

## The Nutritional Benefits of Potassium Citrate

Potassium citrate is a macro-mineral/ salt that can be found in many foods. The mineral helps to reduce the acidity of urine. It is often used in the treatment of kidney diseases and gout. It works by helping to transmit nerve impulses, improving muscle function, and treating various metabolic disorders. The benefits of potassium citrate also help with muscle contractions, such as cardiac, skeletal, and smooth muscles. The mineral helps to produce energy and the production of nucleic acids. Potassium citrate is believed to maintain healthy cells and normal blood pressure. Potassium citrate is generally taken in conjunction with water pills. The reason for this is that as excess water is excreted from the body, it is possible that, with it, might come a drop in some important minerals and nutrients, particularly potassium. It is not recommended to take it without a physician's guidance.

**WHAT DOES THE MINERAL POTASSIUM CITRATE DO?** Potassium citrate is responsible for regulating the water content within the human body, as well as helping with the support of effective nerve transmissions, regulating the electric impulses of the heart, thereby regulating one's blood pressure, and is also a very important, if not, critical factor in the body's use of carbohydrates and proteins.

**HOW MUCH POTASSIUM DO WE GENERALLY NEED?** For daily intake, men and women need at least 4.7 grams of potassium, or 2,000-4,000 mg. Women around the ages of 31 and 50 in America and the United Kingdom, consume less than 50 percent of the daily amount of potassium needed to maintain optimal health. Men in America consume only slightly higher levels of potassium. Most American diets contain 1,500-5,000 mg of potassium daily. This is quite far under the recommended daily intake.

**Symptoms of Potassium Deficiency** Some of the symptoms of potassium to be noted are: tiredness, high and low blood pressure, acne, dry eyes, irritability, irregular or rapid heartbeat, muscle weakness, depression, confusion, anxiety, insomnia, frail skeletal structure, bone and joint pain, decreased reflexes, constipation, high cholesterol, and water retention. Respiratory problems, excessive thirst, evidence of protein in urine, less than adequate growth, infertility and headaches are other symptoms of potassium deficiency. Clearly, if you want the benefits of potassium citrate and you struggle getting the mineral in your daily diet as is easily done as shown above, then looking into a potassium citrate supplement becomes very important to your health.

**Do you need to supplement with Potassium Citrate?** Let's look at some points that may increase your need to get the benefits of a potassium citrate supplement. Generally, people might be of a higher risk for potassium deficiency if they exercise excessively, this is due to the loss of body fluid through perspiration. Because of this, there may be a significant loss in this particular mineral. Women should note that they may be susceptible to osteoporosis through a loss of calcium which can be because of a potassium deficiency. Another factor to note is that people, who suffer frequent diarrhea bouts, are at a higher risk for potassium deficiency. If you suffer from irritable bowel syndrome, then a quality potassium supplement may have benefit to you long term. Some western medications that are prescribed may create a possible potassium deficiency, as may a poor unbalanced nutritional diet, or any activity or condition that results in a large loss of bodily fluids.

**High Potassium foods for the benefits of potassium citrate** Even though you might be a person who should look into a potassium citrate supplement for the benefits of potassium citrate, eating foods high in potassium should not be ignored. Too many people think they can cure their nutritional needs and bad diets by just popping a supplement of some kind. For this reason we have compiled a list of some foods you may take for effective potassium citrate consumption, here is a brief list of some foods high in potassium so that you can hopefully avoid a potassium deficiency: orange juice, bananas, boiled chard, mushrooms, raw, fennel (bulb), romaine lettuce, raw celery, boiled mustard greens, raw cauliflower, raw broccoli, all varieties of summer and winter squash, ripe tomatoes, cooked turnip greens, raw carrots, boiled collard greens, raw cabbage, eggplant, cantaloupe, boiled beets, papaya, snap and string green beans, yam, fresh kale, and Brussels sprouts.

**Overdosing on Potassium Citrate?** There are people who don't really need a potassium citrate supplement. People with kidney disease or kidney failure should stay away from potassium citrate supplements. They could end up doing more harm than good. Also, those people consuming potassium-restricting medications should not take potassium citrate supplements unless their physician has given the all clear. Do not take salt products, either, because these products often contain higher levels of potassium. Some symptoms to be aware of from excessive potassium consumption in the body, include stomach upset, and may alter your heartbeat and also your blood pressure. For those people taking painkillers or anti-inflammatory drugs, they should stay away from potassium supplements, except if their physician has said otherwise or that it is ok.

**Precautions** You must take some precautions when taking potassium citrate. Tell your doctor immediately if you have kidney problems, heart disease, or Addison's disease. If you have drug allergies or high blood pressure inform your doctor of these as well. Another precaution when taking potassium citrate is to not use salt substitutes or low salt milk. The reason for this is that these products will likely contain potassium. This could cause an accidental excess of potassium and you could suffer the side effects of potassium citrate or an overdose. Follow your physician's directions and take it exactly as prescribed.

**Known Side effects from taking Potassium citrate** There are some side effects with the use of potassium citrate. They include stomach upset, nausea, vomiting, and/or loose stools. If these get really severe you need to contact your physician. Somewhat more serious side effects include, muscle weakness, mental changes, rapid/irregular heart beat, tingling or numbness of hands and/or feet. If stools are black and tarry, an unpleasant taste in the mouth, or nervousness, call your doctor or head to the nearest emergency facility. In the event of an accidental overdose, you should call your local poison control center, or emergency facility, immediately and follow their instructions. Symptoms of an overdose include weakness, sluggishness, confusion, irregular heart beat, and possibly fainting. Since the symptoms of an overdose are similar to the symptoms of side effects, seek attention immediately. As with anything, do not add anything to your medications or diet without the approval of a physician. Doing so could very well put your physical health at a very serious risk.

**Tips on Choosing a Potassium Citrate Supplement**

1. Nutritional Supplements are largely unregulated in the US, and don't just take our word for it, you can read an article on the industry wide problem here. Many health supplements have been found to harbor dangerous contaminants in them, but what's more worrying to us, is that consumers only have a 1 in 5 chance of buying a product which contains what is actually stated on the label. For the above reasons, we always advise people to buy nutritional supplements from pharmaceutical GMP compliant facilities, such places adhere to the strictest standards in the world for the manufacture of

dietary supplements. You can be sure your product will be contaminant free if you buy from such a place. Make sure the company you purchase your supplements from has a certificate of analysis on file confirming the active ingredients are what are stated on the product, and also, to confirm the potency of them.<sup>2</sup> Be sure that your potassium citrate supplement does not contain any fillers or additives (examples include: sugar, starch, gluten, silica (sand!)) or any artificial colors or flavors of any kind.

### About the Author

Our innovative Nutrition Education Program serves as a national model for the successful integration of nutrition curriculum into medical.

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