

Potassium Imbalance: Food Sources

Potassium helps to regulate heart rate and rhythm and is involved in maintaining a normal water balance.

Your doctor may question you about what kinds of foods you are eating that may contribute to these problems:

- 1) Hyperkalemia (too much potassium)
- 2) Hypokalemia (not enough potassium)

You may be advised to *decrease* your intake of the following foods if your potassium level is high or *increase* your intake of the following foods if your potassium level is low.

Foods high in potassium

- Vegetables—spinach, tomatoes, tomato juice, potatoes, asparagus, beets, Brussels sprouts, mushrooms, parsnips, pumpkin, rutabagas, artichokes, corn on the cob, and Chinese cabbage
- Fruits—apricots, grapefruit juice, kiwi, nectarines, oranges, orange juice, peaches, pears, avocados, bananas, cantaloupe, dried fruit, honeydew melon, mangoes, papayas, and prune juice
- Milk and milk products
- Granola
- Molasses
- Salt substitutes
- Legumes, nuts, and seeds
- Whole grains

Diet and potassium absorption

Black licorice, when eaten in excess, can lead to dangerously low potassium levels in the body.

If you need further assistance with these recommendations, ask your doctor to refer you to a registered dietitian (R.D.) who can help you with additional nutrition education, cooking suggestions, shopping tips, menu planning, and individualizing a diet to meet your lifestyle needs.

References on file