Potassium and Your Kidney Diet (Chinese Foods)

Your kidneys remove extra potassium from your body. If your kidneys are not working properly, potassium can build up in your blood.

Too much or too little potassium can cause your heart to beat too fast, too slow, or to stop beating. Some people may not be able to feel these changes.

Food choices can affect your blood potassium levels. Your dietitian can help you adjust your choices and answer questions about potassium in your diet.

Serving size

A food can be high or low in potassium depending on how it is prepared. For example, ½ cup (125 mL) boiled spinach has more potassium in it than ½ cup (125 mL) raw spinach because it packs together more tightly when cooked.

A lot of food has potassium in it so it is important to learn which ones are good choices for you.

How much potassium can I have?

The amount of potassium you should eat depends on:
- your body size
- the medicine you take
- how well your kidneys are working
- the amount of urine you make

If you are on dialysis, the quality of your dialysis affects your blood potassium levels. Ask your dietitian for more information.

Know your blood potassium level

Normal blood potassium levels for adults is 3.5 to 5.5 mmol/L.

If your blood potassium level is too high:
- don’t eat vegetables and fruit that are high in potassium
- choose 5 to 6 servings a day of vegetables and fruit that are low potassium

Ask your dietitian for more information.

If your blood potassium is usually in the normal range:
- you may be able to include a few high potassium foods in your diet in small amounts
- ask your dietitian how many servings you can eat

If your blood potassium level is too low:
- add high potassium vegetables and fruit to your diet
- aim for 1 to 2 servings of high potassium food choices every day

Ask your dietitian for more information.
Foods lower in potassium

Serving sizes are ½ cup (125 mL) or 1 medium piece unless other amounts are listed. These serving sizes provide less than 215 mg potassium per serving. 🚫 = Limit as it is high in sodium (salt).

### Vegetables

- alfalfa sprouts
- asparagus
- bamboo shoots, canned
- beans, green/yellow
- bean sprouts
- beets, canned
- bitter melon pods
- broccoli, frozen then boiled, or raw
- cabbage, green/red
- cassava, boiled
- carrots
- cauliflower
- chard, Swiss, raw
- chives
- celery, raw or boiled
- cilantro
- collard greens
- corn, frozen then boiled
- corn on the cob, 6-inch
- cucumber
- dandelion greens
- eggplant
- fennel
- fiddleheads, boiled
- garden cress, raw
- garlic, 1 bulb
- ginger root, ¼ cup (60 mL)
- hominy
- jicama
- kale
- leeks
- lettuce, all varieties
- mushrooms, cooked from fresh, black fungi (cloud ears), shiitake
- mushrooms, straw, canned
- mustard greens
- okra, raw, or raw then boiled
- onions, green/white
- parsley
- peas, green, raw or frozen then boiled
- peppers (green, yellow, red, canned chili, ¼ cup (60 mL) fresh chili)
- potato, peeled, cubed then boiled
- potato, peeled, shredded then boiled
- radish
- rapini, raw or boiled
- salsify, boiled
- shallots
- snow peas, 10 pods
- spinach, raw
- squash – summer (chayote, crookneck, mo qua)
- squash – winter (por qua, spaghetti)
- suey choy
- tomato, ½ raw
- tomato sauce, ¼ cup (60 mL)
- turnip
- water chestnuts, canned
- watercress
- winter melon/wax gourd
- zucchini, raw or boiled

**Tip:** Peel potatoes and cut into small cubes or shred before boiling. Discard the water.

### Fruits

- apple, raw, sauce or juice
- apple rings, 5 dried
- apple pear, ½ medium
- apricots, 2 raw, canned, or nectar
- blackberries
- blueberries
- boysenberries
- casaba melon
- cherries, 10 raw, canned
- coconut, raw or dried flakes
- crab apple
- cranberry, raw, sauce or juice
- currants, raw
- figs, canned, 1 raw or 3 dried
- fruit cocktail, canned and drained
- gooseberries
- grapes, 20 raw or grape juice
- honeydew
- kumquats
- lemon or lemonade
- loganberries
- loquats
- lychee, 10 raw
- mandarin orange
- mango, ½ raw
- mangosteen, 2 raw
- passion fruit, 3
- peach, raw, canned
- peach nectar
- pear, raw, canned
- pear nectar
- pineapple, raw or juice
- plum, 1 raw or 2 canned
- pomegranate, ½ raw or ¼ cup (60 mL) juice
- prunes, 3 dried or canned, ¼ cup (60 mL) juice
- raspberries
- rhubarb
- Saskatoon berries
- strawberries
- tangerine
- watermelon

**Tip:** Draining juice from canned fruit will cut down on the potassium content.
Foods higher in potassium

Serving sizes are ½ cup (125 mL) or 1 medium piece unless other amounts are listed. These serving sizes provide more than 215 mg potassium per serving. ▲ = Limit as it is high in sodium (salt).

