

The “new” chill pill

Curb your cravings, calm your nerves and protect your heart with the help of this modest yet mighty mineral. BY PEGGY HALL

A friend of mine in grad school used to put together a “period package” every month in anticipation of severe PMS. It contained a box of cookies, a one-pound bar of chocolate and a bottle of Midol. I could totally relate. It seemed that the monthly cravings, cramps and crabbiness could only be alleviated through massive doses of comfort foods and pain relievers. Neither of us realized it at the time, but our bodies were actually seeking a

quick hit of soothing magnesium. If we had only known what we were *really* craving! But who ever heard of the miracle of magnesium?

Carolyn Dean, MD, ND, that’s who. In her book *The Magnesium Miracle* (Ballantine Books, 2006), Dr. Dean explains how magnesium depletion triggers a host of unsettling conditions, including migraines, anxiety, depression, muscle aches, insomnia, constipation, high blood pressure and even heart disease and diabetes. (Gee, and I was only concerned about PMS!)

Found in dark green, leafy vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds – and, yes, chocolate! – magnesium is the “relaxing” mineral with the ability to take the edge off raw nerves, calm digestive distress and promote a good night’s sleep. It also helps maintain strong bones and teeth, ease PMS, prevent headaches and migraines, reduce muscle aches and alleviate anxiety. Magnesium is required to metabolize carbohydrates, synthesize protein, stave off diabetes, lower your risk of heart disease and balance cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure. So just why is an estimated 70 to 80 percent of the population missing out on this marvelous mineral?

Stress, processed foods, fatty foods,

It seemed that monthly cravings could only be alleviated through massive doses of comfort foods. We didn’t realize our bodies were actually craving magnesium.

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Supplement Savvy topic.

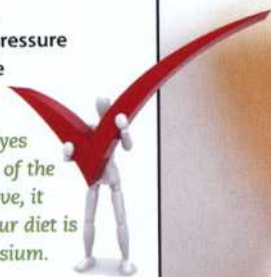


Self Check-up

Do you suffer from any of the following symptoms?

- Migraines
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Muscle aches
- Insomnia
- Constipation
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Diabetes

If you checked yes to one or more of the symptoms above, it could mean your diet is lacking magnesium.



Mg-Rich Menu

Breakfast

Oatmeal, yogurt and walnuts

Snack

Apple slices with almond butter and raisins

Lunch

Corn tortillas with black beans, corn, diced avocado and shredded romaine

Snack

Hummus with raw veggies

Dinner

Halibut, brown rice and spinach

Snack

½ ounce of dark chocolate or ¼ cup light ice cream

diuretics, smoking, alcohol, heavy exercise, strict diets and even high-protein diets can cause the body to excrete more magnesium than it takes in. Additionally, too much calcium will interfere with absorption of magnesium and may also cause the body to excrete

low reserves. Since magnesium is also nature's laxative, you may have to cut back on your dosage if necessary. And, as always, check with your doctor before taking any supplements.

As for me, I now eat more greens and

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it. According to Dr. Dean, magnesium should always be taken with calcium because magnesium is required for calcium absorption and utilization.

The recommended daily serving of magnesium is 350 to 400 milligrams, but many magnesium researchers recommend doubling that amount for optimal health. A liquid calcium and magnesium supplement is easier to absorb and can help bring up

grains and take my liquid calcium and magnesium every night as an insurance policy. I'm sleeping better, and my moods are more stable. The only downside is that now I have no excuse to get my monthly dose of chocolate. Oh, wait: The buzz is that dark chocolate is good for you, high in antioxidants and all that. I wonder when the good news will come out about ice cream. ☺

Next issue: Peggy discusses the popular and controversial supplement often used for weight-loss, Hoodia.



About our expert

Peggy Hall

is a certified yoga instructor, personal trainer and nutritional educator and writes frequently on the topics of nutrition, health and wellness. Creator of the Yoga for Surfers instructional DVD series, she surfs, writes and teaches yoga in Southern California, where she lives with her husband. You can contact her at yogaforsurfers.com.