

Understanding the Dangers of High Potassium

Most people think of potassium (K) as an essential nutrient but many do not know that too much potassium can be dangerous. While all bodies need potassium to function properly, approximately 3 million people in the U.S. with chronic kidney disease (CKD) and/or heart failure are living with high potassium levels, a medical condition called **hyperkalemia**, which can lead to serious heart problems. A recent survey of 488 adults with CKD measured awareness of high potassium and their experiences with this condition. Most of the people completing this survey had advanced CKD, including 63% with a history of dialysis treatment.

High Potassium is a Major Concern for Those with CKD

One of the jobs of the kidneys is to keep the right amount of potassium in the body. When the kidneys do not work well, they may not be able to remove enough potassium, which can build up to harmful levels in the blood.



50% say high potassium is a very important concern; second only to high blood pressure (62%)



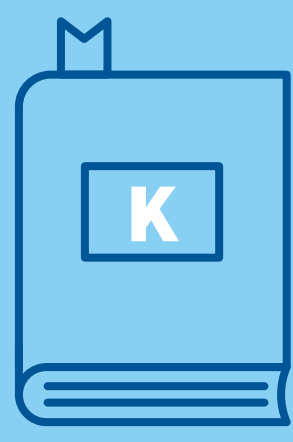
38% have needed emergency care because of high potassium blood levels



90% are at least somewhat aware high potassium can lead to serious heart risks

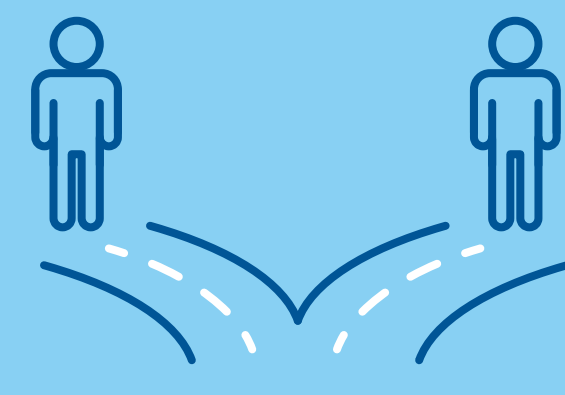
High Potassium is Misunderstood

People with reduced kidney function due to advanced CKD are at chronic risk for high potassium.



Knowledge Gap

Most people with CKD don't know what high potassium is. That includes approximately 59% of stage 1-3 patients and 49% who have been diagnosed with high potassium

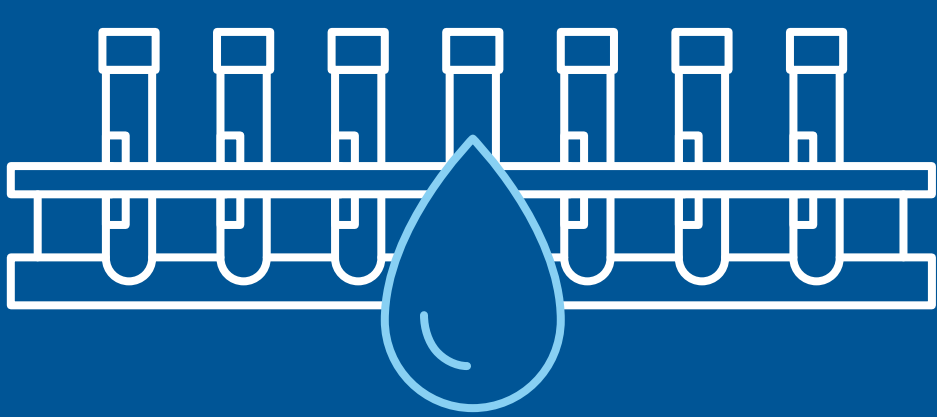


Perception Gap

42% of patients who have been on dialysis view managing high potassium levels as a short-term issue, but around 47% have been living with it for at least one year

More Testing, More Awareness!

A blood test can determine the level of potassium in a person's blood.



27% are not really paying attention to their potassium levels

34% who have experienced high potassium were recommended to get tested more regularly

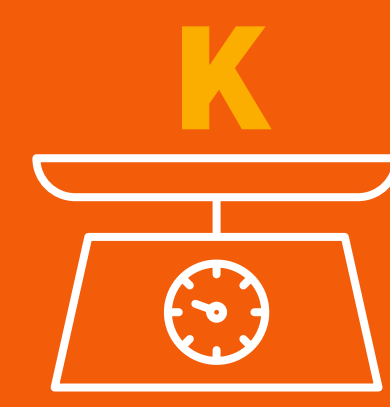
15% of those with high potassium don't report it to their doctor unless specifically asked

Diet is the First Line of Defense

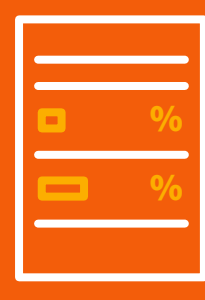
Eating too much food that is high in potassium can also cause potassium levels to rise to unsafe levels, especially in people with advanced kidney disease. It is important to talk to your doctor about what diet is right for you.



85% who have had high potassium were recommended to change their diet and 89% said they followed the recommendation



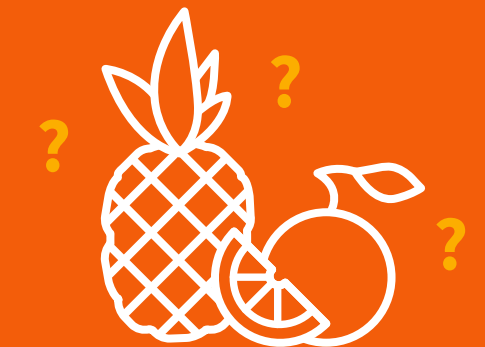
36% who have had high potassium have visited a dietitian but 69% said controlling high potassium with diet was their biggest challenge, with top concerns being:



Dietary restrictions (31%)



Challenge of eating the right foods (18%)



Figuring out the right foods (10%)

“ The biggest change was adapting to a new diet, especially when I was so tired from chronic anemia and dialysis. It was difficult to work a full-time job, go to dialysis for 3.5 hours 3 times a week, grocery shop, and cook meals that were low potassium and low phosphorous. ”

CKD Patient

High Potassium Can be Managed

If you have high potassium – or are at risk for getting it – speak to your doctor about the various options you have to manage your potassium levels.



48% who have had problems with high potassium were recommended a prescription or over-the-counter medication



Patients are more likely to be prescribed a medicine if:

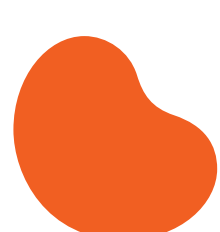
They have also required emergency care, such as hospitalization (51%)

They undergo more lab tests (41%)



Nephrologists are most familiar with all ways to control high potassium

The Hyperkalemia Survey is supported by and was developed in collaboration with Relypsa. The survey gathered responses from 488 chronic kidney disease (CKD) patients in the U.S. in February 2017. Most of the people completing this survey had advanced CKD, including 63% with a history of dialysis treatment.



National Kidney Foundation®



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