



Magnesium



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Adult human bodies contain about 24 grams of magnesium. Magnesium plays a vital role in the human body and therefore it is a vital component in a healthy diet. It is absorbed through intestine and also appears to help with calcium absorption.

Spices, nuts, cereals, coffee, cocoa, tea, wheat germ, beans, soy products, seafood, and milk are rich sources of magnesium. Dark leafy vegetables, as well as grains and nuts, generally have higher magnesium content than meats and dairy products.

No adverse effects have been associated with taking magnesium as a naturally occurring substance in foods. However, adverse effects have been seen with magnesium supplements, most commonly diarrhoea, which stops when you stop taking the magnesium.



Research

Studies have shown that migraineurs have low brain magnesium during migraine attacks. ^[1.] Furthermore, magnesium deficiency may play a particularly important role in menstrual migraine. ^[2.] Two controlled trials have shown that oral magnesium supplementation (taking in by mouth) can be effective in headache prevention. ^[3.,4.] A third study was negative, but this result has been attributed to the use of a poorly absorbed magnesium salt, as diarrhoea occurred in almost half of patients in the treatment group. ^[5.] In general, the published trials yielded mixed results. Magnesium's efficacy may depend on a "high dose" (600mg daily) supplementation for a minimum of 3 to 4 months to achieve any benefit from preventative therapy.

FAQs

Can I take magnesium with other medicines?

Most herbs and supplements have not been thoroughly tested for interactions with other herbs, supplements, drugs or foods; you should talk to your doctor before taking magnesium.

Some antibiotics, called aminoglycosides, can affect the muscles. So taking these antibiotics and magnesium might cause muscle problems. Magnesium might decrease how much antibiotic the body absorbs and decrease their effectiveness. To avoid this interaction these antibiotics should be taken at least 2 hours before, or 4 to 6 hours after, magnesium supplements.

Taking thiazide diuretics (e.g. bendroflumethiazide) can cause low levels of magnesium in the blood (hypomagnesaemia), although not a magnesium deficiency in the whole body. Taking magnesium along with muscle relaxants, such as tizanidine or diazepam can increase the risk of side effects of muscle relaxants.

What is the dose of magnesium?

The manufacturer's recommended dose varies with the brand of the magnesium. The doses used in research were 400mg - 600mg daily. It is best to start at 400mg daily and work up to find the best tolerated dose.

How much does magnesium cost?

Magnesium isn't available on the NHS but can be purchased in health food stores. Costs vary from £2 - £4 for a 30 day supply depending on where you buy them and at what dose.

Which is the best type of magnesium supplement to take?

Certain types of magnesium are not well absorbed by the body. Too much magnesium, particularly the wrong kinds of magnesium, can cause diarrhoea and simply make your mineral deficiency worse. Also, remember to take magnesium for at least 3 months to see if it makes a difference.

If your body isn't absorbing magnesium well, try avoid these types of magnesium: Oxide, hydroxide, and chloride. Instead, look for magnesium types that end in "ate", particularly glycinate, but also gluconate, lactate and orotate. Chelated versions (minerals firmly attached to an amino acid or others compounds are better absorbed) tend to be the best for migraineurs. Sometimes two or more types of magnesium are combined, such as oxide and citrate. The best thing is to simply talk to your doctor and then try one kind and see how your body handles it.

I'm a migraineur so does that mean I have low levels of magnesium?

Chances are good that you do not have a serious magnesium deficiency. However, there are situations where magnesium can get low, such as during a migraine attack. Certain drugs especially can lower your amounts of magnesium, such as diuretics and certain antibiotics. Alcohol may also lower your magnesium levels.

What are the symptoms of low magnesium levels?

Magnesium is important to the body so low magnesium can cause problems, such as:

Irregular heartbeats	Insomnia	Shortness of breath	Nausea	PMS
Loss of appetite	Weakness	Poor coordination	Dizziness	Anxiety

Can I take a calcium / magnesium blend?

No - if you're taking a calcium supplement, take it at another time of day. It can interfere with the benefits of the magnesium for migraine.

A note about calcium: Magnesium and calcium balance each other out in the body. If you have too much of one and not enough of another, it can cause problems. That's one reason why it's important not to take too much of one or the other.

For further information, advice on migraine management and for updates on the latest migraine research, please contact Migraine Action by calling **0116 275 8317**, emailing info@migraine.org.uk, or visiting the charity's website at www.migraine.org.uk. All of our information resources and more are only made possible through donations and by people becoming members of Migraine Action. Visit www.migraine.org.uk/donate to support one of our projects or visit www.migraine.org.uk/join to become a member.

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Bibliography

Web resource: www.relieve-migraine-headache.com

Web resource: www.mgwater.com

4th Floor, 27 East Street, Leicester. LE1 6NB. Tel: 0116 275 8317 Fax: 0116 254 2023

Email: info@migraine.org.uk Web: www.migraine.org.uk

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