

Higher dietary potassium to sodium ratio can lower CVD risk

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(HealthDay)—Higher dietary potassium seems to be associated with

reduced blood pressure, regardless of sodium intake, with the postulated mechanism involving the distal tubule sodium chloride cotransporter (NCC), according to research published online Feb. 7 in the *American Journal of Physiology - Endocrinology and Metabolism*.

Noting that blood pressure is higher in westernized populations consuming sodium-rich processed foods versus isolated societies consuming [potassium](#)-rich natural foods, Alicia A. McDonough, Ph.D., from the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, and colleagues examined the correlation between dietary potassium and blood pressure.

Based on numerous population studies, the researchers found that higher dietary potassium was associated with lower blood pressure, regardless of sodium intake. Interventional studies with potassium supplementation indicate that there may be a direct benefit; alternatively, potassium might indicate alternative beneficial components of a natural diet. Recent rodent model studies indicate putative mechanisms for the benefit of potassium, whereby high dietary potassium provokes a decrease in NCC activity, which drives more potassium secretion and sodium excretion, regardless of sodium intake. Low dietary potassium provokes an increase in NCC activity resulting in sodium retention, regardless of [sodium intake](#).

"The findings suggest that public health efforts directed towards increasing consumption of natural potassium rich foods would reduce [blood pressure](#) and, thus, cardiovascular and kidney disease," the authors write.

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