The Importance of the Sodium-Potassium Balance in the Body

THE SCIENCE OF POTASSIUM WITH SODIUM IN THE BODY

Potassium and sodium are essential dietary minerals and electrolytes, meaning that they become ions (charged particles) in our bodies, making them capable of conducting electrical charges.

Potassium is a positively charged ion, which is pumped into our cells from surrounding extracellular fluid, while its opponent, sodium, is pumped out. The potassium-sodium exchange is necessary for proper fluid balance and creates an electrical charge across the cell membrane. This is the fundamental principle permitting our nerves to conduct “electrical” impulses, which allow communication between cells and muscles—causing the muscles to contract. Since the heart is a large muscle that is continually and rhythmically contracting, potassium is extremely important for proper heart function.

Potassium also controls the creation of glycogen used by muscles for fuel from glucose (blood sugar), and therefore also controls our muscular fuel supply.

POTASSIUM INTAKE—THEN AND NOW

Fruit and vegetables are the main source of dietary potassium. As Western diets have gradually changed over time, especially the last 50 years, to include more processed foods and fewer fresh fruits and vegetables, our daily intake of potassium continues to diminish. In fact, processed foods and restaurant foods—which are high in sodium—now account for more than 75 percent of our sodium intake.1

Consequently, our daily sodium-to-potassium ratio—the measure of sodium versus potassium in our diets—continues to increase. The average intake of sodium is nearly 1.5 times the amount of potassium. Whereas, healthy dietary guidelines suggest double the amount of potassium to sodium in order to maintain proper health.2

The World Health Organization recommends 3,510mg of potassium per day.*
POSITIVE EFFECTS FROM CHANGES TO POTASSIUM-SODIUM CONSUMPTION

Globally, 1.5 billion people suffer from high blood pressure or hypertension, and millions more are suspected to be pre-hypertensive. It has widely been acknowledged that excessive sodium consumption leads to raised blood pressure levels and increased risk of cardiovascular disease, and that sodium reduction leads to healthier levels. Studies have also shown that insufficient potassium intake may lead to greater risk of stroke.

Modifying our consumption of sodium and potassium has been shown to have positive effects.

Recent studies have suggested that by simply increasing potassium intake helps lower blood pressure and that high potassium intake may prevent thickening of artery walls. There is evidence that increased potassium intake and decreased sodium intake, together with loss of excess weight and regular exercise, are the most effective, nonpharmacological (nondrug) ways to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

A SOLUTION TO THE POTASSIUM-SODIUM IMBALANCE

Nu-Tek Food Science has developed a unique potassium chloride product—Nu-Tek Salt Advanced Formula Potassium Chloride. It has shown considerable success in reducing sodium levels in some of the most challenging categories by up to 50 percent.

It is recommended that people who have kidney disease not use potassium salt substitutes.

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Learn how Nu-Tek Food Science can help you meet your sodium-reduction goals.

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Sources:

** The adequate intake and upper limit for sodium and potassium by age, as established by the Institute of Medicine.