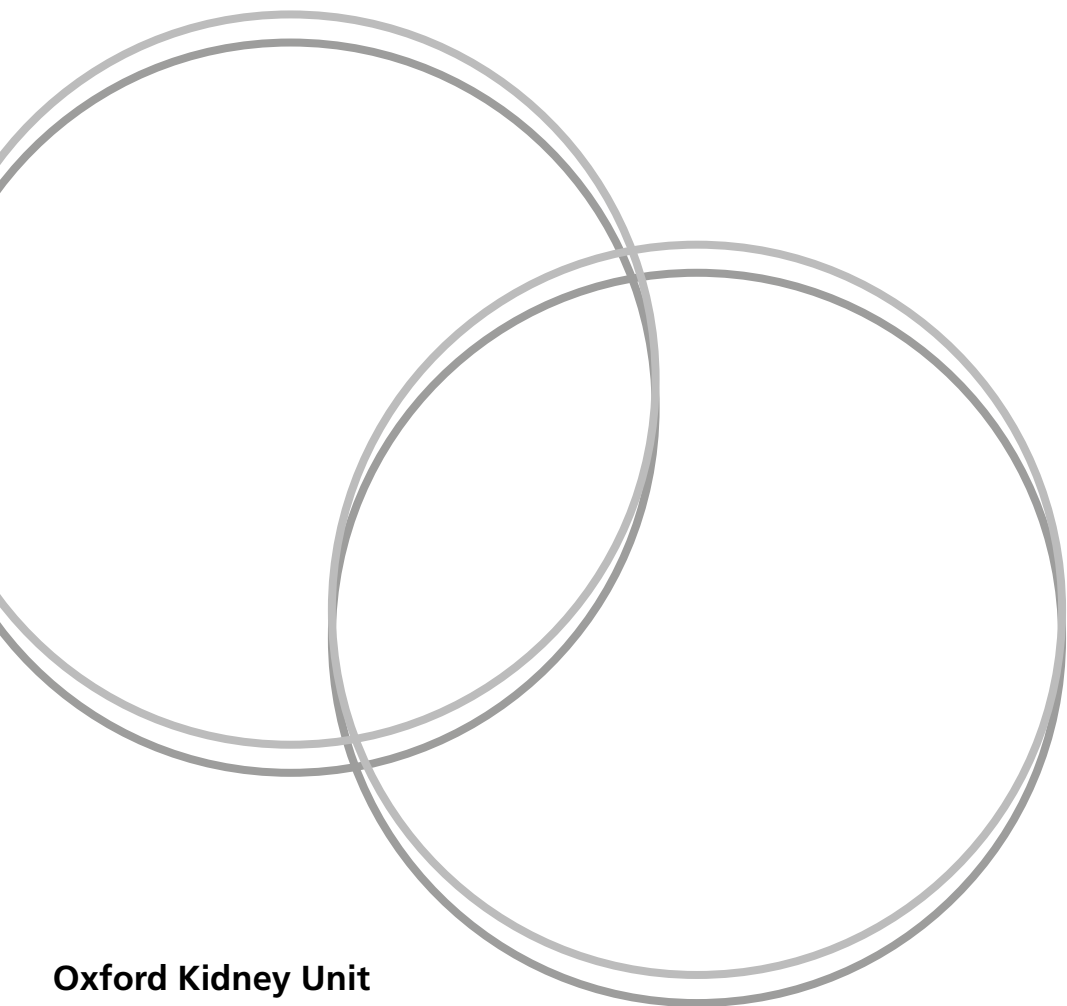




Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Increasing Potassium in Your Diet

**Information for people with
chronic kidney disease**



Oxford Kidney Unit

The dietitians can only provide advice or information to patients cared for under the Oxford Kidney or Transplant Unit (Churchill hospital). This includes the network units at Banbury, High Wycombe, Milton Keynes, Stoke Mandeville and Swindon (Great Western Hospital). If you do not attend these sites, then please contact your local care team.

Introduction

Potassium is a mineral which your body requires to function normally. It helps to maintain a healthy heart, nerve and muscle function. Low levels of potassium in your blood can cause problems with all of these functions. Sometimes they can be dangerous. If you are worried please talk with your kidney team.

Your potassium level should be between 3.5 and 5.5mmol/l

The level of potassium in your body is controlled by your kidneys, but levels can also be affected by other factors. Some things that may reduce your potassium levels include:

- Reduced kidney function.
- Certain medications such as diuretics (these are sometimes called water tablets).
- Episodes of gastroenteritis, sickness and diarrhoea.
- A high output stoma (if you have a stoma).

We measure your potassium by taking a small amount of blood from a vein.

If the potassium level in your blood is low, it is important to eat plenty of potassium rich foods to increase the potassium in your diet. This leaflet will provide you with information on which foods contain higher levels of potassium for you to include in your diet.

Fruits and Vegetables

The levels of potassium in fruit and vegetables can vary widely. The table below gives you some examples of high potassium fruits and vegetables to choose from.

As part of the government's healthy eating message, it is advisable to have at least 'Five-a-Day' and aim for three of these to be a higher potassium option listed below.

