

Did you know?..... **Rx Information from Jenny**

GETTING POTASSIUM FROM FOODS VS. SUPPLEMENTS

Many people wonder whether they can get their potassium from foods instead of potassium supplements (*Micro-K, Klor-Con, etc.*). It depends on how much they need and whether they are trying to PREVENT or TREAT potassium loss. Potassium from foods usually works for prevention. Patients taking thiazide or loop diuretics (*Hydrochlorothiazide, Lasix, etc.*) most likely will need to get an extra 20 to 40 mEq per day.

How do potassium-rich foods compare to pharmaceuticals? Consider these:

- a potato with skin or a cup of spinach provides over 20 mEq
- a cup of kidney or navy beans provides 18 mEq
- a cup of orange juice or yogurt provides 14 mEq
- an average-size banana provides 12 mEq

Keep in mind that some folks should avoid too much potassium due to impaired kidney function, those taking ACE inhibitors (*Lisinopril, Quinapril, Benazepril, and others*), ARBs (*Diovan, Cozaar, Atacand, etc.*) or potassium-sparing diuretics (*Spironolactone, Triamterene*). Patients starting these drugs should avoid excessive potassium intake until they can get their potassium checked. However, an occasional banana isn't likely to be a problem.

Potassium from pharmaceuticals usually works better to TREAT hypokalemia (low potassium) especially when caused by diuretics, vomiting or diarrhea. Dietary potassium comes as a PHOSPHATE salt. Supplements are CHLORIDE salts and therefore can also correct the chloride loss caused by diuretics, vomiting, etc. Most products contain 8 to 20 mEq. People who want an alternative to potassium pills can use salt substitutes (*No Salt, Nu-Salt, etc.*). These contain up to 20 mEq of potassium CHLORIDE per one-quarter teaspoon.

Call if you have any questions!
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