

# POTASSIUM AND ITS BENEFITS – OB 28

Diets containing foods that are good sources of potassium and low in sodium [like orange juice] may reduce the risk of high blood pressure and stroke. This "health claim," is one of 13 authorized by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to recognize foods that may contribute to a particular health benefit. In this case, the focus is on potassium, an essential mineral needed for nerve stimulation and muscle contraction. It also works with sodium to maintain normal fluid balance. When levels of potassium are low, the body retains sodium and fluids, which in turn elevates blood pressure. This is precisely why; people who are having problems retaining fluids should increase the amount of potassium rich foods they eat daily! Most health experts say that our bodies need about 3500 milligrams (mg) of potassium each day. A good rule of thumb is to increase potassium rich foods, while decreasing the amount of sodium we ingest daily. This does not mean you stop salting your foods with good, healthy, sea salt, it simply means to be aware of the amount of sodium that is in the foods you are choosing to eat and to try and eat foods that are lower in sodium content.

## **Foods That Can Give You Potassium**

**Fruits High In Potassium:** apricot, cantaloupe, coconut water, grapefruit, honeydew, orange juice, papaya, peach, fruit cocktail

**Fruits With A Moderate Amount Of Potassium:** apple, cherries, banana, dates, grapes, lemons, oranges, mangos, pineapple, plantain, prune juice, raspberries, raisins, strawberries, tangerine, watermelon

**Vegetables High In Potassium:** artichoke (cooked), asparagus, avocado, bell peppers, beet greens, bamboo shoots, black beans, black-eyed peas, broccoli, cabbage (cooked), cauliflower, celery, chard, chicory, Chinese cabbage, collards, cucumbers, dandelion, dill pickles, endive, escarole, garbanzo beans, great northern beans, kidney beans, lentils, lima beans, mushrooms, navy beans, parsley, pinto beans, radishes, spinach, summer squash, tomato, turnip, white potato, winter squash, zucchini,

**Vegetables With A Moderate Amount Of Potassium:** beets, carrots, eggplant, ginger root, kale, mustard greens, okra, parsnips, pumpkin, rhubarb, rutabaga, sauerkraut, scallion, string beans, sweet potatoes

**Meat With A Moderate Amount Of Potassium:** Liver, rabbit, and turkey

**The following foods contain the most potassium in order to boost your levels daily:**

- 1 cup of cooked Spinach has 838 mgs.
- 4 ounces RAW almonds has 832 mgs.
- ½ medium Cantaloupe has 825 mgs
- 100 grams of an Avocado (California—624 mgs.; Florida—488 mgs.)
- 1 cup of cooked Mushrooms has 554 mgs.
- 1 cup Brussels sprouts has 494 mgs.
- 1 medium banana has 451 mgs.
- 4 ounces of macadamia nuts has 416 mgs.