



## Magnesium

What is magnesium?

An essential trace element, magnesium is found in every cell in the body. It is silver-white in color and metallic in nature.

Why do we need it?

Magnesium is responsible for a variety of bodily functions. It is needed for bone, protein and fatty acid formation; the creation of new cells; the activation of B vitamins; relaxing muscles; clotting blood; proper function of the immune system; and the formation of ATP. Insulin secretion and function also require magnesium.

Because magnesium has so many different actions in the body, the exact reasons for some of its effects remain unknown. Preliminary research, however, has shown it to improve vision in people with glaucoma, lower blood pressure, reduce hyperactivity in children, and reduce symptoms in people suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome.

How much magnesium should I take?

According to the National Academy of Sciences, the recommended daily allowance (RDA) of magnesium is as follows:

- Adult men: 400 milligrams/day
- Adult women: 310 milligrams/day
- Children aged 7-10: 130 milligrams/day
- Infants: 75 milligrams/day
- Pregnant/lactating women: between 310-350 milligrams/day

In addition, it is recommended that people with kidney disease should not take magnesium supplements without first consulting a doctor.

What are some good sources of magnesium?

Chocolate is an excellent source of magnesium. Moderate amounts can be found in legumes, nuts, whole grain foods, soy flour, tofu, green vegetables, brown rice, raisins and seafood.

What can happen if I don't get enough magnesium?

While magnesium deficiency is rare, diabetics, people who routinely take laxatives or diuretics, and alcoholics are at greater risk for becoming deficient. Symptoms of magnesium deficiency include fatigue, insomnia, abnormal heart rhythms, muscle weakness and spasm, depression, listlessness and loss of appetite.

What can happen if I take too much?

Toxicity from increased magnesium intake is rare, because the body usually eliminates excess amounts. The most common symptom of magnesium toxicity is diarrhea, a condition which may occur with amounts as low as 500 milligrams per day. Excess intake of magnesium may also result in decreased calcium absorption.

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