

MAGNESIUM

Magnesium is needed for more than 300 chemical reactions in our body. It is important for our heart, nerves, muscles, blood sugar, energy production, sleep, and more. Common symptoms of magnesium deficiency include: fatigue, irritability, anxiety, insomnia, migraine headaches, muscle pain, fibromyalgia, leg cramps, and restless leg syndrome. The majority of Americans consume less than the recommended daily allowance (RDA) of magnesium, which for women over 30 is 320 mg and 310 mg for ages 19-30. The RDA for men over 30 is 420 mg, and 400 for ages 10-30. Many practitioners feel that higher total intake is beneficial.

With regards to our bones, magnesium helps the body absorb and utilize calcium as well as vitamin D. Dr. Carolyn Dean, author of *The Magnesium Miracle*, notes that magnesium regulates the amount of calcium in a person's body and ensures it is directed toward building stronger bones. Taking too much calcium without enough magnesium may cause excess calcium to be deposited in the wrong places such as the kidneys, coronary arteries, and cartilage rather than in the bones. You should aim to get at least half as much magnesium as calcium. Research shows that magnesium supplementation increases bone density and reduces bone loss in postmenopausal women.

It is best to get your calcium and magnesium from food first and take a supplement if you do not have enough in your diet. Magnesium is found in leafy green vegetables, beans, whole grains, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and fruit.

Some of the highest sources of magnesium are:

- Raw pumpkin seeds (191 mg in ¼ cup)
- Raw cacao powder (175 mg in 1 tbsp)
- Cooked amaranth grain (160 mg in 1 cup)
- Sesame seeds (126 mg in ¼ cup)

- Quinoa (118 mg in 1 cup)
- Raw sunflower seeds (113 mg in ¼ cup)
- Raw almonds (97 mg in ¼ cup)
- Black beans (60 mg in ½ cup)
- Chia seeds (48 mg in 1 tbsp)
- Collard greens (40 mg in 1 cup cooked)

Unlike calcium, the magnesium content is not listed on food labels. You can find out this information by going to the USDA Nutrient Database (<http://ndb.nal.usda.gov/ndb/>)

Magnesium is removed from refined products such as sugar, white rice, and white flour. Magnesium is also depleted by excess alcohol intake, phosphoric acid in sodas, antibiotics, beta-blockers, diuretics, and chronic stress.

The easiest supplements to absorb are magnesium citrate, chelate, and glycinate. Magnesium citrate helps prevent constipation due to its laxative properties. Talk to your doctor or health care provider about integrating magnesium into your diet and taking supplements if necessary. It is always best to take magnesium supplements more than two hours before any medication. If you have kidney disease or severe heart disease, you should take magnesium supplements only under a doctor's supervision.

Another great way to get magnesium is by taking Epsom salt baths or foot baths. Epsom salt is magnesium sulfate. It is absorbed through your skin. Dr. Mark Hyman has a recipe for the "Ultra Bath": Put 2 cups of Epsom salt, ½ cup of baking soda, and 10 drops of lavender oil into the bath water. It is very relaxing and can help with sleep. You may also use magnesium bath flakes. One popular brand is Ancient Minerals. Additionally, magnesium may be applied topically by using magnesium oil, gel, or lotion. As a bonus, these magnesium products can help alleviate tension headaches and muscle pain.

For more information on incorporating magnesium and other important bone building nutrients into your life, contact Margie at Margie@Margiebissinger.com or visit Margiebissinger.com

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