

# Eating less potassium

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## What is potassium?

Potassium is a mineral in many foods. It helps your heart, muscles and nerves work well.

When your kidneys are not working properly, potassium may build up in your blood. High potassium levels in your blood can cause heart problems such as abnormal heart rhythms (arrhythmias), a slow heartbeat or heart failure. It is important to have the potassium level in your blood checked regularly as recommended by your doctor.

Eating less potassium in your diet can help keep the potassium in your blood at a normal level.

## What should the level of potassium be in my blood?

A safe or normal level of potassium is 3.5 to 5.0 mmol/L. A potassium level of over 5.0 mmol/L is not safe.

## How much potassium can I eat?

Potassium needs are different for every person. Your dietitian will help you to choose the right amount of potassium in your diet.

The amount of potassium you can eat depends on:

- your blood potassium levels
- your kidney's ability to work
- any of your medications that affect your potassium levels

## What foods have potassium?

Almost all foods that you eat have potassium. Vegetables and fruits tend to have more potassium than other foods.

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## Common foods high in potassium

### Avoid:

- bananas
- oranges and orange juice
- prunes and prune juice
- potatoes – unless peeled and double boiled
- tomato and vegetable juice
- bran and whole grain cereals
- baked beans and other beans
- lentils and peas
- nuts and seeds
- nut butter
- chocolate
- cola
- molasses

## Other sources of potassium

Potassium is in many salt substitutes, low salt or low sodium products.

### Avoid products such as:

- NoSalt<sup>®</sup>
- Nu-Salt<sup>®</sup>
- Windsor Half Salt<sup>™</sup>
- LoSalt<sup>®</sup>

### Choose no added salt seasonings such as:

- Mrs. Dash<sup>™</sup>
- Club House No Salt Added<sup>™</sup>