

Hyperkalemia: Care Instructions



Your Care Instructions

Hyperkalemia is too much potassium in the blood. Potassium helps keep the right mix of fluids in your body. It also helps your nerves and muscles work as they should. And it keeps your heartbeat in a normal rhythm. Some things can raise potassium levels. These include some health problems, medicines, and kidney problems. (Normally, your kidneys remove extra potassium.)

Too much potassium can cause nausea. It also can cause a heartbeat that isn't normal. But you may not have any symptoms. Too much potassium can be dangerous. That's why it's important to treat it. If you are taking any of the medicines that can raise your levels, your doctor will ask you to stop. You may get medicines to lower your levels. And you may have to limit or not eat foods that have a lot of potassium.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine.
- Stop taking certain medicines if your doctor asks you to. They may be causing your high potassium levels. If you have concerns about stopping medicine, talk with your doctor.
- If you have kidney, heart, or liver disease and have to limit fluids, talk with your doctor before you increase the amount of fluids you drink. If the doctor says it's okay, drink plenty of fluids. This means drinking enough so that your urine is light yellow or clear like water.
- Avoid strenuous exercise until your doctor tells you it is okay.

- Potassium is in many foods, including vegetables, fruits, and milk products. Foods high in potassium include bananas, cantaloupe, broccoli, milk, potatoes, and tomatoes.
- Low potassium foods include blueberries, raspberries, cucumber, white or brown rice, spaghetti, and macaroni.
- Do not use a salt substitute without talking to your doctor first. Most of these are very high in potassium.
- Be sure to tell your doctor about any prescription, over-the-counter, or herbal medicines you take. Some of these can raise potassium.

When should you call for help?



Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You passed out (lost consciousness).
- You have an unusual heartbeat. Your heart may beat fast or skip beats.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have muscle aches.
- You feel very weak.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not get better as expected.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **G087** in the search box to learn more about **"Hyperkalemia: Care Instructions"**.

©2006-2019 Healthwise, Incorporated.

Care instructions adapted under license by Katy Nephrology Associates. This care instruction is for use with your licensed healthcare professional. If you have questions about a medical condition or this instruction, always ask your healthcare professional. Healthwise, Incorporated disclaims any warranty or liability for your use of this information.