

Cranberry Juice: What Is the Potassium Story?

Jessica Krefting, MS, RD, LDN

C RANBERRY JUICE HAS several appealing features to chronic kidney patients. It has been a long-held belief that cranberry juice helps with urinary tract and kidney health. Originally, it was thought that fruit acids were responsible for the bacteriostatic effect. However, proanthocyanidins have been isolated in cranberries as having bacterial antiadhesion activity which will prevent bacteria from binding itself to the bladder walls.¹ A Cochrane meta-analysis has shown that cranberry juice products do not significantly reduce the occurrence of urinary tract infections (UTIs) in women with recurrent UTIs, as previously thought. The amount in a cranberry juice cocktail would not have a high enough quantity of proanthocyanidins to prevent or cure UTIs, as someone would have to drink 150 mL two times a day, indefinitely, to potentially have even a slight effect.² At this level of intake, there were often GI side effects. More research is needed for more concentrated cranberry products such as powder cranberry in pill form.³

Patients with chronic kidney disease may choose cranberry juice for a taste change from water as they have heard it is a fruit juice that has low potassium, as opposed to the breakfast favorite orange juice. Unfortunately, patients can be deceived if they are not reading labels carefully. As shown in Tables 1 and 2, potassium levels can fluctuate from <50 mg to over 200 mg per 8 oz serving. One hundred percent juice is often touted as a “healthier” choice; however, this is untrue for renal patients as the potassium content is greater than 200 mg per serving.

These “100% Juice” drinks often contain a blend of at least four juices: apple, grape, cranberry, and the additional juice in the title (cran-mango, cran-raspberry, etc.) The other option, “Juice Drinks,” contains around 15% juice with filtered water and sugar taking up the rest of the space. Many patients with kidney disease also have diabetes, and many of these juices can contain about 30 g of carbohydrates per 8 oz serving. There are light or diet options which would be a fine choice for these patients, however, contain very little actual juice. Patients with kidney disease may also need to manage fluid intake, and adding a juice into their diet can affect their fluid load. Table 3 lists some other cranberry juice brands worth mentioning, as well as the amount of potassium naturally in raw cranberries. In conclusion, a small amount of cranberry juice can be used as a substitute for other fluids to provide a variety of flavors throughout the day; however, there is no nutritional or medical benefit to be noted.

References

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Dialysis Clinic, St. Elizabeth's Medical Center, Brighton, Massachusetts 02135

Address correspondence to Jessica Krefting, MS, RD, LDN, Renal Dietitian, St. Elizabeth's Medical Center, 736 Cambridge Street, Brighton, MA 02135. E-mail: Jessica.Krefting@steward.org.

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Table 1. Listed as Cranberry Juice—OceanSpray

Product	Size (oz)	Potassium (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Carbs (g)	Sugar (g)	Calories	Noted Vitamins, Minerals, and Ingredients
Diet Cranberry Juice Drink	8	20	20	2	<1	5	100% vitamin C, contains PACT™ cranberry extract, 0% phosphorus
Ocean Spray Sparkling Cranberry Cranberry Juice Cocktail	8.4 8	30 45	30 5	24 28	24 28	90 110	10% vitamin C, 0% phosphorus 100% vitamin C, 0% phosphorus Ingredients: filtered water, cranberry Juice from concentrate, cane, or Beet sugar, ascorbic acid (vitamin C), vegetable concentrate for color.
Cranberry Juice Cocktail with Calcium	8	45	5	30	30	120	100% vitamin C, 10% calcium, 0% phosphorus
Kirkland Ocean-Spray 100% Juice Cranberry Premium	8	50	15	30	30	120	100% vitamin C, 0% phosphorus, no added sugar
Cranberry Juice Cocktail with lime	8	55	50	28	28	110	100% vitamin C, 0% phosphorus
Light Cranberry Juice Drink	8	90	40	11	11	50	Sweetened with sucralose, 0% phosphorus
100% Juice Cranberry	8	190	15	28	28	110	100% vitamin C, no added sugar, 2% phosphorus, 2% magnesium Ingredients: cranberry juice from concentrate (water, juice concentrate), grape juice from concentrate (water, juice concentrate), apple Juice from concentrate (water, juice concentrate), pear juice from concentrate (water, juice concentrate), natural flavors, pectin, ascorbic acid (vitamin C).

www.oceanspray.com.

