

# Food for Thought

June 2013



★ ★ ★ Welcome... ★ ★ ★  
to this latest edition of the newsletter from the QE renal dietitians. In this edition we focus on **Potassium (K+)**.

## Potassium- What are 'safe levels' ?



When your kidneys aren't working properly your Potassium (K+) levels can rise too high. Try to keep your K+ levels between **4.0 - 5.9 mmol/l**.

Meet the team...

Lyndsey, Jo,  
Susan, Stephen,  
Mary, Kelly, Jill, Van,  
Clare, Michelle  
and(not pictured)  
Lou, Emma, Jo and  
Winnie

## Foods lower in Potassium

Apples, pears, tinned fruit-  
drained of juice.

Carrots, cabbage, onions,  
cauliflower, frozen peas - all  
boiled. Cucumber, lettuce,  
celery.

Bread, rice, pasta, noodles

Plain cakes and biscuits.

Wheat, rice or corn snacks  
e.g. popcorn, Skips, Wotsits,  
Doritos



## How do you keep within safe levels ?



You are an individual with your own set of unique blood results. Your bloods are checked each month and you will be told if there are any problems.

There are several reasons why your potassium levels may rise:

1. Poor dialysis or not doing enough dialysis
2. Some tablets e.g. some antibiotics or blood pressure tablets
3. If you have diabetes and your glucose is not well controlled
4. Constipation

But generally the cause of a high K+ is - the **FOOD YOU ARE EATING !**



Most TV programmes & magazines tell us we should eat more fruit & vegetables to keep healthy, but this is only good if your kidneys are working. If you are on dialysis, your kidneys are not working properly and most dialysis patients have to limit their fruits to 2 portions /day and their vegetables or salad to 2 portions /day.

Fruit juices and smoothies are full of K+, & summer drinks of wine & cider are also made from fruit, so you may need to limit these. Fruit squashes or lemonade are better choices & if you fancy a tippie choose Gin & Tonic.

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## Your Recipes

### SPICY BBQ Chicken

4 chicken breasts

2 tbsp natural yoghurt

25g plain flour 1 tbsp red wine vinegar

2 tbsp oil

4 tbsp lemon juice

1 crushed garlic clove

1 tsp ginger

1tsp paprika

1 tsp crushed peppercorns

Mix together yoghurt, flour, vinegar, oil, 2tbsp lemon juice, garlic, paprika, & peppercorns.

Make parallel slits in chicken, about 1cm apart & sprinkle with lemon juice put chicken in bowl & cover with yoghurt mixture.

Chill for several hours turning occasionally. Grill or BBQ chicken for 10-15 mins on each side until cooked.

Serve with rice and green salad

### Your Questions....

Q: Can I take Lo Salt instead of salt?

A: People on dialysis should **not** take Lo Salt or other salt substitutes as these contain Potassium Chloride and may cause your K+ levels to rise

## SPICING up the SUMMER



After the long cold winter, Summer is the time to get out and enjoy Al Fresco eating whenever the weather allows.

Enjoy a variety of fresh meat, fish or chicken which are **well** cooked. Remember coleslaw, potato salad, jacket potatoes, tomato salads, are very high in potassium. Better choices are cold rice, pasta, noodles or couscous and interesting breads like ciabatta, pitta, garlic, tortilla wraps, bagels or baguettes.

Pastry foods like sausage rolls, pork pies & plain quiche can be eaten in moderation, but try to choose bread sticks, pastry twirls, corn or wheat snacks rather than potato crisps.

Avoid banana splits & fresh fruit salad. Why not choose a strawberry tart, trifle, lemon meringue pie, cheesecake, jelly & ice cream.

Be mindful of your fluids & salt –  
But enjoy the sun if you get a chance!



## Potassium Chloride (KCl) - use in processed foods

The NKF (National Kidney Federation) has been in contact with a number of food manufacturers regarding KCl being added to processed foods. A letter was sent asking retailers to produce a free-from list and drew their attention to the needs of renal patients. The following are the responses received by the NKF from the retailers:

- **M&S** – small number of products contain KCl as a gelling agent rather than a salt replacer; labelling is very clear.
- **Waitrose** – have produced a list of own brand products which contain KCl- ask your dietitian for list.
- **Sainsburys** – Aware of health issues; removing KCl from own label products.
- **Tesco** – state that they only have 19 products which contain KCl - ask your dietitian for list
- **Asda** – are currently collating product data for the Department of Health; propose to have a health education sheet on their website.
- **Iceland** – KCl clearly labelled on products.

If you have a question you would like to ask your Renal Dietitian or something you would like to see in the next newsletter, please fill in this slip and give it to your Dietitian.

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