

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

How to eat less potassium when taking finerenone medication

Information for patients, relatives and carers

What is finerenone?

Finerenone is a medicine that helps keep kidneys working longer in people who have diabetes and advanced kidney disease. But, finerenone can also make the amount of potassium in your blood go up, which can be a problem.

What is potassium and what does it do in your body?

Potassium is a mineral that does many jobs in your body, like helping your heart. If you have too much potassium in your blood, it can change your heart's rhythm and lead to other serious health problems.

Why have I been asked to eat less potassium?

Finerenone can raise the amount of potassium in your blood, which can have a bad effect on your heart. By reducing food and drink that have a lot of potassium, you can help keep your blood potassium level safe.

Eating and drinking less potassium helps to reduce your blood potassium.

How can I reduce the amount of potassium that I eat and drink?

This information sheet lists foods that contain less potassium and are good for your health, your kidneys and diabetes. It includes foods that:

- **you can eat often**
- **you can have sometimes**
- **you can have less often**

Breakfast cereals

Most breakfast cereals and breads contain less potassium, with some exceptions.

You can eat often <ul style="list-style-type: none">● porridge (oats)● Weetabix● Shreddies● multigrain hoops	Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none">● has less potassium● suitable for diabetes
To have sometimes <ul style="list-style-type: none">● cornflakes● Rice Krispies● Special K● Coco Pops	Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none">● lower potassium● suitable for diabetes if eaten once in a while
To have less often <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Fruit 'n Fibre● muesli● bran flakes● all-bran● Frosties● sultana bran	Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none">● higher in potassium (cereals with ingredients such as dried fruit, chocolate, bran are usually higher in potassium)● high sugar cereals are not suitable for diabetes

Breads

You can eat often <ul style="list-style-type: none">● wholemeal bread● granary bread● sourdough bread● breads made with wholemeal flour, for example, wholemeal pitta, wholemeal bagel, wholemeal tortilla wraps, chapattis	Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none">● contain less potassium● suitable for diabetes● higher in fibre
To have sometimes <ul style="list-style-type: none">● white bread● 50:50 bread● Croissant● Bagel● Crumpets● white pitta● naan● puris● tortilla wraps	Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none">● contain less potassium● suitable for diabetes if eaten once in a while
To have less often <ul style="list-style-type: none">● bran based breads● breads with chocolate or nuts● chocolate or almond croissants● foods made with besan or urad flour	Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none">● contain a lot of potassium (breads with ingredients such as dried fruit, chocolate, bran are usually higher in potassium)● sweeter breads (like almond croissants) are not suitable for diabetes

Lower potassium and diabetes meal ideas: **cooked main meals**

Main meals include a good mix of starchy carbohydrates (carbs), protein, and some salad or vegetables, or both. Here are examples of carbs and proteins that contain less potassium and are diabetes-friendly:

Main meals: the starchy part	
Foods that are higher in carbs such as rice, pasta and potatoes	
<p>You can eat often</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● rice: basmati, wholemeal or brown ● pasta (dried) ● couscous ● cornmeal ● wholemeal noodles ● one portion per day of one of the following (boiled or parboiled- see cooking tips opposite): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ potato ○ sweet potato ○ yam ○ taro / dasheen ○ cassava ○ breadfruit (up to 150g) ○ plantain (100g only) 	<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● suitable for diabetes ● contain less potassium when you follow the cooking tips below for the “one portion per day” list opposite <p>Cooking tips: Boil these starchy foods and throw the water away. This reduces potassium.</p> <p>This does not happen when you steam, fry, microwave or oven cook – unless they are parboiled or boiled first.</p>
<p>To have sometimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● risotto rice, wholemeal or brown rice ● pasta (fresh) ● egg or rice noodles 	<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● contain less potassium ● suitable for diabetes if eaten once in a while
<p>To have less often</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● baked, steamed or jacket potatoes ● baked, fried, roasted, steamed, pressure cooked breadfruit, cassava, plantain, potatoes, sweet potatoes, taro, yam ● processed potatoes such as chips, oven chips, instant potato, potato waffles or wedges, potato pakoras, hash browns ● fried green banana 	<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● contain a lot of potassium ● some of these foods have added potassium

Main meals: the protein part

Includes foods such as meat, fish and vegetarian sources such as beans, chickpeas, tofu

<p>You can eat often</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• all meat (an average portion size)• all fish (an average portion size)• eggs• vegetarian sources such as Quorn, soya mince, paneer• pulses (lentils and beans such as chickpeas, kidney beans, aduki, soya, pinto beans)• tinned pulses are lower in potassium	<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• contain less potassium• suitable for diabetes <p>Cooking tips: use tinned or dried pulses (soaked for 12 hrs). Throw away the water before cooking.</p> <p>Fish tips: aim to have one portion of oily fish a week – good for heart health.</p>
<p>To have sometimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• nuts and seeds but keep to a maximum of about 10 nuts. For example, almonds or cashews. If you are vegan or vegetarian, you can have more than this.	<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• nuts are high in protein and have healthy fats but also contain potassium. So it is important to limit the amount of nuts you have, especially if you are not vegetarian.
<p>To have less often</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• processed meats, such as bacon, sausages, smoked meats, chorizo, and processed fish like anchovies	<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• these foods are high in salt, so eating them less often will help control blood pressure. They sometimes also contain added potassium.

Lower potassium and diabetes meal ideas: fruits and vegetable

Fruits and vegetables are rich in vitamins, minerals and fibre – aim for about 5 portions per day.