Table 2. Cranberry Juice Blends—OceanSpray

Product	Size (oz)	Potassium (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Carb (g)	Sugar (g)	Calories	Noted Vitamins, Minerals, and Ingredients
CranGrape Grape Cranberry Juice Drink	8	30	55	31	31	120	100% vitamin C, 0% phosphorus
100% Juice Cranberry Concord Grape	8	200	20	33	33	130	100% vitamin C, 2% calcium, 2% phosphorus, 2% iron, 2% magnesium
CranMango Cranberry Mango Juice Drink	8	25	35	30	30	120	100% vitamin C, 0% phosphorus
100% Juice Cranberry Mango	8	170	15	30	30	120	100% vitamin C, 2% calcium, 2% phosphorus, 2% iron, 2% magnesium
CranPineapple Cranberry Pineapple Juice Drink	8	30	15	26	25	100	100% vitamin C, 0% phosphorus
100% Juice Cranberry Pineapple	8	220	20	29	27	110	100% vitamin C, 2% calcium, 0% phosphorus, 2% iron, 2% magnesium
CranRaspberry Cranberry Raspberry Juice Drink	8	45	40	28	28	110	100% vitamin C, 0% phosphorus
100% Juice Cranberry Raspberry	8	170	15	30	30	120	100% vitamin C, 2% calcium, 2% phosphorus, 2% iron, 2% magnesium
CranPomegranate Cranberry Pomegranate Juice Drink	8	30	30	28	28	110	100% vitamin C, 0% phosphorus
100% Juice Cranberry Pomegranate	8	210	15	31	31	120	100% vitamin C, 2% calcium, 2% phosphorus, 2% iron, 2% magnesium
CranApple Cranberry Apple Juice Drink	8	35	45	31	31	120	100% vitamin C, 0% phosphorus
CranStrawberry Cranberry Strawberry Drink	8	45	50	26	26	100	100% vitamin C, 0% phosphorus
CranTangerine Cranberry Tangerine Juice	8	40	5	28	28	110	100% vitamin C, 0% phosphorus
100% Juice Cranberry Blueberry Blackberry	8	180	20	30	30	120	100% vitamin C, 0% phosphorus
White Cranberry Juice Drink	8	25	35	26	26	100	100% vitamin C, 0% phosphorus
CranLemonade Cranberry Lemonade Juice Drink	8	30	125	28	28	110	100% vitamin C, 0% phosphorus
CranCherry Cranberry Cherry Juice Drink	8	60	20	28	28	110	100% vitamin C, 0% phosphorus
100% Juice Cranberry Cherry	8	200	15	33	33	130	100% vitamin C, 2% phosphorus, 4% magnesium, Ingredients: grape juice from concentrate (water, juice concentrate), apple juice from concentrate (water, juice concentrate), cranberry juice from concentrate (water, juice concentrate), cherry juice from concentrate (water, juice concentrate), plum from concentrate (water, juice concentrate), natural flavors, ascorbic acid (vitamin C), citric acid, malic acid, fumaric acid, vegetable concentrate for color

Table 3. Other Forms of Cranberries/Generic Cranberry Juices

Item	Amount	Potassium (mg)	Notes
Raw cranberries	1 cup	88	
100% juice, cranberry juice blend	8 oz	152	No brand label
RW Knudsen Family Cranberry Juice Concentrate	8 oz	180	Suggests reconstituting
Unsweetened cranberry juice	8 oz	195	No brand label
Vitacost 100% cranberry Juice	8 oz	No potassium listed	Listed as 2 tbsp—50 kcal, 8 sugar so for an 8oz cup would be 400 kcal, 64 g sugar

www.ndb.nal.usda.gov.
www.vitacost.com/.
www.rwknudsenfamily.com/.