

# Southern Indiana Nephrology and Hypertension

## Potassium

### What is potassium and why is it important to you?

Potassium is a mineral found in many of the foods you eat. It plays a role in keeping your heartbeat regular and your muscles working right. It is the job of healthy kidneys to keep the right amount of potassium in your body. However, when your kidneys are not healthy, you often need to limit certain foods that can increase the potassium in your blood to a dangerous level. You may feel some weakness, numbness and tingling if your potassium is at a high level. **If your potassium becomes too high, it can cause an irregular heartbeat or a heart attack.**

### What is a safe level of potassium in my blood?

If it is 3.5-5.0.....You are in the **SAFE** zone  
If it is 5.1-6.0.....You are in the **CAUTION** zone  
If it is higher than 6.0.....You are in the **DANGER** zone

### How can I keep my potassium level from getting too high?

- You should **limit foods that are high in potassium**. Your renal dietitian will help you plan your diet so you are getting the right amount of potassium.
- Eat a **variety** of foods but in **moderation**.
- If you want to include some high potassium vegetable in your diet, **leach** them before using. Leaching is a process by which some potassium can be pulled out of the vegetable. Your dietitian can tell you how this is done and how much leached high potassium vegetables can be safely included in your diet.
- **Do not drink or use the liquid** from canned fruits and vegetables, or the juices from cooked meat.
- Remember that **almost all foods have some potassium**. The **size of the serving** is very important. **A large amount of a low potassium food can turn into a high- potassium food.**

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## What foods are high in potassium (greater than 200 milligrams per portion)?

The following table lists foods that are high in potassium. The portion size is ½ cup unless otherwise stated. **Please be sure to check portion sizes.**

### High-Potassium Foods

Fruits	Vegetables	Other Foods
Apricot , raw (2 medium) dried (5 halves)	Acorn Squash	Bran/Bran products
Avocado (¼ whole)	Artichoke	Chocolate (1.5-2 ounces)
Banana (½ whole)	Bamboo Shoots	Granola
Cantaloupe	Baked Beans	Milk, all types (1 cup)
Dates (5 whole)	Butternut Squash	Molasses (1 Tablespoon)
Dried fruits	Refried Beans	Nutritional Supplements: Use only under the direction of your doctor or dietitian.
Figs, dried	Beets, fresh then boiled	
Grapefruit Juice	Black Beans	
Honeydew	Broccoli, cooked	Nuts and Seeds (1 ounce)
Kiwi (1 medium)	Brussels Sprouts	Peanut Butter (2 tbs.)
Mango(1 medium)	Chinese Cabbage	Salt Substitutes/Lite Salt
Nectarine(1 medium)	Carrots, raw	Salt Free Broth
Orange(1 medium)	Dried Beans and Peas	Yogurt
Orange Juice	Greens, except Kale	Snuff/Chewing Tobacco
Papaya (½ whole)	Hubbard Squash	
Pomegranate (1 whole)	Kohlrabi	
Pomegranate Juice	Lentils	
Prunes	Legumes	
Prune Juice	Mushrooms, canned	
Raisins	Parsnips	
	Potatoes, white and sweet	
	Pumpkin	
	Rutabagas	
	Spinach, cooked	
	Tomatoes/Tomato products	
	Vegetable Juices	

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