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## An Integrated View of Potassium Homeostasis

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### To the Editor

As Gumz et al. correctly state, “the healthy kidney has a robust capacity to excrete potassium,” and most people can ingest very large quantities of potassium without clinically significant hyperkalemia. However, it is not widely known that excessive ingestion of potassium-rich foods or drinks because of a psychiatric disorder can cause clinically significant hyperkalemia in people with healthy kidneys and adrenal glands who do not have precipitating factors such as diabetes or the use of potassium-sparing medications. For example, in an adolescent with anorexia nervosa, recurrent hyperkalemia occurred with obsessive eating of up to 20 bananas per day.<sup>1</sup> Hyperkalemia developed in another patient who had schizophrenia and psychogenic polydipsia when she replaced the water in her diet with orange juice.<sup>2</sup> Finally, recurrent hyperkalemia due to excessive ingestion of dried fruits developed in a healthy person, possibly because of an undiagnosed eating disorder.<sup>3</sup>

Excessive consumption of potassium-rich foods or drinks because of a mental disorder should be considered in the differential diagnosis of unexplained hyperkalemia in otherwise healthy people. A careful history regarding the patient’s dietary habits should be obtained.<sup>3</sup>

### References

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