Did you know?.......................... Rx Information from Jenny

GETTING POTASSIUM FROM FOODS VS. SUPPLEMENTS

Many people wonder whether they can get their potassium from foods instead of potassium supplements (Micro-K, Klor-Con, etc.). It depends on how much they need and whether they are trying to PREVENT or TREAT potassium loss. Potassium from foods usually works for prevention. Patients taking thiazide or loop diuretics (Hydrochlorothiazide, Lasix, etc.) most likely will need to get an extra 20 to 40 mEq per day.

How do potassium-rich foods compare to pharmaceuticals? Consider these:

• a potato with skin or a cup of spinach provides over 20 mEq
• a cup of kidney or navy beans provides 18 mEq
• a cup of orange juice or yogurt provides 14 mEq
• an average-size banana provides 12 mEq

Keep in mind that some folks should avoid too much potassium due to impaired kidney function, those taking ACE inhibitors (Lisinopril, Quinapril, Benazepril, and others), ARBs (Diovan, Cozaar, Atacand, etc.) or potassium-sparing diuretics (Spironolactone, Triamterene). Patients starting these drugs should avoid excessive potassium intake until they can get their potassium checked. However, an occasional banana isn’t likely to be a problem.

Potassium from pharmaceuticals usually works better to TREAT hypokalemia (low potassium) especially when caused by diuretics, vomiting or diarrhea. Dietary potassium comes as a PHOSPHATE salt. Supplements are CHLORIDE salts and therefore can also correct the chloride loss caused by diuretics, vomiting, etc. Most products contain 8 to 20 mEq. People who want an alternative to potassium pills can use salt substitutes (No Salt, Nu-Salt, etc.). These contain up to 20 mEq of potassium CHLORIDE per one-quarter teaspoon.

Call if you have any questions!
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