# Potassium chloride - Intravenous

## Newborn use only

**2020**

<table>
<tr><td>Alert</td><td>High risk medicine.<br>The use of pre-mixed potassium chloride solutions are preferred where possible.<br>The addition of potassium chloride to the maintenance fluids is preferred over the use of a side line to minimise the risk. Additional potassium chloride must not be added to premixed potassium chloride intravenous solutions.<br>Recommended to store only 10 mmol/10 mL potassium chloride concentrated ampoules to avoid errors.<br>Concentrated potassium ampoules MUST BE DILUTED prior to intravenous infusion.<br>When correcting severe or symptomatic hypokalaemia – Avoid diluting with glucose solution as serum potassium level may further decrease.<br>Osmolality of 1 mmol/1 mL of potassium chloride = 2000 mOsm/L.(1)<br>Intravenous (IV) fluids with regular pre-mixed 2 mmol/100 mL (20 mmol/L) potassium chloride provides a daily maintenance dose of 2.4 to3.0 mmol/kg/day of potassium at 120 to150 mL/kg/day.<br>Standard Australian consensus amino-acid formulations and paediatric IV fluids have 2 mmol/100 mL potassium chloride.<br>Central IV administration: maximum concentration is 80 mmol potassium chloride/L (0.08mmol/mL).(2)<br>Peripheral IV administration: maximum concentration is 40 mmol potassium chloride/L (0.04mmol/mL).(2)<br>Consider all sources of potassium including parenteral nutrition when calculating total daily dose.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Safety handling of potassium chloride</td><td>• Stock of concentrated potassium ampoules should be subject to risk assessment and stored separately from ampoules of similar appearance and packaging.<br>• Retain in original packaging and remove just prior to use.<br><u>When prescribing potassium</u><br>• Rapid correction is rarely needed in neonates.<br>• Identify and treat the aetiology for hypokalaemia (e.g. ceasing diuretics)<br>• Err on the lower end of the estimate.<br>• Consider oral potassium replacement where possible.<br>• Discuss with clinician-in-charge prior to IV correction of hypokalaemia.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Indication</td><td>Treatment and prevention of hypokalaemia.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Action</td><td>Intracellular cation. Essential in the maintenance of body fluid composition and electrolyte balance. Participates in carbohydrate utilisation and protein synthesis. It is critical in the regulation of nerve conduction and muscle contraction, particularly in the heart.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Drug type</td><td>Electrolyte.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Trade name</td><td>Pfizer Sterile Potassium Chloride Concentrate, Potassium Chloride Juno</td></tr>
<tr><td>Presentation</td><td>Pfizer (Perth) Sterile Potassium Chloride Concentrate (Concentrate for infusion): 10 mmol/10 mL and Potassium Chloride Juno Concentrate: 10 mmol/10 mL.<br>Other strengths of potassium chloride have been intentionally excluded from this neonatal formulary.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Dose</td><td><u>Mild to moderate hypokalaemia (<3.5 mmol/L) with no ECG changes</u><br>Check if the regular maintenance IV fluid has potassium chloride in the solution.<br>Maintenance IV fluid containing potassium may be adequate.<br><br>Parenteral maintenance dose can be provided in maintenance IV fluids as:<br>Not greater than 4 mmol/100 mL (20 to 40 mmol/L) of potassium chloride in peripheral IV fluids;<br>Not greater than 8 mmol/100 mL (80 mmol/L) of potassium chloride in central IV fluids<br><br>The daily parenteral maintenance dose of potassium:<br><br><table><tr><td><u>Weight</u></td><td><u>Dose</u></td></tr><tr><td><1500 g</td><td>2 to 5 mmol/kg/day</td></tr><tr><td>≥1500 g</td><td>1.5 to 3.0 mmol/kg/day</td></tr></table><br><u>Severe (Serum potassium <1.5 mmol/L) or symptomatic hypokalaemia with ECG changes (2)</u><br>Discuss with clinician in-charge prior to rapid IV correction of hypokalaemia. Dose and administration may be altered as the clinical condition dictates.</td></tr>
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| | 0.3 to 0.5 mmol/kg potassium chloride diluted with 2 mL/kg of sodium chloride 0.9% over 2 to 3 hours. **Do not exceed rate of 0.2 mmol/kg/hour**<br>Repeat dose if serum potassium level is not corrected. |
| **Dose adjustment** | Therapeutic hypothermia – Ensure adequate urine output and renal function.<br>ECMO – Determined by renal function.<br>Renal impairment – Ensure adequate urine output prior to supplementation.<br>Hepatic impairment – No specific dose adjustment. |
| **Maximum dose** | |
| **Total cumulative dose** | |
| **Route** | IV |
| **Preparation** | **Addition of potassium chloride to maintenance IV fluids**<br>Note: Preferable to use premixed maintenance IV fluid with potassium chloride (e.g. Baxter 0.225% sodium chloride + 10% glucose + 2 mmol/100 mL potassium chloride).<br>If premixed bags are not available, potassium chloride 10mmol/10 mL strength can be added by following the steps below:<br><br>1. Calculate potassium requirement for infant in mmol/day<br>Infant weight x mmol/kg/day required = mmol/day<br>E.g. 3 kg x 2 mmol/kg/day = 6 mmol/day<br><br>2. Calculate IV maintenance fluid requirement in mL/day (deduct enteral feeds or other IV infusions)<br>Infant weight x mL/kg/day = mL/day of IV maintenance fluid<br>E.g. 3 kg x 90mL (TFR) = 270mL/day of IV maintenance fluid<br><br>3. Calculate volume (mL) of potassium chloride to be added to 500 mL bag<br>mmol/day ÷ mL per day of IV maintenance fluid x 500 = mmol potassium chloride required.<br>E.g. $\frac{6}{270} \times 500$ mL = 11.1 mmol potassium chloride required ≡ 11.1 mL potassium chloride required<br><br>4. From 500 mL bag, **remove** the amount of fluid that will be replaced by potassium chloride<br>E.g. Remove 11.1 mL of IV fluid from 500 mL bag.<br><br>5. **Add** the calculated volume of potassium chloride to 500 mL bag.<br>E.g. Add 11.1 mL of potassium chloride to 500 mL bag.<br><br>6. The bag must be inverted ten times to ensure potassium chloride is thoroughly mixed throughout the solution.<br><br>7. Apply a fluid label, clearly identifying addition of potassium chloride as per NSW health policy<br><br>**IV infusion for severe or symptomatic hypokalemia**<br>0.3 to 0.5 mmol/kg potassium chloride (0.3 to 0.5 mL/kg of potassium chloride 10 mmol/10 mL) diluted with 2 mL/kg of sodium chloride 0.9%* over 2-3 hours (not to exceed 0.2 mmol/kg/hour)<br>*Do not dilute with glucose solutions as glucose can cause further drop in potassium. |
| **Administration** | For rapid correction: IV infusion over 2-3 hours<br>When added to IV maintenance fluid bag: continuous infusion over 24 hours |
| **Monitoring** | Injection site for pain or phlebitis.<br>Continuous cardio-respiratory monitoring<br>Serum electrolytes – serum potassium. |
| **Contraindications** | Hyperkalaemia.(3)<br>Hyperadrenalism associated with adrenogenital syndrome.<br>Tissue breakdown.<br>Acute dehydration. |

