custard (1/4 cup), half and half, heavy cream (3/4 cup), light cream, ice cream, sherbet (1 cup), sour cream (4 tablespoons), yogurt, pudding, soy milk	<i>Rice milk</i>
Meat and meat substitutes (1 oz serving size; same as the size of a golf ball)	Nut or seed: any type (1/4 cup). Nut butter: any type (2 tablespoons)	None	Beef, cheese, egg (1 whole, 2 whites, 2 yolks), egg substitute (1/4 cup), fish, lamb, organ meats, pork, poultry, shellfish, soybean curd/tofu (1/2 cup), veal, venison

Foods	High K+ (201-350mg)	Medium K+ (101-200mg)	Low K+ (1-100mg)
<p>Vegetables (<b>1/2 cup serving size unless indicated; same as the size of a tennis ball</b>)</p>	<p>Asparagus (6 spears - frozen, canned), artichoke (1 medium), bamboo shoots (fresh, canned, cooked), beets, beet greens (cooked - 1/4 cup), brussel sprouts, celery (cooked), kohlrabi, swiss chard (cooked), spinach (cooked, canned, frozen), mushrooms (cooked), okra, parsnips, pumpkin, rutabagas, tomato: fresh (1 small), canned paste (2 tablespoons), sauce (1/4 cup), puree, juice, soup; vegetable juice-V8, winter squash: acorn, butternut, hubbard</p>	<p>Broccoli, beet greens (raw), cabbage (cooked) chinese/napa, carrot, cauliflower, celery (raw - 1 stalk), collard greens, corn, eggplant, endive, escarole, kale, mushrooms (fresh, canned), mustard greens (cooked), onions, peas: green, snow, sugar, radishes, spinach (raw), summer squash, turnip greens, turnips</p>	<p>Alfalfa sprouts (1 cup), beans: green, wax, bean sprout, bell pepper, cabbage (raw), cucumber, leeks, lettuce (all varieties), spaghetti winter squash, water chestnuts (canned), watercress</p>
<p>Fruits (<b>1/2 cup serving size unless indicated; same as the size of a tennis ball</b>)</p>	<p>Apricots (2 halves), avocado (1/4), banana (6"), cantaloupe (1/8), honeydew/casaba melon (1/8), guava, kiwi, nectarine (1 small), mango, orange (1 small), plantain, pomegranate, tangelo  <b>Dried fruits:</b> apricots (5), banana, cherry (5), currants, dates, figs (2), mango, papaya, peaches, pear, prunes (5), raisins  <b>Fruit juices:</b> orange, grapefruit, pineapple, pomegranate, prune</p>	<p>Apple (1 small), blackberries, figs (canned, raw), fruit cocktail, grapefruit (1/2 small), mandarine orange, nectarine (1 small), papaya, peach (canned, raw), pear (raw), pineapple (canned, raw), plums (1 medium), raspberries, rhubarb, tangerine, tangelo, watermelon (1 cup), strawberries  <b>Dried fruits:</b> apple, pineapple  <b>Fruit juices:</b> apple, apricot nectar, blackberry, cherry, grape, lemon, mango nectar, papaya nectar</p>	<p>Applesauce, blueberries, cherries, cranberries (1 cup), cranberry sauce, grape (15), lemon (1/2), lime (1), pear (canned)  <b>Dried fruit:</b> raisin  <b>Fruit juices:</b> pear, peach nectar, cranberry juice cocktail (1 cup), grape juice</p>
<p>Starches, cereals, &amp; breads (<b>1 oz serving size unless indicated; same as the size of a fist or CD case</b>)</p>	<p>Cooked beans and peas (1/3 cup): blackeyed peas, black beans, lima beans, kidney beans, pinto beans, navy beans, great northern beans, split peas, chick peas, soy beans etc., potatoes (1/2 cup), yams/sweet potatoes (1/2 cup)</p>	<p>Whole wheat bread, Whole grain cereal (e.g. Raisin Bran, Bran Flakes, all Bran, Bran Chex) (3/4 cup); granola (1/4 cup), bran and bran products, wild rice (1/2 cup)</p>	<p>Crackers: saltines, butter rounds, whole wheat, graham cracker, melba toast, RyKrisp; white bread, 1/2 bagel, hamburger/hot dog bun, English muffin, small muffin (no nuts, bran or whole wheat), dinner roll, pancake, waffle, pita bread, tortilla (corn or flour), cereals (most brands 3/4 cup), cooked cereal (e.g. oatmeal, Malt-O-Meal, cream of wheat) (1/2 cup), grits, corn meal (3/4 cup), flour (2 tablespoons all purpose), cooked pasta (1/2 cup), white rice (1/2 cup)</p>

