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This Popular Supplement Can Spike Your Heart Attack Risk by 30%...

Posted By [Dr. Mercola](#) | August 15 2011 | 145,632 views | [Disponible en Español](#)

An analysis has found that there is a 30 percent increased risk of myocardial infarction for those taking 500 mg or more of elemental calcium.

This could mean that the use of supplements to "prevent" osteoporosis must now be reconsidered. The practice may be causing an epidemic of cardiovascular calcification, hypertonicity of the cardiac tissue, arrhythmias, and heart attacks both through the heart muscle cramping and destabilized plaque and subsequent occlusion.

According to the study, as reported by Green Med Info:

"Calcium supplements ... increase the risk of cardiovascular events, especially myocardial infarction ... A reassessment of the role of calcium supplements in osteoporosis management is warranted."



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Sources:

- » [British Medical Journal 2011; 342: d2040](#)
- » [Green Med Info](#)

Dr. Mercola's Comments:

For many years, the general medical industry has been pushing calcium supplements as your primary form of "insurance" against osteoporosis, reciting the mantra "calcium builds strong bones and teeth," far and wide.

Calcium is added to everything these days, from pasteurized milk to baby formula, orange juice, and boxed foods like breakfast cereals. And certainly, your body does need calcium. In fact, [calcium from whole foods may even extend your lifespan](#).

But this is NOT the case for calcium supplements.

The belief that calcium is what builds strong bones is absolutely *ingrained* in our society, but has no basis in reality—calcium is but ONE of the many minerals your body needs for building strong bones. Calcium supplements have demonstrated little benefit, and here is one more piece of research suggesting they may increase your risk for a cardiovascular event.

This is just another example of marketing madness taking precedence over a deeper understanding of human biology, and why we need well-designed scientific studies before making blanket statements about any intervention. This isn't the first study to suggest your calcium supplement may be doing more harm than good.

Research Studies You May Never Hear About

There have been a number of studies that indicate calcium supplements increase your risk for cardiovascular incidents and other problems, as well as NOT being of much benefit to your bones. Several significant studies are summarized in the following table.

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Cardiovascular	2010 meta-analysis showed calcium supplements (without coadministered vitamin D) are associated with increased risk for heart attack (BMJ 2010)
	2008 study found calcium supplements are associated with a greater number of heart attacks in postmenopausal women (BMJ 2008)
	2004 study showed that people with excess calcium in their coronary artery and who take statins have a 17-fold higher risk of heart attacks than do those with lower arterial calcium levels; researchers concluded that the two most definitive indicators of heart attack were LDL levels and calcium build-up.
Osteoporosis and Bone Density	2010 article presented evidence for a total lack of support in the research for calcium supplements reducing fracture risk (Clin J Am Soc Nephrol 2010)
	2007 study showed that calcium from dietary sources has more favorable effects on bone health than calcium from supplements in postmenopausal women (Am J Clin Nutr 2007)
	2009 study of postmenopausal women using calcium supplements showed that, although calcium loss from bone was slowed, bone loss was still occurring (Osteoporosis Int. 2009)
	2000 study showed that it's exercise, not calcium, that builds strong bones in teenagers (Pediatrics 2000)
	1997 study showed women with the highest consumption of calcium from dairy products had the highest risk of fractures , and those who took calcium supplements had the highest risk for kidney stones (Nurse's Health Study, Ann Intern Med 1997)
Prostate Cancer	2001 study found men who consumed more than 600mg calcium a day from dairy products showed a 32 percent higher risk of prostate cancer than men consuming less than 150mg per day, and each additional increase of 500mg calcium from dairy was associated with another 16 percent increase in prostate cancer risk (Physicians' Health Study, Amer J Clin Nutri 2001)
Longevity	2009 study found men consuming the most calcium <i>from food</i> were 25 percent less likely to die over the next decade (Amer J Epidem 2009)



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So why is something touted as being so good for you causing such a plethora of problems? Because the ENTIRE calcium paradigm needs to be changed!

Dr. Robert Thompson and "The Calcium Lie"

What you were led to believe about calcium preventing osteoporosis has been shown to be a myth. Robert Thompson, M.D. wrote a book on this subject called *The Calcium Lie*, which explains that bone is comprised of at least a dozen minerals, and the exclusive focus on calcium supplementation is likely to worsen bone density and *actually increase your risk for osteoporosis*.

Dr. Thompson believes overconsumption of calcium creates other mineral deficiencies and imbalances that will increase your risk of heart disease, kidney stones, gallstones, osteoarthritis, hypothyroidism, obesity and type 2 diabetes—and the latest study certainly lends credibility to his theory. Part of the reason calcium is so misunderstood is that the predominant theory of bone mineralization is itself flawed.

Revising Our Theory of Bone Mineralization

When you take a biologically foreign form of calcium, or when your body's ability to direct calcium to the right places becomes impaired (as when you are deficient in vitamin K), calcium is deposited where it shouldn't be—like sand in gears.