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| | Renal impairment with oliguria and azotaemia.<br>Untreated Addison's disease.<br>Ventricular fibrillation.<br>Atrioventricular or intraventricular heart block.<br>Conditions with increased sensitivity to potassium : Adynamia episodica hereditaria, congenital paramyotonia (3) |
| **Precautions** | Renal impairment, adrenal insufficiency, impaired potassium excretion, heart block associated disease, bradycardia; cardiac, renal, sickle cell disease, acidosis.(3) |
| **Drug interactions** | Potassium sparing diuretics, including spironolactone: Increase serum potassium.<br>Amphotericin B Liposomal: – Can cause hypokalaemia.(4)<br>Doxapram: Can cause hypokalaemia.(5)<br>ACE inhibitors, including enalapril and captopril: Elevate serum potassium.<br>Beta adrenergic blockers: - Increase both peak serum potassium and the time required for serum potassium to return to basal levels.<br>Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs): May cause hyperkalaemia by inducing secondary hypoaldosteronism.<br>Heparin: Reduces the synthesis of aldosterone which may result in hyperkalaemia.<br>Digitalis glycosides: Potassium supplements are not recommended for concurrent use in digitalised patients with severe or complete heart block. In treating hyperkalaemia in digitalised patients, too rapid a lowering of the serum potassium concentration can produce digitalis toxicity.(3)<br>Sodium bicarbonate: Concurrent use may decrease serum potassium. |
| **Adverse reactions** | Hyperkalaemia: Can develop rapidly and asymptomatically and is potentially fatal.<br>Pain or phlebitis may occur.<br>Cardiovascular: Hypotension, cardiac depression, arrhythmias and heart block.<br>ECG abnormalities: - Disappearance of P wave, widening and slurring of QRS complex, changes of the ST segment, tall peaked T waves.<br>Gastrointestinal: Vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal discomfort.<br>Other: Listlessness, flaccid paralysis. |
| **Compatibility** | **Fluids:** Sodium chloride 0.9%, sodium chloride 0.45%, Hartmann's, Ringer's, pre-mixed amino-acid formulations(6). Glucose containing solutions, but NOT PREFFERED as glucose may further decrease serum potassium level.<br><br>**Y-site:** Do not add other drugs to pre-mixed potassium chloride bags.<br>Aciclovir, aminophylline, amiodarone, ampicillin, atracurium, atropine, azathioprine, aztreonam, calcium gluconate, caspofungin, cefazolin, cefotaxime, cefoxitin, ceftazidime, ceftriaxone, clindamycin, dexamethasone, dexmedetomidine, digoxin, dopamine, ephedrine sulfate, fentanyl, fluconazole, furosemide, ganciclovir, gentamicin, glyceryl trinitrate, heparin, hydrocortisone, insulin, labetalol, lidocaine, linezolid, magnesium sulfate, metoclopramide, midazolam, milrinone, morphine, neostigmine, noradrenaline, paracetamol, piperacillin-tazobactam, ranitidine, remifentanil, sodium bicarbonate, tobramycin, vancomycin, verapamil, zidovudine.(6) |
| **Incompatibility** | **Fluids:** Fat emulsion.<br>**Y site:** Amoxicillin, azithromycin, cefalotin, methylprednisolone, sodium nitroprusside, suxamethonium, thiopental. |
| **Stability** | Ampoule: Store below 25°C.(6)<br>Infusion solution: Stable for 24 hours at 2 to 8°C.(6) |
| **Storage** | Store vials below 25°C. For single use only and discard any remaining portion. |
| **Excipients** | Water for Injection. |
| **Special comments** | Patients with hypokalaemia may also have hypomagnesemia as a result of concurrent loss of magnesium with diarrhoea, diuretic therapy or medications such as amphotericin B. If hypomagnesemia is present, it should be treated prior to the administration of potassium.(7) |
| **Evidence** | Refer to full version. |
| **Practice points** | Refer to full version. |
| **References** | Refer to full version. |

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