

## Magnesium Benefits

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### MULTITASKER

*Magnesium's support for the body is bone-deep and heartfelt.*

Magnesium, a critical mineral, is used in more than 300 bodily functions, and can be obtained through foods such as spinach, oatmeal and mixed nuts. For several years experts have suggested that the quantity of magnesium in the soil has significantly decreased. This, in combination with diets low in whole grains and fresh fruits and vegetables, has led to a general deficiency in the population. Sources estimate that nearly 70 percent of Americans get inadequate doses of magnesium every day.

Magnesium is an all-star nutrient that assists in energy production, maintains healthy bone density and aids the electrical conduction of the heart. Often thought of as food for the muscles, it works as a relaxant to significantly improve cramps. Those suffering from asthma are often given magnesium for its relaxing effects on lung airways.

Through diet and supplementation, magnesium should be considered for anyone with restless legs, fatigue, headaches or constipation. Fibromyalgia, muscle spasms and trigger points involve tight muscles that need to be relaxed. Patients commonly experience these effects due to a lack of magnesium in their diet. Constipation sufferers often hail magnesium as one of the top treatments for regulating the bowels.

Headaches and neck spasms benefit from this nutrient as well. Pain syndrome patients have long felt the benefits of soaking in Epsom salt baths. This remedy contains magnesium, which acts topically to relax muscles. These baths are also comforting for ill children.

There are several forms of magnesium: Magnesium oxide, glycinate, aspartate, citrate, malate and chelated magnesium. Many of these can be effective, though symptom relief will vary with how well the supplement is absorbed. Magnesium oxide is the least expensive and most common form in over-the-counter offerings. If results are not occurring, consider switching to a different form.

Dosage should be based on symptoms. Most patients are started on 2 capsules a day (usually 400-600 mg total) which is then increased by 1 capsule each week until they experience relief. Once symptoms have resolved, the dosage can be maintained at any successful level. The main side effect of magnesium is loose bowels. Certain forms will cause this more than others. Those suffering from this effect should decrease their daily dosage by 1 capsule. Magnesium glycinate is recommended for these patients. It's advised to start low and gradually increase the dosage until magnesium-related symptoms subside.

### How do I know if my symptoms are related to magnesium deficiency?

It's true most of the symptoms caused by magnesium deficiency have many other potential

culprits. Anyone with any symptoms should begin by incorporating a balanced wellness program into their life. Proper nutrition with whole grains, nuts and fresh produce, regular exercise, stress management and a spiritual life, is essential. Despite this, magnesium and other supplementation may be needed. There are two ways to determine if magnesium supplementation is right for you:

1. **Have your levels checked.** The amount of magnesium in the cells is what's important. The body does all it can to keep the blood levels normal, so if there is a body deficit, it will be found within the cells. Work with a practitioner that will check your RBC-magnesium level (the level of magnesium in red blood cells), and supplement to achieve a normal level.
2. **Magnesium supplementation is safe as long as you listen to your body.** Consider the dosing guidelines above and adjust slowly and accordingly to see if symptom resolution occurs.

### **What are some other indications of magnesium deficiency?**

This condition causes over-excitability of the cardiac and nervous systems. Feeling the heart beating out of the chest (heart palpitations), anxiety, nervousness and panic are all conditions where magnesium supplementation can be of benefit. Anyone suffering from any cardiac symptoms should first be evaluated by their physician to rule out any other causes.

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