POTASSIUM *& Renal Diets*

Potassium's Role in Your Renal Diet

- Potassium is a mineral found in most of the foods you eat. If blood potassium becomes too high it can affect the way your heart and other muscles work.
- Potassium functions as a mineral for these vital functions:
    1. *An essential electrolyte that helps regulate fluid balance in the body*
    2. *It regulates the levels of calcium and phosphorus to maintain bone health*
    3. *It promotes muscular function (including the muscles in your heart!)*
- When we consume too much potassium it shows up in our blood. Healthy kidneys remove the excess potassium from the blood and excrete it in the urine to help maintain normal levels in the blood. Continuing to consume excess potassium especially when our kidneys are struggling, is harmful. Limiting the potassium in our food can make a big difference.

How to Limit Potassium in Your Diet

- Replace high potassium foods with lower ones (see list of high, moderate and low potassium foods below).
- Read food labels to recognize which foods have high potassium content
- Measure and be aware of serving sizes when portioning foods that contain potassium.
- Stick to your potassium limit. Calculate/ track your total potassium intake daily. Online tracker tools can do this for you or a trusty calculator and notebook will work, too.
- Drain canned vegetables, fruits and meats before servings
- Leach vegetables like potatoes to decrease potassium content

| High Potassium foods	Moderate Potassium foods	Low potassium foods
• Artichokes, avocados, raw bamboo shoots, beets, chard, greens (beets, collard, mustard), okra, potatoes, spinach, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, winter squash, yams • Apricots, bananas, dares, honeydew melon, kiwifruit, nectarine, orange (whole fruit and juice), prune juice, prunes, raisins • Bran muffin, beans (dried, baked, canned, lima), fish (salmon, haddock, sword fish, perch), crab, milk (whole, low-fat, fat free, buttermilk), nuts, fast food (cheeseburger/fries)	• Asparagus, broccoli, celery, kale, frozen vegetable medley, green peas, peppers, rutabagas, summer squash, zucchini • Cantaloupe, cherries, fig, grapefruit, mango, peach (fresh), papaya (fresh) • English muffin, oatmeal, wild rice, 4-inch bagel (egg or plain) beef/pork, ice-cream/frozen yogurt, vanilla pudding, red or white wine	• Canned bamboo shoots, canned beets, cabbage, cauliflower, corn, cucumber, eggplant, green beans, lettuce (all types), mushrooms, onions, radishes • Apple (whole fruit, sauce, juice), berries, fresh cranberries (or cranberry juice), grape (or grape juice), lemon, lime, peach or pear (canned-light syrup/water), watermelon, fresh pineapple, plum, tangerine • White bread, tortilla, 4-inch waffles, fats/oils, white or brown rice

Tips for Leaching Potatoes

One small potato contains more than 700 mg of potassium and an average sized one has 926 mg! However, this doesn't mean you have to cut potatoes out of your diet entirely. Certain high potassium foods like potatoes can be soaked in water or *leached* to decrease potassium content for people on a renal diet. *Leaching* means to drain away or filter out. Follow these leaching preparation steps to help decrease the potassium content in your potatoes.

1.) Wash, peel and cut the potatoes into pieces that are approx. 1/8 inch thick

2.) Rinse and soak them in water for at least 2 hours. Use approx. 10 times more un-salted water than vegetables
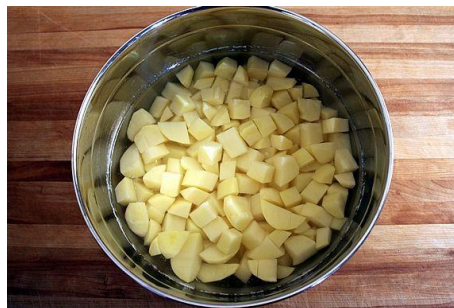
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3.) drain the water and rinse the potatoes under warm water, then boil for 5 minutes or cook as desired

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Leaching Other Vegetables

Leaching and soaking are helpful in potatoes. However, it is not recommended that you soak or boil all vegetables in water for extended periods of time because important water-soluble vitamins including Vitamin C and B vitamins are lost in the water. All vegetables are different and don't lose the same amount of potassium when leached or boiled. (adapted from Davita.com)