

PASS ON THE POTATOES: SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS ON A LOW-POTASSIUM DIET!

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*M*any kidney patients must follow a low-potassium diet, and this is especially difficult over the holidays. If you've been told you need to limit your potassium, you might find the holiday season a difficult time.

Potassium is a mineral that is found in the cells of the body. It is important for keeping our nerves and muscles working properly. The muscle we need to worry most about? Our heart! Potassium levels that are too high or too low can be dangerous for your heart. So your dietitian will work with you to develop a plan that provides you with just the right amount of potassium. The recipes in **Spice It Up!** are created to conform to any kidney diet.

Plan ahead! During the holidays, choose lower potassium alternatives to the high-potassium foods usually served. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

Potatoes: If potatoes are essential to your holiday celebrations, double boil them and make your servings small. Avoid yams, parsnips and fried potatoes. Try a rice side dish, or some rolls instead of potatoes.

Eggnog: this holiday classic is high in both potassium and phosphorus. Try hot apple cider or mulled wine instead.

Nuts: this popular "finger food" is often salty and always high in potassium and phosphorus. And it's difficult to eat "just one"! Choose unsalted pretzels or popcorn instead.

Oranges: these fruits are very high in potassium. Choose a clementine or mandarin instead.

Chocolate: all chocolate is high in potassium and phosphorus. You can enjoy sugar cookies, shortbread, sorbet, apple pie, lemon tarts or pound cake instead.

We especially recommend that you plan ahead on days when you have family gatherings. Here are even more tips you may find helpful:

- Eat lightly early in the day and save your fruits and vegetables for the holiday feast.
- Be aware that buffet tables are very tempting. It's very easy to overeat. Fill your plate only once or choose a smaller sized plate!

- Overeating low-potassium fruits or vegetables can also be a problem during the holidays. Remember that portion size matters! Everyone knows that a banana is high in potassium, but did you know that there is as much potassium in three apples? Ask your dietitian how to help you fit your favourite foods into your low-potassium diet!
- If you cannot resist having a high-potassium holiday meal, avoid any high-potassium foods until after your next dialysis session.

AVOID High-potassium holiday foods

Side Dishes

- Sweet potato
- White potato
- Yam
- Squash
- Mincemeat pie

Desserts

- Pumpkin pie
- Pecan pie
- Desserts made with dried fruit
- Chocolate
- Nuts

Lowering the potassium content in potatoes and other root vegetables:

Double Boil Method

1. *Peel the vegetables and cut them into thin slices or cubes.*
2. *Put them in a large pot with lots of water.*
3. *Bring the vegetables to a boil, and then drain off the water.*
3. *Fill the pot with fresh water.*
4. *Finish cooking the vegetables in the fresh water, then drain again.*