

Potassium in Your Diet

Our bodies need the right amount of potassium every day to stay healthy. Different amounts of potassium are in many foods, including vegetables and fruits.

Some medicines and medical conditions can cause too much or too little potassium in your body. This can make your heart beat too fast, beat too slow, or stop beating. You can't always feel these changes.

This handout lists foods that are higher and lower in potassium, and can help you eat the right amount of potassium.

How much potassium can I have?

The amount of potassium you need depends on:

- your body size
- the medicine you take
- how much potassium is in your blood
- how well your kidneys are working

Ask your dietitian for more information about how many servings of higher and lower potassium foods are right for you every day.

If your blood potassium level is too high:

- Avoid vegetables and fruit that are higher in potassium.
- Choose 5–6 servings a day of vegetables and fruit that are lower in potassium.

If your blood potassium is usually in the normal range:

- Talk to your dietitian about the right amount of potassium foods for you.

If your blood potassium level is too low:

- Add higher potassium vegetables and fruit to your meals and snacks.
- Aim to add 1–2 servings of higher potassium foods every day.

Hidden potassium in packaged foods

Potassium is listed in the Nutrition Facts table on food packages.

Read labels on packaged food and choose foods that have the right amount of potassium for you.

Check the % Daily Value.

In 1 serving:

- 15% or more is a lot of potassium
- 5% or less is a little

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 cup (250 mL)	
Calories 70	% Daily Value*
Fat 1.5 g	2 %
Saturated 0 g	
+Trans 0 g	0 %
Carbohydrate 10 g	
Fibre 1 g	4 %
Sugars 2 g	2 %
Protein 4 g	
Cholesterol 5 mg	
Sodium 510 mg	22 %
Potassium 250 mg	5 %
Calcium 20 mg	2 %
Iron 0.75 mg	4 %

*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot

Check the ingredient list on food packages. Many low sodium foods contain potassium chloride, potassium acetate, or potassium lactate. Other foods may contain different potassium ingredients. These foods will be higher in potassium.

Serving size

A food can be high or low in potassium, depending on how it is prepared.

For example, ½ cup (125 mL) cooked spinach has more potassium than ½ cup (125 mL) raw spinach because spinach packs together more tightly when it's cooked.



The food lists on the next pages will help you eat the right amount.

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.  = Foods higher in sodium (salt). Limit these foods.

Vegetables

- alfalfa sprouts
- asparagus
- bamboo shoots, canned 
- bean sprouts
- beans, green/yellow
- broad beans (fava)
- bitter gourd
- bitter melon pods
- broccoli
- cabbage, green/red
- carrots
- cassava, boiled
- cauliflower
- celeriac (celery root)
- celery
- chard, Swiss, raw
- Chinese cabbage
- chives
- cilantro
- collard greens
- corn
- cucumber
- daikon (Chinese radish), raw
- dandelion greens
- eggplant
- endive
- fennel
- fiddleheads
- gailan (Chinese broccoli)
- garden cress, raw
- garlic, 1 bulb
- ginger root, ¼ cup (60 mL)
- hominy
- jicama
- kale
- leeks
- lettuce, all varieties
- mushrooms, raw or canned 
- mustard greens
- okra
- onions, green/white
- parsley
- peas, green
- peppers, bell
- peppers, chili, canned
- peppers, chili, fresh, ¼ cup (60 mL)
- potato, peeled, cubed or shredded, then boiled
- radicchio
- radish
- rapini
- shallots
- snow peas, 10 pods
- spinach, raw
- squash – summer (chayote, crookneck, mo qua)
- squash – winter (pumpkin, spaghetti)
- suey choy, Napa cabbage
- tomato, ½ raw
- tomato sauce, ¼ cup (60 mL) 
- turnip
- turnip greens
- water chestnuts, canned 
- watercress
- winter melon/ wax gourd
- yardlong bean
- zucchini

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

Tip: Tomato sauce is a higher potassium food if you eat more than ¼ cup (60 mL) at a time.

