Potassium Found to Help Kidney Health for Those with Epilepsy

By Greg Arnold, DC, CSCS, July 24, 2009, abstracted from “Empiric Use of Potassium Citrate Reduces Kidney-Stone Incidence with the Ketogenic Diet” printed online in Pediatrics

Link - http://www.nowfoods.com/HealthLibrary/HealthArticles/HealthNotes/077039.htm?cat

According to the Epilepsy Foundation, epilepsy and seizures affect almost 3 million Americans of all ages and cost our country $15.5 billion each year. There are 200,000 new cases of seizures and epilepsy each year, with 10% of Americans experiencing a seizure in their lifetime, including 3% by age 75 (1).

One treatment for epilepsy that has had a significant degree of success is following a ketogenic diet, which is very high in fats and low in carbohydrates, making the body burn fat instead of sugar for energy. The ketogenic diet has been around for almost 80 years (2) but a significant side effect is a high occurrence of kidney stones, afflicting as many as 6% (1 in 16) of epileptics who go on a ketogenic diet for two years (3).

Now a new study (4) has found that potassium may help kidney health in epileptics on a ketogenic diet. In the study, 303 epileptic children with an average age of 4 and on the ketogenic diet were given either 78 mg of potassium citrate per day or placebo for two years. They found that five times as many kids not receiving potassium developed kidney stones, with 4 out 198 in the potassium group (2%) versus 11 of 105 in the control group (10.5%). No side effects were reported by the children.

For the researchers, “We strongly believe that universal use of [potassium citrate] is warranted for all children who start the ketogenic diet, with clear benefits outweighing risks.”

Greg Arnold is a Chiropractic Physician practicing in Danville, CA. You can contact Dr. Arnold directly by emailing him at mailto:PitchingDoc@msn.com or visiting his web site at www.PitchingDoc.com

Reference:
2. “Ketogenic Diet” posted on www.epilepsyfoundation.org/answerplace/Medical/treatment/diet/