

Risk of Heart Attack Rises **When Taking Calcium Supplements** ***(Without Magnesium)*, Research Shows**

By Drs. Kay Judge and Maxine Barish-Wreden McClatchy Newspapers

Your doctor may have told you to take calcium supplements to protect your bones and reduce the risk of fractures. A new study in the British Medical Journal, however, may turn that advice upside down.

Researchers pooled the results of 15 medical trials in which a total of about 12,000 people were given calcium-supplement pills. They found that the people taking the calcium had a 30 percent increase in the risk of heart attack compared to those who did not. There was also an significant increase in the risk of stroke and death.

The risk of heart attack was greater among those with the highest intake of calcium pills (more than 800 milligrams a day); it was not dependent on the age or sex of the participants, or the type of calcium supplement.

Further, a randomized controlled trial published in 2008 looked at the effects of calcium supplements on vascular disease. In this study, 1,471 postmenopausal women were randomized to receive Citracal (1,000 mg per day of elemental calcium in divided doses) vs a placebo for five years.

At the end of the study, the women taking calcium pills had a greater risk of heart attack, stroke and sudden death compared with those taking the placebo; the risk of having a heart attack was about 50 percent higher, the risk of stroke almost 40 percent higher.

Why might calcium increase the risk of vascular disease? Observational studies in the past have suggested that people with higher intakes of calcium actually had a lower risk of vascular disease; this is medically plausible because calcium does seem to slightly increase the amount of good cholesterol (HDL) in the blood and lower the bad cholesterol (LDL).

However, we know that calcium can also cause mischief in our arteries, those of you who have had a CT scan of your heart to screen for heart disease know assessed risk is based on your calcium score.

When our arteries are inflamed from poor diet, obesity, smoking and couch-potato lifestyles, calcium is pulled into that inflamed area from the bloodstream. It then gets laid down in the blood vessels, leading to atherosclerosis or hardening of the arteries.

Hence, a higher calcium score on a CT scan implies more disease in the arteries that feed the heart.

So is calcium problematic? The studies above involved people who took calcium pills. What about foods that are high in calcium — do they increase your risk of heart disease, too? Probably not. (*Except Milk*)

When you take a calcium pill, this leads to an acute increase in blood-calcium levels, and this rapid increase likely delivers more calcium to your arteries, where it can cause damage.

Calcium in food, on the other hand, is absorbed much more slowly and does not lead to a significant change in blood levels; hence it does not seem to cause the problems that pills do.

So what's the bottom line? Your food is your medicine. Eat a wide variety of plant foods, including dark green leafy veggies, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds, all of which contain calcium (e.g., 1 cup of cooked broccoli has 180 mg of calcium). (*These Foods Are Rich in Magnesium*)

Calcium Supplements May Increase Heart Attack Risk in Women

Source: **Ian Reid, MD**, is a professor of medicine and endocrinology, University of Auckland, New Zealand, and author of a study of 1,471 postmenopausal women, published in *British Medical* journal.

Women ages 55 and older who took 1,000 mg of calcium daily were 50% to 70% more likely to have heart attacks over five years than women taking placebos. Men were not studied.

Self-Defense: Heart disease is most prevalent over age 70. Women in this age group should consult their physicians about stopping calcium. Younger women with heart disease also should consider stopping.

Increase Magnesium...

A deficiency of magnesium is the second most common dietary mineral deficiency in Americans, after iron deficiency. Magnesium relaxes the smooth muscles within blood

vessels. People who don't get enough magnesium have an increased risk for high blood pressure (hypertension), one of the main causes of heart disease.

Magnesium deficiency is common in patients who take diuretics to lower blood pressure. Some diuretics flush magnesium as well as potassium from the body.

Calcium taken *without magnesium* can generate significant health problems

Are you taking Calcium / Vitamin D ***without magnesium***?

Are you taking Tums?

Do you drink milk regularly, eat yogurt daily?

Are you having leg cramps, "Charlie horses", restless legs?

Are you suffering with arthritis, stiff joints, constipation?

Is your energy level significantly low?

Have a hard time sleeping at night?

Ever have "unexplained" heart palpitations?

In nature there is an almost equal balance between calcium and magnesium. The typical American diet with soda pop, sugar, caffeine, white flour, and white rice has generated *magnesium deficiency in almost 70%* of the population.

Add to this, large quantities of calcium through supplementation ***without magnesium***, large quantities of milk products, and you are creating magnesium deficiency.

Calcium and phosphorus without magnesium promotes calcium deposits anywhere in the body!!

Calcium promotes muscle contraction, magnesium is needed for muscles to relax!

Magnesium is needed for energy release and blood sugar regulation!

For additional information go to www.DrBobRothan.com