



# Wellness at Work

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## Are we eating enough Potassium?

**Potassium?** What more could you need to know about getting enough potassium if you eat your banana every morning? Because you too could become one of the 72 million Americans that is affected by high blood pressure.

Studies show that potassium can significantly lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of stroke. Research is showing that many Americans are not consuming enough of the recommended foods to get adequate potassium in their diet.

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend consuming 4,700 mg of potassium everyday. A diet full of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat milk products would ensure

enough potassium. However, many are not eating these food choices at *every meal*. According to the American Dietetic Association, ADA, less than one third of Americans are consuming the recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables a day, and only about half are meeting their needs for low-fat milk products.

Potassium works to help your muscles and nerves function properly, maintain the proper electrolyte and acid-base balance in your body, enable nutrients to move into and waste products to move out of cells, and helps lower your risk of high blood pressure. A potassium rich diet blunts the effects of

salt on blood pressure. Most of us are aware that salt is a majorly overused component in our diets. With potassium helping counteract the negative affects salt has on blood pressure, we can reduce our risk for other serious health complications such as stroke or heart disease.

At every meal, try adding some tasty healthful potassium rich foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains,

*The healthy choice with potassium is to eat more!*



### Ideas for a Potassium-Rich Day

**Breakfast:** 1 cup oatmeal, 1 medium banana, 8 oz. fat-free milk

**Lunch:** 2 oz. turkey, 1 1/2 oz. low fat Swiss cheese, lettuce and sliced tomato, 2 slices whole wheat bread, 6 baby carrots, 1 cup cubed cantaloupe

**Snack:** 2/3 cup low-fat granola with 1/4 cup dried apricots, 6 oz. orange juice

**Dinner:** 4 oz. Salmon, 1 large sweet potato, 6 steamed asparagus spears, 1 cup spinach salad with oil & vinegar dressing, whole grain dinner roll, 1 tsp. butter

**Snack:** 3 oz. fruit blend with a good source of potassium, and 1/2 cup sliced strawberries

**Totals:** 1970 calories, 44 g total fat, 2390 mg sodium, 5065 mg potassium

\*adapted from the ADA facts sheet\*

## Tips for a Low-Salt Diner \* adapted from the ADA facts sheet\*

### *Celebrate salt-free cooking!*

- Swap herbs, spices and salt-free seasoning blends to bring out the best in your dish.
- Use salt shakers only for decoration. The American Heart Association estimates that by setting aside the salt shaker, Americans could reduce salt and sodium intake by 30 percent.
- Indulge in foods naturally low in salt and sodium.

- Munch on some red peppers, carrots, or cucumbers...roast some asparagus, zucchini, yellow squash or red onion...or liven' up your salad with some exotic cherry tomatoes.
- Keep it fresh! Choose fresh and frozen vegetables (without sauce) more often. Canned vegetables are typically higher in salt and sodium. Look for canned foods with no salt added.
  - Drain and rinse canned

- foods. Reduce the salt content by draining and rinsing canned food items.
- Read food labels. Find Sodium-Free, Very Low Sodium or Low Sodium options. Check the Nutrition Facts panel for sodium content per serving.
  - Watch for hidden salt and sodium. Bouillon cubes, meat tenderizers, marinades, soy sauce and steak sauce can be loaded with salt and sodium.