

Magnesium

Magnesium is a mineral that helps maintain normal muscle and nerve function. It also helps keep your heartbeat steady, your blood pressure normal, and your bones strong.

Cancer treatments may cause your magnesium levels to become low. Your doctor may prescribe magnesium as an antacid or laxative; suggest that you take a magnesium supplement; or advise you about eating foods that contain magnesium.

Magnesium can be toxic if you take more than the safe limit. It may also affect how certain medications work. Follow the advice from your health care team about taking magnesium supplements and about eating large amounts of foods high in magnesium.

How much Magnesium do I need?

The amount of magnesium you need to get from food (and possibly supplements) depends on your age and sex. Use the following chart to learn daily magnesium goals for most healthy teens and adults. Your doctor or registered dietitian (RD) will tell you what goal is right for you.

Daily Magnesium Recommendations in Milligrams (mg)

| Age | Males | Females |
|-------------|--------|---------|
| 14-18 years | 410 mg | 360 mg |
| 19-30 years | 400 mg | 310 mg |
| 31+ years | 420 mg | 320 mg |

Tips for Taking Magnesium Supplements

- If your doctor prescribes magnesium supplements, take them as directed. Typically, they are taken with 8 ounces of water and preferable with a meal.
- Do **not** take more than 350 milligrams (mg) of supplemental magnesium per day unless your doctor recommends a larger dose.
- When you eat foods high in fiber, oxalates, or phytates (such as whole grains, nuts and seeds, spinach, chocolate, and rhubarb), your body may absorb less magnesium. Do not eat these foods at the same meal that you take your magnesium supplement.
- Ask your doctor about how to fit taking magnesium supplements into your medication schedule so they do not interfere with how other medications work.
- If you take fiber, folic acid, or iron supplements, take them at least 2 hours before or after you take magnesium.

Food Choices and Magnesium

The following chart identifies foods that are sources of magnesium. Include them more often if you have been advised to eat more magnesium-rich foods by your health care team.

| Magnesium-Rich Foods | | |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Food | Serving size | Amount of Magnesium |
| Fruits | | |
| Avocado, California | ½ medium | 35 milligrams (mg) |
| Avocado, Florida | ½ medium | 103 mg |
| Banana | 1 medium | 34 mg |
| Kiwi | 1 medium | 23 mg |
| Raisins, golden | ½ cup | 28 mg |

Magnesium-Rich Foods *(continued)*

| Food | Serving size | Amount of Magnesium |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Vegetables | | |
| Broccoli, chopped, cooked | ½ cup | 19 mg |
| Potato, baked with skin | 1 medium | 55 mg |
| Potato, baked without skin | 1 medium | 40 mg |
| Spinach, cooked | ½ cup | 65 mg |
| Spinach, raw | 1 cup | 24 mg |
| Nuts and seeds | | |
| Almonds, dry roasted | 1 ounce | 86 mg |
| Cashews, dry roasted | 1 ounce | 73 mg |
| Nuts, mixed, dry roasted | 1 ounce | 66 mg |
| Pumpkin seeds | ½ ounce | 75 mg |
| Tahini (sesame paste) | 2 tablespoons | 28 mg |
| Legumes (beans, peas, and peanuts) | | |
| Hummus (chickpea dip) | 2 tablespoons | 20 mg |
| Lentils, cooked | ½ cup | 35 mg |
| Peanut butter | 2 tablespoons | 50 mg |
| Peanuts, dry-roasted | 1 ounce | 50 mg |

Magnesium-Rich Foods *(continued)*

| Food | Serving size | Amount of Magnesium |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Grain Foods | | |
| Brain, 100% | 2 tablespoons | 44 mg |
| Bran flakes | ½ cup | 60 mg |
| Bread, whole wheat | 1 slice | 24 mg |
| Oatmeal | 1 cup | 56 mg |
| Shredded wheat cereal | 2 biscuits | 80 mg |
| Wheat germ, toasted | 1 ounce | 90 mg |
| Other Foods | | |
| Chocolate bar | 1.45 ounces | 45 mg |
| Cocoa powder, unsweetened | 1 tablespoon | 27 mg |
| Shrimp | 3 ounces | 29 mg |
