

# Lowering your potassium levels

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about lowering your potassium levels. It explains what foods to avoid and gives suitable alternatives.

If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

## 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.

Avoid	Choose instead
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 (for example, 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.

## Further information

### Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about lowering your potassium levels, please do not hesitate to ask your **renal dietitian** by calling the nutrition and dietetics department on **020 71884128**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Please leave a message on our answer phone and we will call you back. Alternatively you can talk to your nurse when you see him/her.

### 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)

### Knowledge & Information Centre (KIC)

For more information about health conditions, support groups and local services, or to search the internet and send emails, please visit the KIC on the Ground Floor, North Wing, St Thomas' Hospital.

**t:** 020 7188 3416

### 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

### NHS Direct

Offers health information and advice from specially trained nurses over the phone 24 hours a day.

**t:** 0845 4647    **w:** [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

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