

Hyperkalemia (high potassium level in blood)

What is potassium?

Potassium (K+) is a mineral that found in food, it's important to keep the heart beats regularly and for the muscles and nerves to work properly ¹

What is normal potassium level?

Normal blood potassium level is 3.5-5.0 mmol/liter. (Your hospital or lab may use a slightly different normal range, so check this locally)

How much potassium do I need?

It is recommended that for someone with normal kidney function to have diet that contains at least 4700 mg of potassium per day². For someone with moderate to severe chronic kidney disease it is recommended to limit potassium to 2000-3000 mg per day. Further restriction might be recommended by your doctor.

Low potassium diet is defined as a dietary intake of between 2000 to 3000 mg/day.²

What happen if my potassium is high?

You may not have any symptoms if potassium is slightly elevated, your doctor will tell you that your potassium level is elevated after testing your blood. If the potassium level is significantly elevated, it may cause life threatening conditions like abnormal heart beats.

What causes potassium level to go up?

Your kidneys usually get rid of the extra potassium and keep the level normal. If you have chronic kidney disease, your kidneys may not be able to get rid of potassium properly so the level will go up.

There are other causes of high potassium level, like Addison's disease, trauma or burn.

Is there any medication that cause high potassium level?

Yes, some medications can cause high potassium, like some water pills, beta blockers, some blood pressure medications, and NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs). ³

How to bring my potassium level down?

By changing your diet, using some medications ³. Your doctor will decide the exact course of management.

What food should I eat and what to avoid to control my potassium?

Please refer to our detailed list of meals and food items.

1. Potassium. National Kidney Federation. Accessed July 26, 2022. <https://www.kidney.org.uk/potassium>
2. 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines | health.gov. Accessed July 26, 2022. <https://health.gov/our-work/nutrition-physical-activity/dietary-guidelines/previous-dietary-guidelines/2015>
3. Hyperkalemia. AAKP. Published June 10, 2019. Accessed July 26, 2022. <https://aakp.org/center-for-patient-research-and-education/hyperkalemia/>