

FOODS

HEALTHY FOODS

containing potassium are **FRUITS, VEGETABLES, LEGUMES, NUTS AND WHOLE-GRAIN CEREALS**. In these foods the **potassium is naturally** there. These **healthy potassium food sources contain nutrients and fiber that are good for your body**.

UNHEALTHY FOODS WITH POTASSIUM

are the **ultra-processed foods with potassium ADDITIVES (*)**. Potassium additives are **not naturally present in the food and can increase blood potassium levels more than the potassium naturally present in the food**. *They are used for increasing shelf-life, adding more flavor and color to food.

ULTRAPROCESSED FOOD

are ready-to-eat foods that we buy in the supermarket, and usually have a lot of salt, fat and additives with potassium and phosphate. Examples: Snacks (potato chips and others), Processed meats (mortadella, ham, sausages, salami, smoked turkey), Ready-to-drink beverages (cocoa-milk drinks) and beverages containing electrolytes, such as Sport drinks, often contain potassium additives.

41

IMPORTANT: There are 41 potassium additives that can be used in foods. **Ultra-processed foods are a hidden source of potassium.**

LIST OF RAW FRUITS AND VEGETABLES ACCORDING TO THE POTASSIUM CONTENT PER SERVING

Fruits and vegetables with low potassium content (< 200 mg of K/serving)

FRUITS

1 medium persimmon
1 medium slice of pineapple
1 medium apple
½ of medium mango
1 medium pear
1 medium peach
1 medium fresh plum
10 small strawberries
1 cup of blueberries
1 cup of raspberries
½ cup blackberries
40 mL of lemon juice

RAW VEGETABLES

5 lettuces leaves
1 cup of watercress
1 cup of sliced cucumber
1 cup of cabbage
5 radishes
1 medium tomato
½ of medium carrot

Fruits and vegetables with higher potassium content (> 200 mg of K/serving)

FRUITS

1 medium **banana**
1 slice of melon cantaloupe
1 slice of watermelon
1 orange
1 grapefruit
1 **kiwi**
½ **avocado**, black or green skin
Coconut water
Coconut, fresh
1 cup (cubes) of papaya
10 grapes
1 cup of cherries
3 passion fruits

RAW VEGETABLES

1 cup of kale
1/2 cup beet
1 cup of broccoli

Nutrient source: USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) Food Composition Tables.

Fruits/vegetables marked in **red** have higher K concentration.



POTASSIUM



A collaboration between ERN and the ERA Cookbook



WHAT IS POTASSIUM?

Potassium is a mineral that helps to control essential body functions. If you have chronic kidney disease, potassium can become high in your blood. For this reason, **the amount of potassium in the diet needs to be carefully balanced.**

WHICH FOODS CONTAIN POTASSIUM?

Potassium is present in many foods and beverages, especially fruits and vegetables and ultra-processed foods.

Potassium is described as “**K**” in the food labels.

The amount of potassium in food varies depending on the type of food.



If I have chronic kidney disease and high blood potassium levels (>5.5 mEq/L),

WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH THE DIET?

1

Talk to the dietitians from your clinic and ask them to adapt your diet to your needs and preferences. If this is not possible, the following information will help you to choose the food you eat.

2

Avoid eating **FOODS AND BEVERAGES THAT ARE ULTRA-PROCESSED.**

3

It is **IMPORTANT NOT TO EXCLUDE** all the **HEALTHY FOOD WITH POTASSIUM** from your diet. Here are some tips on how to include them safely.

a REPLACE fruits and vegetables with **HIGH POTASSIUM** for those with **LOW POTASSIUM** as shown in the Table in this handout. The amount is individualized, but normally, 3 servings of low potassium fruits/day and 2 servings of raw vegetables/day is well tolerated even if the blood potassium is high. For the vegetables and beans, follow the procedure for cooking them in water as described in the other handout.

b Prefer to use fresh fruits and vegetables. Canned fruits and vegetables may contain potassium additives. If you use canned fruits and vegetables, drain the water and rinse them in water before eating.

c All nuts have high potassium content. If the potassium from your blood is high, it is better to limit them.



If I have chronic kidney disease and my blood POTASSIUM IS NORMAL,

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

1

Keep a healthy diet and limit the intake of ultra-processed foods. These might contain potassium additives.

2

If your glomerular filtration rate is below 15 ml/min/1.73 m² and you are not in dialysis, follow the same recommendations for those with high potassium level.

3

Do not use low-sodium salts. These contain potassium chloride (KCl). In Europe, KCl is listed on food labels under the code E-508.

ARE THERE OTHER FOODS THAT CONTAIN POTASSIUM?

Other foods high in potassium include chocolates, dried fruits, instant coffee and powdered milk. If the blood potassium levels are high, limit these foods.

VERY IMPORTANT!

Do not use salt substitutes that contain KCl (potassium chloride). These salts are recommended for people with high blood pressure, but individuals with chronic kidney disease should not use them.

Star fruit is the only food prohibited from the diet of patients with chronic kidney disease not due to its potassium content, but due to a neurotoxin that cannot be removed by the dialysis. Ingestion of star fruit by patients with chronic kidney disease can cause seizures, coma and even death.

