

# Lowering your potassium levels

**This leaflet is for people with kidney disease who have been advised to follow a low potassium diet by their dietitian, doctor or nurse. It explains what foods to avoid and/or limit and gives suitable alternatives. If you have any further questions, please contact us using the details on the back page.**

## **Why are my potassium levels high?**

Potassium is a mineral found in many foods and drinks. The correct level of potassium in your blood is essential to being well and feeling well. Your body takes the potassium it needs from what you eat and drink.

Your kidneys remove potassium from your blood and you pass it out of your body in your urine. If your kidneys do not work properly, they may not remove enough or any potassium. Too much potassium in your blood can be dangerous to your heart, nerves and muscles, so you must take control.

## **How can I lower my potassium levels?**

Reducing the potassium that you eat is one way of helping to reduce the amount of potassium in your blood. Here is a list of foods to avoid or limit, together with suitable alternatives.

<b>Avoid</b>	<b>Choose instead</b>
Soups	Cream of chicken soup.
Fruit juices and vegetable juices	Diluted squash or cordial, carbonated drinks, water.
Chips Jacket potatoes Fried plantain	Boiled potatoes (150g a day), mashed or creamed potatoes, boiled plantain (100g a day), pasta, rice, bread, couscous.
Bananas, avocado, kiwi, melon, apricot and mango	Other fresh fruit, including apples, pears and grapes, or tinned or stewed fruit – up to two portions per day. One portion of fruit (80g) is approximately one handful.
Nuts, seeds, dried fruit, chocolate and products containing them (such as, biscuits, cakes, cereals, breads and rolls)	Plain biscuits, cakes or cereals, such as digestives, rich tea, plain sponge cake, Weetabix, cornflakes and porridge. Plain breads, plain bagels, croissants, crumpets and pitta bread.
Baked beans, mushrooms, spinach	Other vegetables – up to two portions per day. One portion of vegetables is one handful or two to three tablespoons. Boil vegetables and discard the cooking water.
Coffee (limit to one cup per day)	Tea, including fruit or herbal teas.
Potato crisps	Corn, maize or rice snacks.

## **Contact us**

If you have any questions, please contact the **renal dietitians** on **020 7188 4128**, 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

If we are unable to take your call please leave a message on our answer phone and we will call you back

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets)

## **Pharmacy Medicines Helpline**

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

**t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

**t:** 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas'

**t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's

**e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

## **Language Support Services**

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

**t:** 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953