

# Low potassium dietary advice when in hospital





**Potassium is a mineral in the blood that helps with nerve and muscle function. If the potassium level in the blood becomes too high it can affect the way the heart beats and functions. If the level is dangerously high it is life threatening.**

To help to reduce your potassium to a safe level you have been advised to follow a low potassium diet. There is a low potassium menu available which you may choose to have.

The aim of this booklet is to provide advice on how to choose low potassium options from the standard menu and some of the alternative menus available in the hospital. This may provide you with more choice and variety during your hospital stay.

### **Guidance for breakfast options:**

- Avoid any cereals which contain dried fruit or nuts
- Bread, bread rolls and toast, with butter and jam or marmalade, are suitable

## Guidance for ordering from the core lunchtime menu:

<b>Starters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Soup should be avoided</li><li>• Bread and butter is suitable</li></ul>
<b>Main Courses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All main courses are suitable except for the indian selection and beans on toast</li></ul>
<b>Jacket Potatoes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Jacket potatoes are very high in potassium and should be avoided</li></ul>
<b>Sandwiches and salads</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All sandwiches and salads are suitable</li></ul>
<b>Side dishes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coleslaw, pasta salad and rice salad are suitable</li><li>• Limit side dishes to 1 per meal</li><li>• Baked beans and beetroot salad should be avoided</li></ul>
<b>Desserts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Avoid any dessert that contains dried fruit, nuts or chocolate</li><li>• Cake or custard can be chosen as a dessert but should not be taken together</li><li>• Limit yoghurts to 2-3 per week</li><li>• All fresh fruit on the menu, except for bananas, are suitable</li></ul>

## Guidance for ordering from the evening menu:

<b>Starters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Starters should be avoided as they are too high in potassium</li></ul>
<b>Main Courses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All main courses are suitable except for the indian selection and beans on toast</li></ul>
<b>Potatoes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mashed or boiled potatoes can be taken up to once a day</li><li>• Chips, roast potatoes, potato wedges and jacket potatoes should all be avoided</li></ul>
<b>Alternatives to Potatoes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pasta, rice, bread, chapatti and naan bread are all good alternatives to potatoes</li></ul>
<b>Vegetables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limit vegetables to two portions a day</li><li>• A portion of salad can be taken instead of vegetables. The salad should only include one small tomato</li><li>• Tomato based sauces can be taken if eaten with a pasta or a rice dish, but should be avoided if the meal contains potato</li></ul>
<b>Desserts</b>	<i>See advice for core lunchtime menu</i>

## Cultural and other Menus

Starters on all of the menus listed below should be avoided as they are high in potassium. If you are having dessert, see advice for ordering from the lunchtime menu

**The following menu items are very high in potassium and should be avoided:**

<b>Kosher menu</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meat lasagne with mixed vegetables and spinach</li><li>• Steak pie with roast potatoes, peas and sweet corn</li><li>• Grilled plaice in sauce with sauté potatoes &amp; ratatouille</li><li>• Fried cod with parisienne potatoes and continental cabbage</li></ul>
<b>Multi-Cultural menu</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tinda chana dal with toor Dal and basmati rice</li><li>• Aloo sag with toor Dal and basmati rice</li><li>• Green salad</li></ul>
<b>African Caribbean</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vegetables in a mild caribbean sauce, white rice and green beans</li></ul>
<b>Children's menu</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vegetable lasagne</li><li>• Penne pasta bolognese</li><li>• Chips and baked beans as side dishes</li><li>• Bananas</li></ul>

## Drinks

Suitable drinks	Drinks to avoid
<p>Water, tea, orange or lemon squash, lemonade, cola, 7-up, tango, sprite, lilt, soda and tonic water.</p>	<p>Limit coffee to one cup daily Avoid milky drinks, chocolate drinks, Bovril and malted drinks, e.g. Horlicks, Ovaltine and Bournvita, shop bought coffee, high juice squash, blackcurrant Ribena, fresh fruit juice</p> <p>Limit milk to that served on cereal and in hot drinks and avoid drinking milk on its own</p>

If you have been advised to follow a fluid allowance remember to count all drinks within this.

## Snacks

To help to increase the variety in your diet, family and friends may wish to bring snacks. Low potassium snacks are available on the ward and highlighted with the code 'LP' on the red snack list. The list below will help you choose suitable options.

Suitable snacks	Snacks to avoid
<p><b>Cakes:</b></p> <p>Plain sponge or fairy cakes, plain scones, cherry scones, plain flapjack, cream cakes, doughnuts, cherry muffins, lemon muffin and croissants</p>	<p>Any cakes or pastries containing chocolate, coffee, nuts, dried fruit, marzipan and coconut</p>
<p><b>Sweets:</b></p> <p>Boiled sweets, barley sugars, mints, butterscotch, marshmallows, jelly babies, fruit pastilles and chewing gum</p>	<p>Chocolate, liquorice, fudge, toffee, fruit gums</p>
<p><b>Biscuits:</b></p> <p>Plain biscuits, e.g. rich tea, digestive, Hobnob, shortbread and ginger biscuits. Cream filled biscuits e.g. custard creams, golden crunch, Jammie Dodgers</p>	<p>Any biscuit containing chocolate, dried fruit or nuts</p>



Suitable snacks	Snacks to avoid
<p><b>Savoury Snacks:</b>            Bread, crackers, crumpets, plain bread sticks and popcorn            Limit your intake of the following foods of up to two packets each week as they are high in salt: pretzels, maize based snacks: e.g Skips, tortilla chips and Wotsits, wheat based snacks e.g. Wheat Crunchies and Mini Cheddars</p>	<p>All potato crisps, including Hula-Hoops, French Fries and Quavers             Nuts</p>
<p><b>Fruit - Limit to 2 portions a day</b>            A portion is equivalent to one of the following:            1 apple, 1 pear, 1 peach, 1 small orange, 9 strawberries, 25 raspberries, 1 kiwi, 1 small nectarine, 2 small plums, 2 small satsumas, 20 blackberries, 15 grapes</p>	<p>Apricots, bananas, rhubarb, cantaloupe melon, redcurrants, blackcurrants and avocado, dried fruit</p>

If you have diabetes or you are struggling with your appetite please ask to speak to a dietitian as the advice for you may be different. You can also ask to speak to a dietitian if you would like more support with following a low potassium diet.

Before being discharged from hospital your doctor will advise if you need to remain on a low potassium diet. Your dietitian will provide you with further individual advice before discharge.

## Personal Notes

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# Personal Notes

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If you have any queries please contact:

**Dietitian**

**Contact number**

If you have any suggestions or comments regarding this leaflet please let your dietitian know.

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