

# beyond bananas+

Potassium and your kidneys

## Food Labels and Potassium

**Food labels are full of important information about what you eat and drink. Understanding food labels is especially important if you are living with kidney disease. Food labels can help you make kidney-friendly nutrition choices and manage your kidney disease at any stage. When you have kidney disease, your doctor may tell you to limit your intake of certain nutrients, like potassium.**

### Reading Food Labels to Manage High Potassium

Potassium is a mineral found in many foods and drinks, and your body needs it to survive. Your kidneys help keep the right amount of potassium in your body. Having too much potassium in your body can cause a dangerous condition called hyperkalemia. If left untreated, hyperkalemia can lead to a heart attack or death! Having too little potassium in your body can also cause harm. Taking potassium binders can help control your potassium, but it is also important to track how much potassium you eat and drink every day.

Reading food labels can help you pick foods and drinks that are high in the nutrients you need and low in nutrients you should limit. Food labels usually tell you the amount of nutrients and minerals in each serving of a food or drink item. When you have hyperkalemia, you can use the information on a food label to help you figure out which items have potassium.

### Where to Find Food Labels

Food labels often appear on foods and drinks that come in some type of package like a bag, box, jar, bottle, or can. However, not all packaged products have labels or list potassium on the label. For example, fresh fruits, vegetables, and animal protein like beef, chicken, fish and eggs do not always have a label, but they can still contain potassium.

**For a list of low, medium, and high potassium foods, download the Beyond Bananas Potassium Food Guide at [KidneyFund.org/BeyondBananas](https://www.kidneyfund.org/BeyondBananas)**

# How to Read a Food Label

## Serving Size

This tells you how much of the food or drink is equal to one serving. Many packages contain more than one serving, but the information on the label is for just one serving. This is why portion control is important. For example, foods low in potassium can become high potassium foods if you eat a larger portion.

## Nutrition Facts

8 servings per container

**Serving size** 2/3 cup (55g)

Amount per serving

**Calories** 230

% Daily Value\*

**Total Fat** 8g **10%**

Saturated Fat 1g **5%**

*Trans* Fat 0g

**Cholesterol** 0mg **0%**

**Sodium** 160mg **7%**

**Total Carbohydrate** 37g **13%**

Dietary Fiber 4g **14%**

Total Sugars 12g

Includes 10g Added Sugars **20%**

**Protein** 3g

Vitamin D 2mcg **10%**

Calcium 260mg **20%**

Iron 8mg **45%**

Potassium 240mg **6%**

\* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

## Calories

Check here to find out how many calories are in one serving of the food or drink. If you eat two servings of a food, you are having twice as many calories. Tracking your calories can help you keep a healthy weight.

## % Daily Value (%DV)

This percentage shows you how much of a nutrient is in one serving of the food, based on a 2,000-calorie daily diet. Your nutrition needs may be different, but you can use this as a guide. Work with your dietitian to figure out the right %DV for you.

## Sodium

Foods considered low in sodium have less than 140mg or 5% of your Daily Value per serving. High sodium foods have 20% or greater of your Daily Value per serving. Many packaged and processed foods are high in sodium because they have added salt (sodium chloride). Eating less sodium can help lower blood pressure and keep your heart healthy.

## Nutrients

Look here to see how much fat, sodium, carbohydrates and protein are in one serving of the food.

## Potassium

High potassium foods have more than 250 mg (milligrams) of potassium per serving. Medium potassium foods have 151-250 mg per serving. Low potassium foods have 150 mg or less per serving. If your doctor told you to lower your potassium, it is important to keep track of all the potassium you get from your foods and drinks. Even one food or drink item can make a difference in your potassium level.

## Ingredients

Beware of phosphorus additives and added potassium in the ingredient list. Sometimes, low-sodium or low-salt packaged foods have potassium chloride salt instead of sodium chloride salt. Potassium chloride can add potassium to low-sodium foods. Potassium is not always listed on food labels, so be sure to check the ingredient list.

Visit [KidneyFund.org/BeyondBananas](http://KidneyFund.org/BeyondBananas) and download the **Beyond Bananas Potassium Tracker** to start tracking your potassium intake today.