### Vegetables

- amaranth (yin choy)
- artichokes
- bamboo, raw or boiled
- beets, raw or boiled
- beet greens
- bok choy (Chinese cabbage)
- broccoli, raw then boiled
- Brussels’ sprouts
- carrot juice
- cassava, raw
- chard, Swiss, boiled
- choy sum
- daikon (Chinese radish)
- fiddleheads, raw
- gai choy, boiled (Chinese mustard greens)
- gailan (Chinese broccoli)
- garden cress, boiled
- gow gay
- kohlrabi
- lo bok, daikon (Chinese radish)
- lotus root
- mushrooms, shiitake, dried
- mushrooms, black oyster, raw
- okra, frozen then boiled
- pak choi, boiled
- parsnips
- peas, black-eyed
- potato, boiled, whole
- potato, baked
- potato, microwaved
- potato chips/fries
- potato, hashbrowns or scalloped
- pumpkin
- rutabaga
- salsify, raw
- squash - winter (acorn, butternut, hubbard)
- spinach, boiled
- sweet potato
- taro
- tomato, canned or cooked ▲
- tomato juice and V8® juice, regular or low salt
- tomato paste
- tomato sauce, ½ cup (125 mL)
- water chestnuts, raw
- wolfberry
- yams
- yardlong bean

**Tip:** Soak vegetables that are high in potassium in water for several hours. This will remove a lot of the potassium. Ask your dietitian for more information about cooking high potassium vegetables.

### Fruits

- apricots, dried
- avocado
- banana
- breadfruit
- cantaloupe
- cherimoya
- coconut juice
- currants, dried
- dates
- durian
- guava
- jackfruit
- kiwi fruit
- nectarine
- orange, navel, raw or juice
- papaya
- passion fruit juice
- persimmon
- plantain
- prickly pear
- pummelo
- raisins
- tangelo

### Caution

Do not eat or drink **starfruit** and **starfruit juice**. These are dangerous if your kidneys don’t work well.

**Grapefruit** and **grapefruit juice** affect the way many medications work. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if grapefruit is safe for you to have.
Other foods high in potassium

There are many foods besides fruits and vegetables that are higher in potassium. Some of these foods are listed below. If your potassium levels are high you may need to limit these foods as well.

Talk to your dietitian about whether these foods are all right for you to eat.

| Grain Products | • Don’t eat cereals made with whole bran such as Raisin Bran®, All Bran®, Fibre 1®, and Bran Buds® as well as foods made with these cereals.  
• Don’t eat multigrain and whole grain products, and chickpea flour rotis.  
• Choose white, 60% whole wheat, light rye, or sourdough breads. |
| Milk Products | • This includes fluid milks, soy beverages, yogurt, pudding, and ice cream.  
• Limit to 1 cup (250 mL) from all milk products or less per day. |
| Nuts and Seeds | • Use nuts, seeds, and nut butters sparingly.  
• Limit to 2 Tbsp (30 mL) per day or up to ½ cup (125 mL) in a recipe. |
| Beans and Lentils | • This includes beans (kidney, white, Lima, navy, pinto, soy), chickpeas, dried peas, and lentils.  
• Limit to ½ cup (125 mL) cooked, once per week. Speak with your dietitian if you are vegetarian. |
| Beverages | • Limit black tea and coffee to 2 to 3 cups (500 to 750 mL) per day. |
| Candy and Sweeteners | • Limit chocolate to 15 grams (size of 1 mini chocolate bar) daily.  
• Limit pure maple syrup to 1 Tbsp (15 mL) per day, if used at all.  
• Limit chocolate or carob desserts such as chocolate cake to 1 serving per day.  
• Limit foods that contain molasses such as gingersnaps to 1 serving per day. |
| Other Foods | • Don’t use salt substitutes with potassium such as No-Salt® or Half-Salt® and low sodium soups with potassium chloride (check the ingredient list). |