MAGNESIUM

By Julie Cottrell, MS, RD, LD

These Healthline articles below do an excellent job of explaining the valuable role of magnesium in our bodies. You may have lower-than-desirable levels in your body without even knowing it. Blood levels usually remain adequate while the body depletes stored magnesium. Our food supply, which is one source of magnesium, has become depleted due to lower levels of magnesium in the soil. Charts that state the magnesium content of foods may not reflect the true amount that modern day foods actually have in them - so use these charts cautiously.

Healthline Article I 10 Evidence-Based Health Benefits of Magnesium

Check out the article above to learn more about these 10 cited benefits of magnesium:

1. Magnesium is involved in hundreds of biochemical reactions in your body
2. It may boost exercise performance
3. Magnesium fights depression
4. It has benefits against type 2 diabetes
5. Magnesium can lower blood pressure
6. It has anti-inflammatory benefits
7. Magnesium can help prevent migraines
8. It reduces insulin resistance
9. Magnesium improves PMS symptoms
10. Magnesium is safe and widely available

Magnesium's role in vitamin D production is not named in this list above, but is another IMPORTANT ROLE of magnesium. Read more about it here.

Point #10 above stated that magnesium is "widely available", with a focus on the **foods that contain magnesium**. Scan the list below to see if you are currently including very many of these items in your diet, and refer to the original article if you would like to read more.

"Magnesium is absolutely essential for good health. The recommended daily intake is 400–420 mg per day for men and 310–320 mg per day for women. You can get it from both food and supplements."

FOOD SOURCES: The following foods are good to excellent sources of magnesium:

- **Pumpkin seeds**: 46% of the RDI in a quarter cup (16 grams)
- **Spinach**, boiled: 39% of the RDI in a cup (180 grams)
- **Swiss chard**, boiled: 38% of the RDI in a cup (175 grams)
- **Dark chocolate** (70–85% cocoa): 33% of the RDI in 3.5 ounces (100 grams)
- **Black beans**: 30% of the RDI in a cup (172 grams)
- **Quinoa**, cooked: 33% of the RDI the in a cup (185 grams)
- **Halibut**: 27% of the RDI in 3.5 ounces (100 grams)
- **Almonds**: 25% of the RDI in a quarter cup (24 grams)
- **Cashews**: 25% of the RDI in a quarter cup (30 grams)
- **Mackerel**: 19% of the RDI in 3.5 ounces (100 grams)
- **Avocado**: 15% of the RDI in one medium avocado (200 grams)
- **Salmon**: 9% of the RDI in 3.5 ounces (100 grams)

FOOD SOURCES (continued)

If you are a **visual person**, you may enjoy clicking on this additional Healthline article. It lists out 10 higher-magnesium foods and provides a picture plus information about the food named.

[10 Magnesium-Rich Foods That Are Super Healthy]

ASSESSING FOR LOW MAGNESIUM

Check out this article: Medical News Today I [How can I tell if I have low magnesium?]

- **First, scan through this list to see if you have any underlying conditions that would make a magnesium deficiency more likely:**

  - ☐ continually eating a low-magnesium diet (check the food lists to see if you eat these foods regularly)
  - ☐ having gastrointestinal disorders such as Crohn's disease, celiac disease, or regional enteritis
  - ☐ losing excessive amounts of magnesium through urine and sweat resulting from genetic disorders or drinking too much alcohol
  - ☐ being pregnant and lactating
  - ☐ being hospitalized
  - ☐ having parathyroid disorders and hyperaldosteronism
  - ☐ having type 2 diabetes
  - ☐ being older
  - ☐ taking certain medications, such as proton pump inhibitors, diuretics, bisphosphonates, and antibiotics

- **Next, note whether you have any signs of deficiency from any of these categories below:**

EARLY SIGNS of magnesium deficiency may include:

- ❖ nausea
- ❖ vomiting
- ❖ loss of appetite
- ❖ fatigue
- ❖ weakness

AS DEFICIENCY PROGRRESSES, people may experience:

- ❖ lower calcium levels in the blood, known as hypocalcemia
- ❖ lower potassium levels in the blood called hypokalemia
- ❖ numbness and tingling in the extremities
- ❖ cramps and muscle contractions
- ❖ seizures
- ❖ personality changes
- ❖ abnormal heart rhythms
- ❖ coronary spasms

PROLONGED MAGNESIUM DEFICIENCY *can have an adverse impact on a person's long-term health and* increase the risk of **chronic diseases**, including: **heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis**.

Healthline Article I [Magnesium Supplements: All You Need to Know]

Here is an excerpt from the opening statements of this article:

> *I first learned about the importance of magnesium in one of my undergrad nutrition classes.*
>
> *What surprised me the most was learning about the number of roles magnesium plays in our bodies. Your body requires magnesium for more than 300 enzymatic reactions! Plus, a deficiency or suboptimal intake can have a drastic effect on your health (1Trusted Source).*
>
> *For example, a low magnesium intake has been associated with* ***high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and even sleep problems.***
>
> *Although magnesium is found in a wide variety of foods — especially nuts, legumes, and whole grains — supplements can offer benefits, particularly for people with low magnesium intake.*
>
> *However, with magnesium supplements available in a wide variety of forms and dosages, choosing one isn't always easy.*
>
> *This article looks at the benefits and side effects of magnesium supplements and highlights the various forms and dosages.*

Healthline Article I [10 of the Best Magnesium Supplements for 2021]

If you are in the market for a magnesium supplement, you may like some assistance selecting the best one, based on your budget and desired outcome. This article lists out some specific brands and highlights the benefits you may expect from that particular formulation.

Some of the specific conditions for which a particular magnesium formulation is named include: sleep, anxiety, leg cramps, migraine, and constipation.

A final note from Julie:

I really like these Healthline articles because they provide quality, science-based information, and links within articles where you can go and find the study cited or other information. I don't always agree with EVERY point made (which I sometimes note in my comments) but this could sometimes be based on my own personal slant/bias. Sometimes we don't have all the "right answers" and we have to make a "best guess" based on current scientific data, and interpreted in the context of our own situation/life circumstances. As always, please discuss your concerns with your medical team for help in making the most informed choice for your life.