



The Emily Program

Real help for eating disorders

Dietary Sources of Potassium

Potassium is a specific type of mineral, called an electrolyte. Electrolytes, like potassium, are very important to the body. Potassium is important in building muscle and proteins, maintaining normal growth, using carbohydrates, and also controls the electrical activity of the heart. Having too much or too little potassium is potentially very dangerous.

A low blood level of potassium is called hypokalemia. Too little potassium can cause weak muscles, abnormal heart rhythms, and a rise in blood pressure. Hypokalemia can be caused by:

- Diuretics
- Laxatives
- Severe or prolonged vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Certain kidney or adrenal gland disorders

Too much potassium in the blood is called hyperkalemia. Too much potassium may cause abnormal and dangerous heart rhythms. Some common causes of hyperkalemia include:

- Poor kidney function
- Severe infection
- Diuretics which are potassium-sparing, such as spironolactone
- Some heart medications like ACE-inhibitors and angiotensin 2 receptor blockers (ARBs)

Dietary sources of Potassium:

- Baked potato, with skin (1 medium) 925 mg
- Soy milk (1 cup) 600 mg
- Avocado (1/2 fruit) 487 mg
- Fish (3 ounces, halibut, cod, salmon) 480 mg
- Banana (1 medium) 425 mg
- Papaya (1 small) 391 mg
- Milk (1 cup) 350-380 mg
- Tomato or vegetable juice (1/2 cup) 275 mg
- Raisins (1/4 cup) 270 mg
- Turkey (3 ounces) 250 mg
- Yogurt (1/2 cup) 238 mg
- Orange (1 medium) 237 mg
- Broccoli (1/2 cup) 230 mg

How much Potassium do you need?

Ages 9-13 4.5 grams/day (4500 mg)

Ages 14+ 4.7 grams/day (4700 mg)

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, your Potassium intake needs may also be higher. Please consult with your physician.

Source: National Institutes of Health/Medline Plus. Retrieved from: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002413.htm>