Fruits	
All fruits	
<p>You can eat often</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all fruits are great to have (up to 2 to 3 portions a day) be careful of the ones listed in the ‘to have occasionally’ section below. 	<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contain less potassium suitable for diabetes good for overall health
<p>To have sometimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> apricot berries – in particular, blackcurrant (stewed), gooseberries, loganberries, cape gooseberry, redcurrants, white currants damson fig greengage kiwi 	<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> these fruits are a bit higher in potassium, so it’s best to limit how often you have them and the amount you eat aim for a single portion of the fruit, or a small handful of berries
<p>To have less often</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fruit juice avocado banana blackcurrant (raw) coconut dried fruits such as dried apricots, figs, currants, raisins, sultanas, prunes, mixed fruit 	<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> these fruits are higher in potassium so should be eaten infrequently

Vegetables

You can eat often

- all vegetables are great to have (up to 2 to 3 portions a day)
- be careful of the ones listed in the 'to have occasionally' section below

Why are these vegetables better to have?

- contain less potassium
- suitable for diabetes
- good for overall health

Cooking tips: boiling and throwing the water away reduces potassium in vegetables.

This does not happen when you steam, fry, microwave or oven cook vegetables (unless they are parboiled or boiled first)

To have sometimes

- boiled Brussels sprouts
- baked butternut squash
- raw cabbage
- celeriac
- celery
- courgette
- endive
- fennel
- kerala
- mushrooms
- okra
- pak choi
- parsnip
- raddichio
- tomatoes – includes tomato sauces (use less tomato sauces in cooking or reduce the amount of the sauces you eat or how often you have them)

Why?

- these vegetables are a bit higher in potassium so it's best to limit how often you have them and how much you have
- these are still good for your health, so can include them as part of your diet

To have less often

- Jerusalem artichoke
- bamboo shoots (canned)
- beetroot (fresh, boiled or raw)
- Swiss chard
- dried mushrooms
- spinach (any)
- tomato puree, sun-dried tomatoes
- water chestnuts (raw, ok if canned)
- patra leaves

Why?

- these vegetables are higher in potassium so should be less often and in smaller amounts

Drinks (including milks and alcohol)

You can have often <ul style="list-style-type: none">● tea (any)● barley water● water (including flavoured and tonic)● no-added-sugar squashes and cordials● instant coffee – but only once a day	Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none">● contain less potassium● suitable for diabetes
To have sometimes <ul style="list-style-type: none">● diet fizzy drinks Maximum of one small cup a day of any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● filter coffee or milky coffee (like latte, cappuccino)● drinking chocolate and cocoa, Horlicks, Ovaltine, Milo● fruit juice or smoothie (any)	Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none">● although diet drinks are suitable for diabetes they can contain some potassium● they are not the ideal for overall health● some drinks have added potassium
To have less often <ul style="list-style-type: none">● fizzy drinks (non-diet variety)● coconut water	Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none">● high in sugar● high in potassium

Milks

You can have often

- cow's milk (or other dairy milk) – maximum of ½ pint or 300mls per day
- non-dairy milks - maximum of ½ pint or 300mls per day

Why?

- dairy milk (from cow, goat, sheep) has potassium so keep within ½ pint or 300mls per day
- non-dairy milks tend to have less potassium and are suitable for diabetes

To have less

- condensed milk
- evaporated milk
- coconut milk
- skimmed milk powder

Why?

- condensed milk is not suitable for diabetes
- these milks contain a lot of potassium

Alcohol – if permitted by your doctor

You can have (in limited amounts and if your doctor has not advised against having alcohol)

- spirits, for example: brandy, gin, rum, vodka, whisky

Why?

- contain less potassium

To have less often (and in limited amounts)

- ale
- beer
- cider
- lager
- stout
- wine
- port

Why?

- contain a lot of potassium

Snacks

<p>You can eat</p> <p>Savoury</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● plain popcorn ● tortilla crisps (lightly salted or no salt) ● rice cakes ● crisp breads, bread sticks, crackers 	<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● contain less potassium ● suitable for diabetes – especially the more wholemeal versions
<p>To have sometimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● nuts – any, including peanut butter (vegetarians can eat more nuts) ● pakoras made with gram or chickpea flour ● papadums 	<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● these contain a lot of potassium so have them less often and in small amounts (e.g. 2 tablespoons or less)
<p>To have less often</p> <p>Savoury</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● crisps ● corn snacks and crisps ● ‘vegetable’ crisps ● Bombay mix ● chevra <p>Sweet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● biscuits and cakes ● sweets and fudge ● marzipan ● chocolate, chocolate spread ● liquorice ● Asian sweets, such as burfi, besan, burfi, halva, rasmali, jelabi ● marshmallows, Turkish delight 	<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● these contain potassium or sugar, or both ● Corn based crisps and snacks often have added potassium

Seasonings, condiments and spreads

<p>You can eat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● sea salt or table salt (sparingly) ● mustard ● mint sauce ● horseradish ● salad cream ● salad dressing ● relish, for example, pickle, piccalilli, corn or onion relish 	<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● contain less potassium ● suitable for diabetes
<p>To have sometimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● brown sauce ● tomato ketchup ● tahini ● mayonnaise 	<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● these contain a lot of potassium and salt
<p>To have less often</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● salt substitutes, for example Lo Salt, Saxa So-Low salt ● Bovril <p>Spreads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● lemon curd ● chocolate spread ● marmalade ● fruit jams 	<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● condiments and chocolate spread contain more potassium ● they are high in salt or sugar ● some have potassium added to them

**Produced by the Nutrition and Dietetics Department
Kidney Dietitians Team
Imperial College Healthcare Trust
Contact: 0203 313 3048**

Published: August 2024
Review date: August 2027
Reference no: 985
© Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust