

Potassium & Your CKD Diet

What you need to know about managing potassium with chronic kidney disease

What Is Potassium?

Potassium is a mineral that helps your heart, muscles, and nerves work properly. When kidneys are not working well, potassium can build up (hyperkalemia) or drop too low (hypokalemia). Your nephrologist will check your blood levels and tell you whether to limit or increase potassium in your diet.

High Potassium (Hyperkalemia)

Your doctor may ask you to **LIMIT** high-potassium foods. High potassium can cause dangerous heart rhythms.

Low Potassium (Hypokalemia)

Your doctor may ask you to **INCREASE** potassium-rich foods. Low potassium can cause muscle weakness and cramps.

Always follow your doctor's specific instructions. Your nephrologist will tell you your target potassium range based on your lab results.

High-Potassium vs. Lower-Potassium Foods

A food is "high potassium" if it has 200 mg or more per serving. Serving size matters — even a low-potassium food becomes high-potassium in large amounts.

Fruits (1 serving = ½ cup unless noted)

Higher Potassium (>200 mg/serving)	Lower Potassium (<200 mg/serving)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apricots (raw, 2 med; dried, 5 halves) • Avocado (¼ whole) • Banana (½ whole) • Cantaloupe • Dates (5 whole) • Dried fruits • Grapefruit juice • Honeydew melon • Kiwi (1 medium) • Mango (1 medium) • Nectarine (1 medium) • Orange (1 medium) • Orange juice • Papaya (½ whole) • Pomegranate (1 whole) • Prunes and prune juice • Raisins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple (1 medium) • Applesauce / apple juice • Blackberries • Blueberries • Cherries • Cranberries • Fruit cocktail • Grapes / grape juice • Grapefruit (½ whole) • Mandarin oranges • Peaches (canned, ½ cup) • Pears (canned, ½ cup) • Pineapple / pineapple juice • Plum (1 whole) • Raspberries • Strawberries • Tangerine (1 whole) • Watermelon (limit 1 cup)

Vegetables (1 serving = ½ cup unless noted)

Higher Potassium (>200 mg/serving)	Lower Potassium (<200 mg/serving)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acorn / butternut / hubbard squash • Artichoke • Baked, black, or dried beans • Beets • Broccoli (cooked) • Brussels sprouts • Carrots (raw) • Greens (except kale) • Kohlrabi • Lentils & legumes • Mushrooms (cooked) • Okra • Parsnips • Potatoes (white & sweet) • Pumpkin • Spinach (cooked) • Tomatoes & tomato products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asparagus (raw, 6 spears) • Beans (green or wax) • Broccoli (raw) • Cabbage (green or red) • Cauliflower • Celery (1 stalk) • Corn (fresh, ½ ear) • Cucumber • Eggplant • Kale • Lettuce • Mushrooms (raw) • Onions • Peas (green) • Peppers • Radish • Water chestnuts (canned) • Yellow squash • Zucchini

Other Foods (1 serving = ½ cup unless noted)

Higher Potassium (>200 mg/serving)	Lower Potassium (<200 mg/serving)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beef (3 oz) • Bran / bran products • Chicken (3 oz) • Chocolate (1.5–2 oz) • Granola • Milk, all types (1 cup) • Nuts & seeds (1 oz) • Peanut butter (2 tbsp) • Salmon (3 oz) • Salt substitutes / lite salt • Yogurt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bread (not whole grain) • Yellow or angel food cake • Coffee (limit to 8 oz) • Cookies (no nuts/chocolate) • Noodles • Pasta • Rice • Tea (limit to 16 oz)

How to Reduce Potassium in Vegetables (Leaching)

Leaching pulls some — but not all — potassium out of vegetables. You still need to limit the amount you eat even after leaching.

1	Peel the vegetable and place in cold water to prevent darkening.
2	Slice the vegetable 1/8 inch thick .
3	Rinse briefly in warm water for a few seconds.
4	Soak at least 2 hours in warm unsalted water — use 10x the water to vegetable (e.g., 1 cup veggies = 10 cups water). Change water every 4 hours if soaking longer.
5	Rinse again in warm water for a few seconds.
6	Cook using 5x the water to vegetable in unsalted water. Discard cooking water.

Also avoid using liquid from canned fruits, canned vegetables, or juices from cooked meat — these liquids are high in potassium.

Quick Tips to Manage Your Potassium

Read food labels.	Check the Nutrition Facts panel for potassium content per serving.
Watch your portions.	Even low-potassium foods become high-potassium in large amounts.
Avoid salt substitutes.	Many salt substitutes and "lite salts" are very high in potassium — avoid unless your doctor approves.
Skip potassium supplements.	Do not take potassium supplements unless prescribed by your doctor.
Cook wisely.	Boiling and draining vegetables helps lower their potassium content.
Ask about your labs.	Your potassium is checked at each visit — ask what your number is and what range to target.
See a renal dietitian.	A renal dietitian can build a personalized eating plan for your specific potassium target.

<p>Questions about your diet? Talk to your provider at your next visit or call: 219-931-5227</p>	<p>Our Locations: Munster · Gary · Merrillville Michigan City · Portage Valparaiso · Whiting, IN</p>	<p>Online: ns-nwi.com</p>
--	---	--------------------------------------