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A FREE-TO-THE-POOR THANKS!

The Co-op would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all our members who have very generously donated to our [Free-to-the-Program](#) throughout the year.

This year, the Co-op's Free-to-the-Poor program has donated hundreds of supplements to many individuals who are less fortunate. Also, earlier this year we donated 600 bottles of Multi-Vites to St. Joseph's House of Hospitality of Rochester, NY for the poor and homeless (see our [May newsletter](#)).

The Free-to-the-Poor program would not be as successful without the efforts of our members! You truly make this program a success each and every year. Thanks from us and from the many people you touch with your generosity.

More info on the Co-op's Free-to-the-Poor program:

A PRIMER ON MAGNESIUM, AN ESSENTIAL MINERAL

Magnesium is an essential element for normal body function. There are over 300 different enzymatic reactions that involve magnesium. This mineral is necessary for every step of a cell's energy creating process, nerve activities, vascular function and bone formation (to name a few).

Being that this mineral is so essential, we are currently investigating a new magnesium product for our members in 2005.

One handy little reference book is *The Magnesium Solution for High Blood Pressure* by Dr. Jay S. Cohen. Dr. Cohen, who also wrote *The Magnesium Solution for Migraine Headaches* and is an expert on medications and side effects.

According to Dr. Cohen, 55% of magnesium is found in your bones, 26% in muscles, 18% in tissues and a very small 1% in your blood.

Today medical facilities commonly use magnesium for cardiac care units and to treat eclampsia (hypertensive disorder during pregnancy).

However, Dr. Cohen points out, when it comes to other diseases or high risk situations, most doctors will prescribe drugs instead of trying magnesium first.

There are decades of scientific information that proves that magnesium is safe and can prevent and treat many ailments including:

o Vascular diseases o Hypertension o Heart diseases o Migraine headaches o Diabetes (particularly type 2) o Osteoporosis o Fibromyalgia

Now, let's dive into how magnesium works.

MAGNESIUM'S HEALTHY ROLE IN YOUR BLOOD VESSELS

One primary enzymatic activity of magnesium is its influence on the vascular system.

Your vascular system consists of copious amounts of blood vessels (arteries and veins), which are continually pushing blood through your body. Each time your heart beats, it forces much of the blood into the arteries, but from there, arteries and veins are on their own. They are lined with smooth muscle. This muscle contracts and expands pushing blood through the vessels.

There are many factors that influence this smooth muscle's activity, but at the forefront, there is magnesium. Magnesium is key in expanding the muscles, opening up the blood vessels. Conversely, another important mineral, calcium, constricts the blood vessel and therefore increases blood pressure.

A BALANCING ACT: MAGNESIUM AND CALCIUM

With two important minerals at odds with each other when it comes to blood vessels contraction and expansion, it is ever so important to keep magnesium and calcium in balance. What happens when they are not in balance?

Hypertension. If the concentration of magnesium decreases while calcium increases, the vessel contracts longer and your blood pressure goes up. Dr. Cohen goes on further pointing out that other common disorders can occur when these minerals are out of balance - such as migraine headaches.

Migraines occur when the blood vessels of the brain act erratically. The large brain blood vessels are dilated and the small vessels are constricted. Research has found that patients with migraines have low magnesium levels in the brain blood vessels.

OTHER IMPORTANT FUNCTIONS OF MAGNESIUM

This really could be a long list, but I will highlight some of the most significant functions of magnesium:

- Keeps heart beat regular: Magnesium maintains the heart muscle as well as the nerves that initiate the heart beat.
- Increases bone density: Since 55% of magnesium is found in bone (and teeth of course!) then it obviously important in the formation and maintenance of bone. Magnesium is involved in calcium transport by converting vitamin D into a form that increases calcium absorption.
- Helps carbohydrate metabolism: Magnesium has shown to influence the release of insulin and therefore can control blood glucose levels.
- Relaxes all types of muscles: As mentioned above, magnesium allows the muscles to expand, allowing for muscle relaxation. Just think: if you are asthmatic, your lung muscles are tight. Magnesium can encourage the lung muscles to expand, allowing you to breathe more freely. Pesky muscle spasms can be the result of magnesium deficiencies too.

ARE YOU DEFICIENT IN MAGNESIUM?

According to Dr. Cohen, 80 percent of the American population is deficient! The main reason is, of course, diet. Americans eat less magnesium-rich foods, which include green leafy veggies, beans, nuts and soybeans.

Dr. Cohen notes some other reasons for magnesium deficiency:

o Accelerated growth of veggies and legumes does not allow enough time for magnesium to fixate in plants
o Boiling veggies causes loss of magnesium
o High fat diets, salt, coffee, soft drinks (with large amounts of phosphate), and alcohol all reduce magnesium absorption
o Processed water, including your municipal and bottled water, has very low amounts of magnesium

TESTING YOUR MAGNESIUM LEVEL

Unfortunately, a simple blood test is not the best way to test for magnesium. Remember, only 1% of this mineral is actually circulating in your blood.

Dr. Cohen explains there are other tests that are not “wildly popular among patients” nor are completely accurate. He suggests talking to a knowledgeable health practitioner to determine magnesium levels in your system.

ADDING MAGNESIUM TO YOUR DIET

How much? When? Take with what?

The RDA for magnesium in adult men is 420mg and 320mg in women. Now going back to calcium - the RDA for calcium is 1000mg to 1200mg, depending on your age.

Dr. Cohen recommends closer to 500mg of magnesium per day, but suggests working up to that amount slowly. For specific medical conditions, increased magnesium should be done with medical supervision.

As it turns out, Dr. Rodier ([see our interview with him](#)) suggested between 500mg to 1000mg per day, which many are not getting in their diet and supplement regimen combined.

For best absorption, take magnesium with a meal and add vitamin B6 and vitamin D to your daily dietary supplement.

As I mentioned earlier, we are looking into a separate magnesium supplement.

For more information on magnesium and Dr. Cohen:

- Dr. Cohen's link: <http://www.medicationsense.com/index.html>
- Magnesium on WholeHealthMD: http://www.wholehealthmd.com/refshelf/substances_view/1,1525,890,00.html
- The Magnesium Online Library <http://www.mgwater.com/index.shtml>
- Magnesium supplementation in type 2 diabetes: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=15466952
- Magnesium in cardiovascular diseases and other disorders: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=15372830
- Significance of magnesium in congestive heart failure: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=8800040

HEALTH IN THE NEWS

- An apple a day could protect your brain cells: <http://www.newswise.com/articles/view/508393/?sc=mwtn>
- Blood pressure system may have effect on aging: <http://www.newswise.com/articles/view/508308/?sc=mwtn>
- Acupuncture for osteoarthritis of the knee: <http://www.newswise.com/articles/view/508359/?sc=mwtn>

O-k, that's it for today. Keep an eye out for my interview next week with Elliot Freeman, R.Ph. from Chicago on the importance of Vitamin D.

Until then, practice breathing deeply as you go in and out of the holiday rush.

Still purringly yours,

Guido

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Making Health Affordable Together

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