



# Potassium

## Did You Know ...

Molasses is the yellowish dark brown liquid by-product of refined sugar. Molasses is high in many minerals, including potassium.

Just two tablespoons of molasses contain 586 milligrams of potassium, which is roughly the same amount contained in one cup of sliced bananas (537 milligrams).

Molasses is mostly used in enhancing the flavor of baked goods, but it can also be added to savory recipes, such as BBQ sauces, glazes, or baked beans.



Potassium is an important mineral for many body functions. As an electrolyte, it helps maintain balance in water and pH levels throughout the body. It also serves a vital role in nerve functions and muscle contractions. Potassium is especially important in controlling blood pressure because it lessens the effects of sodium, which can increase blood pressure.

## How much do I need?

- 3,000 milligrams per day for children 1 – 3 years old
- 4,500 milligrams per day for children 4 – 13 years old
- 4,700 milligrams per day for teens 14-18 years old, men and women 19 years and older, and pregnant women
- 5,100 milligrams per day for breastfeeding women
- For recommendations for athletes and those with special health conditions, check out the CSU Extension Fact Sheet: [Potassium and the Diet](#).

## Food Sources

Potassium is naturally found in most foods, especially fruits and vegetables. Dark leafy greens, potatoes, avocados, bananas, mushrooms, squashes, dried fruits, and citrus fruits are all great sources of potassium. Some fish and variety of dairy products also provide potassium. Processed foods contain very little potassium and are high in sodium.

## What happens if I don't get enough?

Potassium deficiency is rare. However, it can occur to those with continuous fluid loss due to severe diarrhea, urination, and excessive sweating. People with kidney problems and alcoholics may also be at risk for low potassium. Symptoms include nausea, fatigue, loss of appetite, and muscle cramps.

## Can I get too much?

Toxicity is rare since excess potassium is usually excreted through urine. However, if excess cannot be removed from the body due to kidney problems, it can lead to high potassium in the blood, known as hyperkalemia. Symptoms include irregular heartbeats, muscle weakness, paralysis, and difficulty breathing.