

Warning signs you are deficient in magnesium

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(NaturalNews) Magnesium is a very important mineral, the second-most abundant within human cells. Some 60% of it in the human body is contained within the bones, over 25% in the muscles and the rest in soft tissue and body fluids. Learn about the important functions of this essential mineral and some warning symptoms of deficiency.

Functions

Magnesium plays a role in activating many enzymes in the body. It also plays a role in maintaining the electrical charges of cells, especially in the nerves and muscles, and in muscle contraction and relaxation. Further, this mineral is involved in cellular functions such as energy production, cellular replication, lipid synthesis and protein formation. It even contributes to bone formation, as it helps regulate calcium metabolism.

Magnesium plays a critical role in heart health, contributing to energy production and heart muscle contraction. By raising the solubility of calcium in urine, magnesium helps prevent the formation of kidney stones. Indeed, magnesium supplementation has been found to help with preventing kidney stone recurrence.

Research also suggests that dietary magnesium intake is directly linked to lung function and the severity of asthma.

Deficiency symptoms

The warning signs that one could be lacking magnesium, some of which are similar to those of potassium deficiency, include:

- heart disturbances
- issues with nerve conduction and muscle contraction
- muscle cramps and spasms
- poor coordination
- weakness
- chronic fatigue
- headaches - including migraines and tension headaches
- appetite loss
- insomnia
- cravings for sweets
- mental confusion

- irritability
- personality changes
- being easily stressed

People with low levels of [magnesium](#) are more prone to ailments such as insomnia, premenstrual syndrome, menstrual cramps, hair loss, swollen gums, high blood pressure, kidney stones, heart disease and even cancer.

In fact, it has been found that persons who suffered sudden and fatal heart attacks had very low magnesium levels in their hearts. When magnesium levels are low, a spasm of the coronary arteries could take place, affecting the flow of blood and oxygen to the heart -- this could then trigger a heart attack.

Persons with fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome are also commonly found to have low magnesium levels. In addition, women with osteoporosis have been found to have lower bone magnesium levels than those without the condition.

Deficiency causes

Due to poor food choices, with diets lacking in natural whole foods, many people do not actually consume enough magnesium.

Elderly persons, especially those with [health](#) issues, are more susceptible to magnesium deficiency. Women are also more likely to be deficient during their premenstrual period.

Factors which elevate its secretion or reduce its absorption could also lead to magnesium deficiency. These include:

- intake of too much calcium (they must be balanced)
- alcohol consumption -- it has been found that as much as 60% of alcoholics have low levels of magnesium, as alcohol increases the amount of magnesium excreted in the urine. And this deficiency could be a big reason why alcoholics are more likely to suffer from cardiovascular disease.
- liver disease
- kidney disease
- diabetes
- digestive disorders like malabsorption
- use of oral contraceptives, diuretics and/or medications which deplete magnesium levels
- surgery

It should be noted that standard blood tests do not flag up magnesium deficiency until it's already severe, often after the onset of a serious health condition. Thus, the symptoms and dietary choices would offer some clues.

Food sources

The best food sources of magnesium include kelp, dulse, molasses, buckwheat, wheat bran, wheat germ, millet, rye, tofu and nuts, including almonds, cashews, Brazil nuts, peanuts, pecans and English walnuts.