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Why should you have a normal blood potassium level?

Sorry to alarm you, but it is the scary truth- abnormal blood levels of potassium may kill you without any specific warning signs.. Too low potassium can cause cardiac arrest, among other complications.

It is no secret that our body need the right balance of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients to function at their best to keep us in trim health. All foods we eat are divided into macronutrients, such as carbs, fats and proteins and micronutrients including the electrolytes like potassium, sodium sulfur, calcium magnesium among others. There are 7 essential plant nutrient elements such as boron, zinc, manganese, iron, copper, molybdenum, chlorine which constitutes in total less than 1% of the dry weight of most plants. We derive these micronutrients from the veggies we eat.

Today, our discussion is on the importance of having the right range of potassium in our blood. It is vital for our wellbeing, and it is an electrolyte- a substance that carries an electric charge and conduct electricity in our body to help our muscles and nerves to work efficiently. Every cell in our body needs potassium, which also facilitate proper digestion of macronutrients and maintain a healthy blood pressure levels.

Our body cannot produce potassium naturally and we need to eat foods that contains it, and for a day we need about 4,700 mgs daily for most adults, according to Harvard Medical School.

It is important to get your potassium from foods rather than from supplements unless you are put on diuretics. Supplements may increase your blood level of potassium and may be difficult to control. It is better to eat potassium-rich foods such as bananas, tomatoes, and other fruits to boost your potassium intake. Medium size banana has about 425mg of potassium.

Potatoes also has high potassium levels. One medium-sized baked white potato with its skin on, has around 425mg of potassium.

Boiling potatoes in water and mashing it can cause the potassium level to drop and baking and roasting will keep the mineral levels higher.

Avocados is a superfood packed with potassium, and each fruit contains nearly 250mg of essential electrolytes, including potassium.

Light white beans, like Navy beans, Boston beans, white pea beans are excellent sources of potassium. A cup of white beans has nearly 930 mg of potassium, according to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service, which means that eating a typical serving size — about a half-cup — still provides you with nearly 10% of the recommended daily amount of the mineral.

Salmon fish is high in potassium, having about 650 mg of potassium in 6 ounce of salmon fish.

Dark leafy veggies are packed with potassium, such as spinach, Swiss chard, and beet greens. Cooked spinach has about 420 mg of potassium per half cup, and beet greens boast an impressive 650 mg.

Other fruits and veggies that have high potassium include-oranges, cantaloupe, honeydew, apricots, grapefruit, raisins, dates and prunes.

Sweet potatoes, mushrooms cucumber and peas are rich in potassium.

How does potassium help beneficial functions in your body?

As mentioned earlier, it helps your nerves to function and muscles to contract.

It helps your heartbeat stay regular. It also helps move nutrients into cells and waste products out of cells. A diet rich in potassium helps to offset some of sodium's harmful effects on blood pressure.

If your potassium level is too low, can result in vomiting, diarrhea, adrenal gland disorders, breathing difficulties, heart palpitations, tingling and numbness in extremities, and mood changes.

If you have any of the above symptoms, get your blood electrolytes done quickly.

When taking certain diuretics your potassium level can drop and your doctor will put you on potassium supplements. Such diuretics are furosemide, hydrochlorothiazide and chlorthalidone. These medications are used to treat high blood pressure, heart failure and lower extremity swelling.

Potassium follows water out of your kidneys to your bladder, and diuretics can increase urination, may lower your potassium levels.

Asthma drugs like Albuterol, Proair, Proventil may lower your potassium levels.

Albuterol stimulates your body to release more insulin, which takes potassium out of your bloodstream and puts it into your cells, essentially lowering the amount of potassium circulating in your system. Know that nebulizer treatments lower potassium levels even more than inhalers.

Insulin at high doses may lower potassium levels in the blood by shifting potassium from your bloodstream into your cells.

If the adrenal glands that sit on your kidneys produce too much of hormone aldosterone, can lower your potassium levels, which can cause weakness and muscle spasms.

Aldosterone normally balances sodium and potassium levels in your blood. But too much of this hormone can cause you to lose potassium and retain sodium.

Hyperkalemia

High potassium in your blood is called hyperkalemia, which can damage your heart and cause a heart attack.

So, it is essential that you check your potassium level included in the electrolytes, at least once a year to check on your potassium.

If your potassium level is high there are low in potassium veggies and fruits to eat.

In a potassium-restricted diet, it is important to stick with foods that are going to help you stay on track and feel your best.

Eggs have low potassium levels.

Kale is a popular veggie low potassium

Goat Cheese is low in potassium

Apples are low in potassium

Chia seeds are low potassium

Peppers are low potassium.

White rice is low in potassium

Grapefruit is low potassium.

Nuts including almond, cashews, walnuts, and macadamia are low in potassium.

Certain medications can raise potassium levels.

ARBs (angiotensin II receptor blockers). ...

ACE (angiotensin converting enzyme) inhibitors. ...

Spirolactone. ...

NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs). ...

Cyclosporine and tacrolimus. ...

Heparin. ...

Propranolol and labetalol.

ARBs(angiotensin II receptor blockers including losartan, valsartan and irbesartan may raise your potassium levels. These medications are given to control your blood pressure.

ACE (angiotensin converting enzyme) inhibitors. ACE inhibitors are blood pressure medications ending in “-pril” like lisinopril, enalapril, and quinapril. Like ARBs, ACE inhibitors also raise potassium levels.

Spirolactone. Spirolactone (Aldactone) is known as a potassium-sparing diuretic. Like ARBs, it can also cause the kidneys to hold onto potassium instead of letting it leave your body through urine. Spirolactone is prescribed for acne, cirrhosis, PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome), and heart failure.

So, I have discussed with you today on the importance of keeping your blood potassium within the normal range and the reasons to do so. So, don't ignore your potassium levels.

Make sure you are having it monitored.

Hope this video talk was useful

Goodbye and stay safe.