

Low Potassium Diet for Diabetic Nephropathy

Patients must contact their dietitians for any questions regarding the incorporation of information obtained from this guideline into their diets.

Potassium is a substance found in food that affects your heartbeat. The unhealthy kidney cannot excrete an excess of potassium in the urine so that it stays behind in the body. Your blood levels of potassium will then rise and it can be dangerous to your heart, even cause death. Potassium is found in many foods, especially fruit, vegetables, milk and certain starches. These foods need to be restricted in the diet to ensure that the potassium in the blood does not increase to dangerous levels. Consult your dietitian to find out how much potassium you are allowed in your diet.

How to reduce potassium content of vegetables

- Peel vegetables and cut in smaller pieces.
- Soak vegetables for about 2 hours in warm water and then drain the vegetables.
- Afterwards boil the vegetables in water until cooked and drain before serving.

Tips on fruit and vegetable intake

1. Restrict your intake of fruit and vegetables combined to at least 4 – 5 portions per day.

2. Most of the fruit are high in potassium except for apples, pear, granadilla and youngberries.
3. Follow instructions on the preparation of vegetables and potatoes to reduce their potassium content.
4. Most starches are low in potassium except for potato and sweet potato that should be limited to only 1 portion per day or as prescribed by your dietitian.
5. Milk and dairy products e.g. low fat fruit yoghurt, artificially sweetened chocolates or chocolate sweets (do not use more than the daily allowance).

Other food items high in potassium that has to be restricted as prescribed by your dietitian:

- Raw vegetables
- Dried fruit, fruit salad, fruit juice
- Potato chips (oven-baked), baked potato and sweet potato
- Tomato puree, - juice, and -sauce
- Legumes e.g. dried beans, peas, lentils, soya products
- Nuts and peanuts
- Salt replacements or salt substitutes containing potassium
- Wine, coffee

Portion sizes of the food items listed are based on the adapted American Dietetics Associations' Exchange Lists

