

Discharge Instructions for Hypokalemia



You have been diagnosed with hypokalemia. This means you have a low level of potassium in your blood. Potassium helps your nerve and muscle cells work as they should. These cells include the cells in your heart. A low level of potassium in the blood can cause serious problems, such as abnormal heart rhythms and even a heart attack.

Diet changes

Eat more potassium-rich foods such as:

- Bananas
- Oranges and orange juice
- Tomatoes, tomato sauce, and tomato juice
- Leafy green vegetables, such as spinach, kale, salad greens, collards, and chard
- Melons (all kinds)
- Pomegranates
- Peas
- Beans
- Potatoes
- Sweet potatoes
- Avocados, including guacamole
- Vegetable juices, such as V8
- Fruit juices
- All nuts and seeds
- Fish, including tuna, halibut, salmon, cod, snapper, haddock, swordfish, and perch
- Milk, including fat-free, low-fat, whole, chocolate, and buttermilk
- Soy milk

Other home care

- Take a potassium supplement as directed by your healthcare provider.
- After heavy exercise or any activity that causes you to sweat a lot, grab a beverage high in potassium. This includes chocolate milk, coconut water, orange juice, or low-sodium vegetable juices.
- Be sure to eat foods or drink fluids with potassium if you have diarrhea or vomiting.
- Have your potassium levels checked regularly as directed.
- Take all medicines exactly as directed.

- Tell your healthcare provider about all prescription and over-the-counter medicines you are taking. This includes herbal products. Some water pills (diuretics) can cause you to lose potassium.
- Don't have foods that are high in salt. Pass up canned and prepared foods that are high in salt.

Follow-up

- Make a follow-up appointment as directed by our staff.
- Keep all follow-up appointments. Your healthcare provider needs to monitor your condition closely.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your provider right away or go to the emergency room if you have any of the following:

- Vomiting
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Rapid, irregular heartbeat
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Muscle cramps, spasms, or twitching
- Weakness
- Paralysis

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