Fruits

- apple, raw, sauce, or juice
- apple pear, ½ medium
- apple rings, 5 dried
- apricots, 2 raw, canned, or nectar
- blackberries
- blueberries
- boysenberries
- casaba melon
- cherries, 10 raw or canned
- coconut, raw or dried flakes
- crab apple
- cranberry, raw, sauce, juice, or dried
- currants, raw
- figs, canned, 1 raw or 3 dried
- fruit cocktail, canned and drained
- gooseberries
- grape juice
- grapes, 20 raw
- honeydew
- kumquats
- lemon or lemonade
- loganberries
- loquats
- lychee, 10 raw
- mandarin orange
- mango, ½ raw
- papaya
- passion fruit, 3 raw
- peach
- pear
- pineapple
- plum, 1 raw or 2 canned
- prickly pear
- prunes, 3 dried or canned, ¼ cup (60 mL) juice
- raisins, 2 Tbsp (30 mL)
- 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 shoots, raw or boiled
- beet greens
- beets
- bok choy (pak choi)
- Brussels sprouts
- carrot juice
- cassava, raw
- chard, Swiss, boiled
- choy sum
- daikon (Chinese radish), boiled
- edamame
- gai choy (Chinese mustard greens)
- garden cress, boiled
- gow gay
- kohlrabi
- lotus root
- mushrooms, cooked
- parsnips
- paruppu keerai (lamb's quarters)
- peas, black-eyed
- potato, whole boiled, baked, or microwaved
- potato chips/fries, hash browns, or scalloped
- pumpkin
- rutabaga
- saag
- sohanjna ki phalli
- spinach, boiled
- squash - winter (acorn, butternut, hubbard)
- sweet potato
- sword beans
- taro
- tomato, cooked or canned 
- tomato juice and V8® juice, regular  or low salt
- tomato paste 
- tomato sauce 
- water chestnuts, raw
- yams

Tip: Boiling vegetables in large amounts of water can reduce their potassium content. Ask your dietitian for more information about cooking high potassium vegetables.

Tip: Limit ketchup to 2 Tbsp (30 mL) a day, if used at all.

Fruits

- apricots, dried
- avocado
- bael fruit
- banana
- breadfruit
- cantaloupe
- cherimoya
- coconut milk or water
- currants, dried
- dates
- durian
- guava
- jackfruit
- kiwi fruit
- nectarine
- orange, navel, raw or juice
- passion fruit juice
- persimmon
- plantain
- pomegranate, ½ raw or juice
- pummelo
- sapota
- tamarind
- tangelo
- wolfberry (goji)

Caution:

Grapefruit and **grapefruit juice** are low in potassium, but they affect the way many medicines work. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if grapefruit is safe for you to have.

Starfruit and **starfruit juice** can be dangerous if you have poor kidney function.

Other foods higher in potassium

There are many foods besides vegetables and fruits that have potassium. If your potassium levels are high, you may need to limit these foods as well. The list below can help you make lower potassium choices from these groups.

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

Grain Foods	Cereals made with whole bran such as bran flakes, raisin bran, granola, or muesli, and foods made with these cereals are high in potassium. If you need to lower your potassium: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid whole grain products, chickpea flour rotis, and other foods made with chickpea flour.• Choose white, whole wheat, light rye, or sourdough breads.
Milk and Dairy Foods	Fluid milks, soy beverages, yogurt, pudding, and ice cream contain potassium. If you need to lower your potassium, limit all milk and dairy foods to 1 cup (250 mL) or less a day.
Nuts, Nut Butters, and Seeds	Nuts, nut butters, and seeds are higher in potassium. If you need to lower your potassium: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use nuts, nut butters, and seeds sparingly.• Limit to 2 Tbsp (30 mL) a day, or up to ½ cup (125 mL) in a recipe.
Beans and Lentils	Beans (kidney, white, Lima, navy, pinto, soy), chickpeas, dried peas, and lentils are higher in potassium. If you need to lower your potassium, limit these to ½ cup (125 mL) cooked, once a week. Speak with your dietitian if you follow a vegetarian eating pattern.
Drinks	Black tea, coffee, and coffee drinks are higher in potassium. If you need to lower your potassium, limit to 2–3 cups (500–750 mL) a day.
Candy and Sweeteners	Chocolate, pure maple syrup, chocolate/carob desserts, and foods that contain molasses are higher in potassium. If you need to lower your potassium, eat 1 or less of the following each day: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• chocolate: 15 grams (size of 1 mini chocolate bar) or• pure maple syrup: 1 Tbsp (15 mL) or• chocolate or carob desserts such as chocolate cake or• foods that contain molasses such as gingersnaps
Other Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salt substitutes usually contain potassium chloride and are higher in potassium. Limit or avoid these if you need to lower your potassium.

For more support



- Talk to your healthcare team.
- Call Health Link at 811 and ask to talk to a dietitian or complete a [self-referral form](#) on ahs.ca/811
- Visit ahs.ca/nutrition.