

Hyperkalemia

You will learn the following:

- Causes (easy mnemonics to remember it)
Signs & Symptoms (tricks on how to easily remember)
Nursing Intervention...things that NCLEX and lecture exams look for

Hyper= excessive

Kal= root word for potassium

Emia=blood

Meaning of hyperkalemia: **excessive potassium in the blood**

Normal Potassium is 3.5 to 5.3. Anything higher 7.0 or higher is very dangerous!

Most of the body's potassium is found in the intracellular part of the cell compared to the extracellular which is where sodium is mainly found. Blood tests that measure potassium levels are measuring the potassium outside of the cell in the extracellular fluid.

Remember that potassium is responsible for nerve impulse conduction and muscle contraction.

Causes of Hyperkalemia

Remember the phrase "The Body **CARED** too much about Potassium"

Cellular Movement of Potassium from Intracellular to extracellular (burns, tissue damages, acidosis)

Adrenal Insufficiency with Addison's Disease

Renal Failure

Excessive Potassium intake

Drugs (potassium-sparing drugs like aldactone (spiroaldactone), Triamterene, ACE inhibitors, NSAIDS)

Signs & Symptoms of Hyperkalemia

Remember the word **MURDER**

Muscle weakness

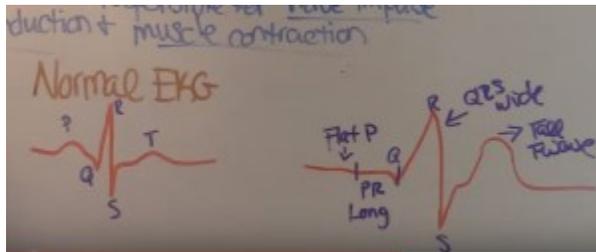
Urine production little or none (renal failure)

Respiratory failure (due to the decreased ability to use breathing muscles or seizures develop)

Decreased cardiac contractility (weak pulse, low blood pressure)

Early signs of muscle twitches/cramps...late profound weakness, flaccid

Rhythm changes: Tall peaked T waves, flat p waves, Widened QRS and prolonged PR interval



Nursing Interventions for Hyperkalemia

- Monitor cardiac, respiratory, neuromuscular, renal, and GI status
- Stop IV potassium if running and hold any PO potassium supplements
- Initiate potassium restricted diet and remember foods that are high in potassium
- Remember the word POTASSIUM for food rich in potassium

Potatoes, pork

Oranges

Tomatoes

Avocados

Strawberries,

Spinach

fIsh

mUshrooms

Musk Melons: cantaloupe

Also included are carrots, cantaloupe, raisins, bananas.

- o Prepare patient for ready for dialysis. Most patient are renal patients who get dialysis regularly and will have high potassium.
- o Kayexalate is sometimes ordered and given PO or via enema. This drug promotes GI sodium absorption which causes potassium excretion.
- o Doctor may order potassium wasting drugs like Lasix or Hydrochlorothiazide
- o Administer a hypertonic solution of glucose and regular insulin to pull the potassium into the cell