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Phosphorus Content of Foods

Phosphorus is an important mineral that your body uses for energy and overall health. What you eat and drink can affect the amount of phosphorus in your body. The key to selecting foods with phosphorus is having the right balance for your needs.

Natural and Added Phosphorus

Natural Phosphorus: Phosphorus occurs naturally in meats, dairy, grains, and vegetables. Your body absorbs about half of this natural phosphorus from foods and drinks.

Added Phosphorus: Phosphorus is also added to many foods and drinks as a preservative. Your body absorbs nearly all of the added phosphorus from foods and drinks.

How Much Phosphorus is in Food and Drinks?

Nutrition Facts labels don't typically include phosphorus amounts and they don't identify whether the phosphorus in the product is natural or added.

Read the ingredients list to check if a product label displays "phos" in the ingredients. This abbreviation will indicate for sure that phosphorus has been added.

Ingredients with phosphorus that are most commonly added to food include disodium phosphate, sodium hexametaphosphate, phosphoric acid, calcium phosphate, and dipotassium phosphate.

Foods and drinks with the highest added phosphorus are usually processed foods, packaged foods, and fast foods.

Phosphorus in Foods

| | Lower Phosphorus Choices | Higher Phosphorus Choices |
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| Grains and Baked Goods | <p>Fresh breads, buns, dinner rolls, bagels English muffins, or pitas without "phos" ingredients</p> <p>Plain cereals such as oatmeal, corn flakes, rice crispies</p> <p>Reduced-salt crackers, rice cakes, pretzels, popcorn, or tortilla chips without "phos" ingredients</p> | <p>Processed breads and cereals with phosphorus additives on food label</p> <p>Biscuits, brownies, cakes, muffins, pancakes, pastries, or waffles that are ready-to-eat or made from a dry mix with "phos" on the label</p> <p>Refrigerated or frozen dough for biscuits, cookies, pastries, or sweet rolls with "phos" ingredients</p> |

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| Protein Foods | <p>All-natural chicken, turkey, fish or seafood</p> <p>Lean and fresh beef, lamb, pork, veal, or wild game (3 ounces is size of palm of hand)</p> <p>Whole eggs or egg whites (1 egg is 1 ounce)</p> <p>Tofu, beans, lentils, hummus (1/4-1/3 cup)</p> <p>Unsalted nuts (1/4 cup) or nut butters (1 tablespoon)</p> | <p>Processed meats like bacon, ham, hot dogs, chicken nuggets or strips, bologna, salami, or sausage</p> <p>Breaded or fried meats, chicken, fish or seafood</p> <p>Organ meats such as kidney or liver</p> |
| Dairy and Dairy Alternatives | <p>Unfortified dairy alternates such as almond or rice beverages</p> <p>Milk or soy beverage (1/2 cup)</p> <p>Cottage cheese with no “phos” ingredients (1/2 cup)</p> <p>Yogurt (6 ounces) all natural, unsweetened, or plain preferred</p> <p>Natural cheese such as brie, feta, Swiss, cheddar, or mozzarella. Only have a small amount (1 ounce - size of your thumb or 2 dice)</p> <p>Regular or low-fat cream cheese, Neufchatel, or sour cream (1 tbsp)</p> <p>Sherbet, sorbet, fruit ice, or popsicles (1/2 cup)</p> | <p>Non-dairy creamers and some half and half creamers with “phos”</p> <p>Enriched dairy alternates such as almond, oat or rice beverages</p> <p>Processed cheese, such as American</p> <p>Processed cheese spreads and dips</p> <p>Fat free cream cheese or sour cream</p> <p>Ice cream, pudding or frozen yogurt</p> <p>Milk-based or cheese-based soups or sauces</p> |
| Vegetables | <p>Fresh, frozen, or canned without added “phos” ingredients</p> | <p>Vegetables with sauces added</p> <p>Frozen or packaged potatoes or vegetables with “phos” ingredients</p> |
| Fruits | <p>Fresh, frozen or canned without added “phos” ingredients</p> | <p>Fresh, frozen or canned with added “phos” ingredients</p> |
| Beverages | <p>Water</p> <p>Fresh brewed coffee or tea</p> <p>Fresh lemonade or pure fruit juice (1/2 cup)</p> <p>Beverages without “phos” ingredients</p> | <p>Beverage or powdered mix with “phos” ingredients: most colas, energy and sports drinks, canned or bottled coffees and teas, flavored waters and drink mixes.</p> <p>Beers and wines</p> |

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| <p>Other (Fast, convenience or restaurant foods)</p> | <p>Hamburgers, fish filet (no cheese), plain chicken wings</p> <p>Grilled, roasted, broiled, baked fish, chicken, turkey, fish or seafood.</p> <p>Plain prepared eggs (no cheese, ham, bacon, sausage), French toast, English muffin, bagel, hot cereal, toast</p> <p>Pizza without meat or extra cheese</p> <p>Tacos, burritos, enchiladas fajitas with limited toppings. Choose white rice, lettuce, sautéed onions, bell peppers on the side</p> <p>Tuna or egg salad sandwich (no cheese)</p> <p>Sides: salad without cheese, coleslaw, apple slices, applesauce, grapes, or carrots</p> <p>Meals with no “phos” ingredients and have less than 600 milligrams of sodium per serving</p> | <p>Battered or fried fish or chicken including nuggets, sandwiches, strips or wings</p> <p>Pizza with meat and extra cheese</p> <p>Tacos, burritos, enchiladas with meat and toppings such as cheese and beans</p> <p>Hot dogs and sausages</p> <p>Any sandwich made with ham, processed deli meats, American cheese, or bacon</p> <p>French fries or other fried potatoes or battered vegetables, biscuits, or macaroni and cheese</p> <p>Meals or soups with “phos” ingredients and more than 600 milligrams of sodium per serving</p> |
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