

PHOSPHORUS AND POTASSIUM: NATURALLY GOOD FOR YOU

A better title for this commentary might have been—Phosphorus and Potassium: You Can't Live Without Them. The truth is, phosphorus and potassium are absolutely essential to life, for crop plants and humans. I chose the other title, however, because it makes me feel good to know that essential nutrients are provided naturally through the use of mineral fertilizers.

Fertilizer phosphorus and potassium are produced by mining and refining ore deposits that were laid down by nature over long periods of time. Their application to soils to replace nutrients removed by crop growth is a step in the recycling process that has allowed the world as we know it to evolve. Another step occurs when we eat foods produced with proper fertilization.

We need lots of phosphorus. In fact, of all the mineral nutrients contained in our bodies, phosphorus is the second most abundant. It can be found in every cell, but nearly 80% is concentrated in our teeth and bones. It makes sense, then, that in order to have strong teeth and bones we must consume large quantities of the nutrient. How can we be sure we are getting enough? Fortunately, nature supplies us with liberal amounts in our foods—meats, dairy products, fruits, nuts, and vegetables. Eating a balanced diet that includes sufficient phosphorus is our best defense against bad teeth and weak bones as well as other potentially serious health problems.


As one of millions in North America with high blood pressure, I am aware of the need for potassium. One of my medications (a diuretic) tends to deplete my body of potassium as it removes excess water to lower blood pressure. So, I must be careful to include high potassium foods such as bananas in my diet. My wife and I season our food with lite salt, a mixture of potassium chloride and sodium chloride (ordinary table salt), to increase our consumption of potassium and lower our sodium intake. We use potassium chloride in our water conditioner for the same reason.

It is comforting to me to know that such a vital part of my well being can be maintained so easily, simply by following nature's process of recycling...by eating tasty, nutritious foods that contain the phosphorus, potassium, and other nutrients provided by mineral fertilizers. Remember, these nutrients are naturally good for you.



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