Higher Potassium Fruit	Higher Potassium Vegetables
Apricot	Artichoke, esp Jerusalem
Banana	Asparagus
Blackberries (raw, stewed)	Avocado
Blackcurrants	Bamboo shoots
Cherries	Beetroot
Coconut	Brussel sprouts
Grapes	Butternut squash
Mango	Celery
Melon (NOT water melon)	Courgette
Orange (large)	Fennel
Pomegranate	Mushrooms
Rhubarb	Okra
Sharon fruit	Onions, shallots, spring onion
All dried fruit	Parsnip
e.g. apricots, currants, dates,	Pak Choi
figs, raisins, sultanas, mango,	Spinach, Baby spinach
prunes	Sweetcorn
	Swiss chard
	Tomatoes: raw, sundried,
	canned whole contents
	Turnip

Tinned fruit and vegetables lose a lot of potassium through the canning process. If you are using tinned fruit and vegetables, include the juice, syrup or water they are tinned in when cooking or eating.

Starchy carbohydrates

Here are some examples of high potassium starchy foods to include in your diet:

- Starchy root vegetables such as potato, sweet potato, cassava and yam. See below for cooking tips.
- Bread and pastries containing nuts, seeds and dried fruit.
- Breakfast cereals containing dried fruit and nuts or those high in bran, e.g. muesli, fruit and fibre, granola and All Bran. You can also sprinkle dried fruit, nuts and seeds on your morning porridge or cereal.
- Rice and pasta which are low in potassium can be served with a stir fry with high potassium vegetables listed on the previous page or a tomato-rich bolognese or chilli made with tomato passata or tomato puree.

Helpful cooking tips for all vegetables:

Roasting, baking, steaming and microwaving are good cooking methods to help retain the potassium content. Keeping the skins on also reduces the loss of potassium. If you do boil your vegetables and potatoes, consider using the cooking water to make stock for gravy, sauces and soups. Vegetables can also be added directly to stews, curries and stir fries.

Meat, Fish and Vegetarian/Vegan Alternatives

Meat, fish, lentils, beans and pulses all contain potassium, therefore include these in your diet every day. Some higher potassium beans and pulses include:

- Aduki beans.
- Baked beans in tomato sauce.
- Pinto beans.
- Soy/edamame beans.

Adding lentils, beans and pulses to soups and stews can help increase the potassium content of the meal.

Dairy products

Milk and dairy products are a good source of potassium (and calcium). Some examples of adding dairy foods into your diet include:

- Milk on your breakfast cereal.
- Yoghurt: on its own, or with cereal, fruit, jelly.
- Milky puddings e.g. rice pudding, custard, crème caramel.
- Creamy sauces e.g. a white sauce with fish or chicken, or a creamy tomato pasta bake.

Snacks

Most snack foods e.g. crisps, biscuits, sweets, are high in energy as well as salt or sugar content and may not be a healthy choice. Check the food labels if you need to limit these.

Examples of savoury and sweet snacks that are rich in potassium include:

Savoury snacks	Sweet snacks
<p>Nuts, nut mixes (preferably unsalted)</p> <p>e.g. pistachios, walnuts, hazelnuts, pecan, almonds, brazil nuts</p> <p>Seeds, seed mixes</p> <p>e.g. sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds</p> <p>Twiglets</p> <p>Peanuts, preferably unsalted</p> <p>Bombay mix</p> <p>Potato crisps and snacks</p> <p>choose naked or salt your own varieties where possible</p> <p>Vegetable / lentil crisps</p>	<p>Dried fruit</p> <p>e.g. raisins, sultanas, apricots, banana crisps</p> <p>Dried fruit and nut mix</p> <p>Banana bread</p> <p>Cakes, buns and scones containing dried fruit, chocolate, coconut, nuts</p> <p>Biscuits containing chocolate, dried fruit, nuts</p> <p>Cereal bars containing nuts, seeds, dried fruit</p> <p>Liquorice Allsorts</p> <p>Fudge, toffee</p> <p>Carob</p> <p>Peanut, nut and sesame brittle</p>

Beverages

If you have been advised on a fluid allowance, make sure that you count everything you drink as part of your daily allowance. If you are unsure what your fluid restriction is, please ask your kidney team.

Some high potassium beverages include:

- coffee
- fresh fruit and vegetable juices
- smoothies
- hi-juice squashes
- milk
- milkshakes
- drinking chocolate
- malted drinks
- coconut water.

Miscellaneous Foods

Below is a list of miscellaneous foods which are high in potassium. These include some items used in cooking, in sandwiches/on toast as well as condiments.

- soups, especially those with tomatoes or root vegetables
- chocolate/chocolate nut spreads
- peanut butter, nut butters
- coconut milk or coconut cream (can also be used in cooking)
- dried milk powder
- tomato puree, ketchup, chutney.

The renal dietetic team have a range of other leaflets that you may find helpful.

Contacts

Renal Dietitians

Tel: **01865 225 061**

Please leave a message on the answerphone and one of the team will call you back.

Further information

Oxford Kidney Unit

The website has lots of information about the Oxford Kidney Unit for patients and carers.

Website: **www.ouh.nhs.uk/oku**

Kidney Care UK

A charity which has lots of practical support and information for people with kidney disease.

Website: **www.kidneycareuk.org**

Six Counties Kidney Patients Association

The SCKPA is run for patients by patients or family members.

They offer support to people suffering from kidney disease or who are on dialysis. They work closely with the Oxford Kidney Unit and have branches in Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, and Milton Keynes, and parts of Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Berkshire.

Website: **www.sixcountieskpa.org.uk**

Further Information

Please speak to the department where you are being seen if you would like an interpreter. You will find their contact details on your appointment letter. Please also ask them if you would like this information leaflet in another format, such as:

- easy read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronically
- in another language.

We have tried to make this information meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They will be happy to help.

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