Low Potassium, Opposite pH

Hypokalemia with metabolic alkalosis versus hypokalemia with metabolic acidosis

Alk — Hyperaldosteronism / vomiting

- metabolic alkalosis with hypokalemia
- sodium retained, potassium and hydrogen ions lost
- primary hyperaldosteronism: hypertension with low renin

Acid — Diarrhea / renal tubular acidosis

- metabolic acidosis with hypokalemia
- bicarbonate is lost

Low K + alkalosis
Hyperaldosteronism or vomiting

Low K + acidosis
Diarrhea or renal tubular acidosis

The key
Same low potassium, opposite pH

The pH separates the causes of hypokalemia