

Controlling your potassium level - A guide for inpatients

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

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What is potassium?

Potassium is a mineral which is found naturally in many foods. Some potassium is needed as part of a healthy diet. It is needed in the body for your muscles and heart to work properly.



Why is the amount of potassium in my blood too high?

Several things can affect the level of potassium in your blood. The potassium levels in your blood should be kept within the normal limits as it can affect your heart function if it becomes too low or high. A high level may occur as a result of certain medications that you are taking, or it may be that your kidneys are not controlling your potassium levels effectively.

What should I do to control my potassium levels?

In many cases raised levels can be corrected by changes in medication, preventing constipation and having good blood sugar control (if you have diabetes). If levels remain high, then you may be asked to reduce the amount of potassium in your diet. The following points will help you to choose suitable foods, drinks, and meals from the hospital menu. If you are required to continue this diet at home your doctor will refer you to a kidney dietitian for further advice.

When choosing from your menu:

| |  Good choices |  Limit |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Drinks | Tea Diluted squash Fizzy drinks Water | Fresh fruit juice Fruit smoothies Coffee Drinking chocolate Malted drinks (e.g. Ovaltine, Horlicks) |
| Snacks | Apples Pears Mints Boiled sweets Jelly sweets Plain biscuits (digestive, rich tea, ginger, shortbread or oat biscuit) Plain popcorn | Crisps, potato or vegetable based snacks Chocolate, toffee, fudge or liquorice Biscuits with nuts, dried fruits or chocolate. Bananas, apricots, prunes, dried fruit including fruit cake Nuts |
| Breakfast | Most breakfast options - plain cereals, porridge, toast | Bran flakes Cereals with dried fruit, nuts (e.g. muesli) or chocolate |
| Main meals | Pasta, rice or sandwiches Most vegetables are suitable If having potatoes choose boiled or mashed, and only have these at one meal per day | Soups Jacket potato Chips Roast potatoes and hash browns Parsnips and mushrooms Baked beans and tinned tomatoes |
| Desserts | Most puddings and cold desserts Fruit in natural fruit juice (discard the juice) | Sticky toffee pudding Chocolate sponge Chocolate muffin |

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact: The Nutrition and Dietetics Department, Telephone: 01904 725269, Email: yhs-tr.yorkdietitians@nhs.net.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website: www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

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