

Magnificent magnesium

Magnesium plays a role in more than 300 functions in the body. It is needed for muscle and nerve function, bone health, blood sugar control and regulating blood pressure. We also need magnesium to release energy in our body.

Long-term low levels of magnesium could be linked to certain health problems like migraine headaches, osteoporosis, type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure. This doesn't mean magnesium can cure these diseases. It also doesn't mean that low magnesium is the only cause. Many factors are involved with these health conditions. Researchers are still working to learn how magnesium is connected to these health conditions.



TODAY'S FOODS & MAGNESIUM

The recommended dietary allowance (RDA) for magnesium is 320 mg for women and 420 mg for men. Most people get their magnesium from food.

But, some researchers believe that levels of magnesium in foods may be getting lower. Also, magnesium is not found in most processed or packaged foods. That's why it's recommended to get the magnesium your body needs by eating healthy foods.

People with type 2 diabetes or digestive diseases may have a higher risk of not getting enough magnesium. In addition, certain medicines can cause depletion of magnesium. These medicines include:

- Loop diuretics, including furosemide and bumetanide
- Thiazide diuretics, including hydrochlorothiazide and ethacrynic acid
- Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs), including esomeprazole magnesium and lansoprazole

If you take these medicines, your doctor may talk to you about your magnesium levels and whether you need extra magnesium.

SHOULD I TAKE A SUPPLEMENT?

There are many different types of magnesium supplements. Some do not absorb in the body very well. High doses of magnesium supplements can cause diarrhea, nausea, and stomach cramps. Extremely high doses can also be toxic.



Magnesium can also interact with certain medicines. If you take any of the following medicines, do not take magnesium supplements within two hours of taking your medication:

- Biophosphonates like alendronate, which treat osteoporosis
- Antibiotics including tetracyclines and quinolones

However, getting magnesium from healthy foods does not cause these side effects. If you're interested in a supplement, always ask your doctor first to be sure it's safe for you.