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# Discharge Instructions for Hypokalemia

You have been diagnosed with hypokalemia. This means you have a low level of potassium in your blood. Potassium helps your nerve and muscle cells work as they should. These cells include the cells in your heart. A low level of potassium in the blood can cause serious problems, such as abnormal heart rhythms and even a heart attack.

## Diet changes

Eat more potassium-rich foods such as:

- Bananas
- Oranges and orange juice
- Tomatoes, tomato sauce, and tomato juice
- Leafy green vegetables, such as spinach, kale, salad greens, collards, and chard
- Melons (all kinds)
- Pomegranates
- Peas
- Beans
- Potatoes
- Sweet potatoes
- Avocados, including guacamole
- Vegetable juices, such as V8
- Fruit juices
- All nuts and seeds
- Fish, including tuna, halibut, salmon, cod, snapper, haddock, swordfish, and perch
- Milk, including fat-free, low-fat, whole, chocolate, and buttermilk
- Soy milk

## Other home care

- Take a potassium supplement as directed by your healthcare provider.
- After heavy exercise or any activity that causes you to sweat a lot, grab a beverage high in potassium. This includes chocolate milk, coconut water, orange juice, or low-sodium vegetable juices.
- Be sure to eat foods or drink fluids with potassium if you have diarrhea or vomiting.

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- Have your potassium levels checked regularly as directed.
  - Take all medicines exactly as directed.
  - Tell your healthcare provider about all prescription and over-the-counter medicines you are taking. This includes herbal products. Some water pills (diuretics) can cause you to lose potassium.
  - Don't have foods that are high in salt. Pass up canned and prepared foods that are high in salt.

## **Follow-up**

- Make a follow-up appointment as directed by our staff.
- Keep all follow-up appointments. Your healthcare provider needs to monitor your condition closely.

## **When to call your healthcare provider**

Call your provider right away or go to the emergency room if you have any of the following:

- Vomiting
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Rapid, irregular heartbeat
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Muscle cramps, spasms, or twitching
- Weakness
- Paralysis