Approach to Hyperkalemia

• Check a potassium level and it is elevated (~6.5) - 5 steps:

1) **Recheck the potassium** - Most common cause is pseudo-hyperkalemia, so recheck while going on to step 2

2) **Get an EKG** - Any EKG changes need to be treated immediately. Earliest sign is peaked T waves → P-wave flattening → QRS lengthening → Sine wave → Death

3) **Protect the heart** with calcium: Usually 1 amp of calcium chloride (can be hard on veins) can use calcium gluconate if you have time

4) **Push potassium** back into the cells: can give Insulin and D50 together, Albuterol to shift potassium into cells

5) **Remove potassium** from the body: can give Kayexalate (make pt remove excess potassium in stool), can give diuretics, definitive treatment is dialysis

References