

**Potassium is an essential nutrient that is naturally present in many foods and available as a dietary supplement. Potassium is present in all body tissues and is required for normal cell function**

### Importance

People often underestimate the importance of potassium. It's classified as an electrolyte because it's highly reactive in water.

When dissolved in water, potassium produces positively charged ions. This special property allows it to conduct electricity, which is important for many processes throughout your body.

Roughly 98% of the potassium in your body is found in your cells. Of this, 80% is found in your muscle cells, while the other 20% can be found in your bones, liver, and red blood cells.

Your body uses this electricity to manage a variety of processes including:

- maintaining fluid balance
- sending nerve signals
- regulating muscle contraction

### How to Get It

Potassium is found in a wide variety of plant and animal foods and in beverages. Fruits, vegetables, and legumes are great sources. Whole-wheat flour and brown rice are much higher in potassium than their refined counterparts, white wheat flour and white rice.

Food	mg.
Dried Apricots 1/2 cup	755
Cooked Lentils 1 cup	731
Acorn Squash 1 cup	644
Prunes 1/2 cup	635
Raisins 1/2 cup	618
Baked Potato Medium	610
Kidney Beans 1 cup	607
Orange Juice 1 cup	496

### Benefits

A potassium-rich diet may;

- lower blood pressure
- reduce water retention
- protect against stroke
- prevent osteoporosis
- possibly prevent the formation of kidney stones

### How Much Should Kids Get?

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recommends the following daily amounts:

Age	mg.
Birth-6 months	400
7-12 months	860
1-3 years	2,000
4-8 years	2,300
9-13 years	2,500
14-18 years	3,000



THE ESSENTIAL NUTRIENT

# POTASSIUM

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