Foods	High K+ (201-350mg)	Medium K+ (101-200mg)	Low K+ (1-100mg)
Fats (1 teaspoon unless incidated; same as the size of a stamp)	Any type nut or seed.	None	Margarine, mayonnaise, oil, shortening, salad dressing, tartar sauce, butter, coconut (2 tablespoons)
Desserts & miscellaneous	Barbecue sauce, ketchup, salt substitutes, salt free broth, cocoa powder, carob, dark corn syrup, molasses, carnation instant breakfast	Chocolate (1.5 oz)	<p><b>Cookies</b> (no nuts or chocolate): sandwich, shortbread, sugar, sugar wafer, vanilla wafer</p> <p><b>Cakes, pastries, pies:</b> (no nuts, chocolate or high potassium fruits) angel food cake, vanilla cake (2"x2"), fruit pie (apple, berry, cherry, peach) (1/8 slice), small danish pastry or sweet roll, doughnut</p> <p><b>Snack items:</b> popcorn (plain 1-1/2 cup), tottrilla chips (9), pretzels (10 sticks), gelatin (1/2 cup), fruit ice, ice pop, sorbet</p> <p><b>Candy/sweets:</b> candy corn, gumdrops, hard candy, jelly beans, Lifesavers, cough drops, marshmallows, fruit chews, fruit roll ups, fruit snacks, butter mints</p> <p><b>Condiments:</b> nondairy frozen topping (1/2 cup), liquid nondairy creamer (1/2 cup), honey, jam, jelly</p> <p><b>Coffee, tea</b> (limit to 8 oz.)</p>

## Leaching foods

Leaching can help pull out some potassium from certain vegetables. Please remember that leaching will not take out all of the potassium, only some. For example, it may move a high potassium food to a medium potassium food. It is still important to limit these items. Foods that can be leached include: potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, beets, rutabagas, squash, mushrooms, cauliflower and frozen greens.

*For potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, beets, and rutabagas*

1. First peel and cut vegetable into small 1/8 inch thick cubes.
2. Rinse in water and then soak for a minimum of 2 hours. Use 10 times the amount of water to the amount of vegetables. If soaking longer, change the water every 4 hours.

3. Rinse under water and cook vegetables in 5 times the amount of water.

4. Let vegetables come to a boil, then drain water and repeat step number 3.

*For squash, mushrooms, cauliflower and frozen greens*

1. Thaw frozen vegetables and drain.
2. Rinse vegetables in water and soak for a minimum of two hours in warm water. Use 10 times the amount of water to the amount of vegetables. If soaking longer, change the water every 4 hours.
3. Rinse in water again and cook the usual way, but with 5 times the amount of water to the amount of vegetable.

**Sample 1-1.5 gram Potassium Menu**

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
1/2 cup pear 1 pancake 1 tablespoon syrup 1 scrambled egg 4 oz. cranberry juice	3 oz. hamburger patty 1 hamburger bun 1 teaspoon mayonnaise 1/2 cup corn 1/4 cup strawberries 1 sugar cookie	2 oz. baked chicken 1 cup pasta 1/2 cup green beans 1 teaspoon butter 1/2 cup carrots 1 fruit rollup
Snack	Snack	Nutrient analysis
2 vanilla wafers 4 oz. lemonade	1 oz. cheese 5 crackers 4 oz. apple juice	Energy: 1,660 calories Protein: 57 grams Fat: 57 grams Potassium: 1.2 grams (1,200 milligrams)

**Sample 2 gram Potassium Menu**

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
1 cup corn pops 4 oz. 2 percent milk 1 slice toast 1 teaspoon butter 2 teaspoons jelly	3 oz. hamburger patty 1 hamburger bun 1 tablespoon mayonnaise 1/2 cup green beans 1 apple 1/2 cup home fries 8 oz. water	4 oz. baked chicken 1/2 cup corn 1 cup rice 1/2 cup canned pineapple (no juice) 10 oz. lemonade
Snack	Snack	Nutrient analysis
4 graham crackers 4 oz. apple juice	2 granola bars	Energy: 2,300 calories Protein: 69 grams Fat: 21 grams Potassium: 2 grams (2,000 milligrams)



**Texas Children’s Hospital®**

*Developed by the Nutrition Coordinating Council.*

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