

# Reducing your potassium intake

## Department of Renal Medicine

### Patient Information Leaflet

#### Introduction

Your renal consultant has found that your levels of potassium are too high. The information in this booklet will give you information on reducing your intake of higher potassium foods and drinks.

Please note that the information in this booklet is only a guide. If you need any more information or have any queries, please speak to the Renal Unit staff.

#### What is potassium?

Potassium is an important mineral found in a variety of foods and drinks. The kidneys normally help to control the level of potassium in your blood. If your kidneys are not working properly, potassium is not removed when it should be and the potassium levels in your blood can become too high.

#### Why do I need to reduce my intake of potassium?

Over time, high levels of potassium can have a dangerous effect on your heart.

Not all people with kidney disease need to limit higher potassium foods and drinks. You only need to reduce your intake of these foods if your doctor, nurse or dietitian recommends this.

Suggestions for reducing your intake of high potassium foods are on the following page.

## Main sources of potassium and alternatives

	Higher potassium foods (to limit)	Lower potassium alternatives
<b>Drinks</b>	Fruit or vegetable juices and smoothies Coffee: up to two cups a day Milk or milky drinks: up to half a pint a day Beer, lager, cider, stout, wine, champagne, sherry, port	All fizzy drinks, cordials, squashes, flavoured water (choose sugar-free versions if you have diabetes or if you are trying to lose weight) Tea and fruit tea Spirits (in moderation only)
<b>Fruit</b>	All dried fruit, bananas, grapes, apricots, plums, rhubarb, fresh pineapple, kiwis <b>NB: star fruit should be avoided by anyone with kidney disease</b>	Apples, pears, small oranges, satsumas, peaches, nectarines, cranberries, blueberries, tinned fruit (drained of juice), passion fruit
<b>Vegetables</b>	Tomatoes, mushrooms, sprouts, spinach, beetroot, sweetcorn, avocados, aubergines, artichokes, parsnips, celeriac, plantain, okra	All vegetables including carrots, peas, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli (they should be <b>boiled</b> ) Lettuce, cucumbers, peppers
<b>Sweet foods</b>	Chocolate, toffee, liquorice, black treacle, coconut, marzipan	Sweets, fruit pastilles, marshmallows, mints, chewing gum, jam, honey, syrup (limit sweet foods if you have diabetes or if you are trying to lose weight)
<b>Snacks</b>	All nuts, potato crisps, Bombay mix	Snacks made from wheat, corn or rice e.g. Wotsits, Skips, Mini Cheddars, popcorn, plain biscuits (limit these foods if you are trying to lose weight)
<b>Potatoes and alternatives</b>	Baked potatoes, roast potatoes, chips (including oven chips)	Boiled potatoes, rice, pasta, noodles, bread

**Important: Avoid all salt substitutes e.g. LoSalt, Solo.**

If you need more information, please ask your doctor to refer you to a renal dietitian.

## What else do I need to know?

Other things, as well as your diet, may affect your potassium levels. Your doctor or dietitian will discuss these with you if appropriate.

Please be aware that **constipation** can increase your potassium level so if this is a problem, please speak to your doctor, pharmacist, nurse or dietitian.

Sometimes medications are required to help to control your potassium level. The main ones that are used are:

- Calcium Resonium
- Sodium bicarbonate

If these medications are prescribed for you, your doctor or dietitian will give you more information about them. It is very important that these are taken as directed.

## Can I find out more?

The following weblink has more information on kidney conditions:

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Kidney-disease-chronic/Pages/Treatment.aspx>

### Contact information

**The Renal Unit at Russells Hall Hospital on 01384 244384**

7.30am to 8pm, Monday to Saturday

9am to 5pm, Sunday

Out of these hours, ring the hospital switchboard number and tell them you are a renal patient. Ask to speak to the haemodialysis nurse on call.

**Remember: the renal team is always willing to give help and advice. Please contact us, however small your query.**

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/renal/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru vă rugăm să sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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