Calcium deposits are major contributors and even causative factors in many conditions, including the following:

Cellulite and scar tissue	Coronary artery disease and atherosclerosis	Dental plaque and gum disease	Hypothyroidism
Obesity and diabetes	Alzheimer's disease	Breast cancer and cysts (fibrocystic breasts)	Gallstones, colon cancer and Crohn's disease
Kidney stones	Ovarian cysts	Cataracts, glaucoma, and macular degeneration	Bone spurs, stiff joints, osteoarthritis, tendonitis and bone cancer

Complicating the problem of calcium deposits are nanobacteria that actually use this bad calcium to their advantage, forming hard shells of calcium phosphate that serve as defensive armor against your body's immune system, like a clamshell shields a clam. When the shells harden, toxins such as mercury, pesticides, and plastics are trapped in there, which is why it is so hard for you to get those toxins out of your body. This encapsulated space also forms an excellent hiding area for opportunistic viruses, bacteria and fungi.

And when it comes to bone health, drugs are certainly not the answer.

If you want to prevent osteoporosis, please avoid taking bisphosphonate drugs (including Fosamax, Boniva, and Actonel) as there is ample evidence they do not lower your fracture risk or make your bones stronger, and they have a whole host of side effects, including jawbone death, and liver and kidney damage, among other things. These drugs poison your osteoclasts, permanently killing them and interfering with your normal bone remodeling processes. For a discussion of how to effectively prevent bone loss without dangerous or expensive drugs, refer to my osteoporosis article.

Arterial Plaque is a Calcium Problem—NOT a Cholesterol Problem

So, if your calcium supplement is being turned into "little rocks" that are being deposited in your soft tissues and arteries, you can begin to understand how this could be increasing your risk for a heart attack or stroke.

Many believe that arterial plaque is simply a buildup of cholesterol. But in reality, more than 90 percent of these fatty plaques are calcified. Cholesterol is soft and waxy and does not impair the elasticity of your arteries. But calcium deposits are like concrete, "hardening" your arteries and impairing their ability to expand. It is calcium, not cholesterol, which induces arterial stiffness.

This is particularly important for postmenopausal women, because hormone balance is necessary for proper calcium signaling—directing your body to deposit calcium into your bones. When hormones fall out of balance, this signaling causes calcium to slowly exit your bones and become deposited in your arteries instead.

This is why your risk for heart disease can jump substantially with the onset of menopause—some say by as much as 360 percent.

There is simply NO good evidence that calcium supplementation is achieving its goal of reducing fractures, but there is abundant evidence it's wreaking havoc on people's health. The calcium must be in a bioavailable form, and must be balanced out with vitamins D and K and important trace minerals, and part of a total nutritional plan.

The Bottom Line

One of the best ways to achieve healthy bones is by consuming a diet rich in fresh, raw whole foods that maximize natural minerals so that your body has the raw materials it needs to do what it was designed to do.

It's more likely your body can use calcium correctly if it's *plant-derived* calcium. Good sources include raw milk from pasture-raised cows (who eat the plants), leafy green vegetables, the pith of citrus fruits, carob, and wheatgrass, to name a few. It's worth mentioning that the studies done about calcium from dairy products are all done with *pasteurized dairy*, rather than raw dairy products that have more of their nutrients intact, and this muddies the results of these studies.

You also need sources of silica and magnesium, which some researchers say is actually enzymatically "transmuted" by your body into the kind of calcium your bones can use. This theory was first put forth by French scientist Louis Kevran, a Nobel Prize nominee who spent years studying how silica and calcium are related.

Good sources of silica are cucumbers, bell peppers, tomatoes, and a number of herbs including horsetail, nettles, oat straw, alfalfa, and raw cacao, which is also extremely rich in highly bioavailable magnesium.

Dr. Thompson recommends the use of natural unprocessed salt as a far better alternative to calcium supplements because it provides the trace minerals you simply cannot get from food grown in today's mineral-depleted soils. My favorite source of trace minerals is pure, unprocessed Himalayan salt, which contains 84 elements needed by your body.

Other Suggestions for a Healthy Heart and Strong Bones

In order to achieve the best possible health, you have to devise a plan of attack from multiple angles. These suggestions will synergistically help keep your heart, blood vessels, organs and bones healthy.

1. Limit fructose to less than 25 grams per day. For most people, it would also be wise to limit your fructose from fruit to 15 grams or less, as you're virtually guaranteed to consume "hidden" sources of fructose if you drink beverages other than water and eat processed food. For a reference list of some of the most common fruits that you can use to help you count your fructose grams, please see this [previous article](#).
2. [Optimize your vitamin D](#) either from natural sunlight or an oral supplement. Check your blood levels regularly.
3. [Vitamin K2](#) prevents coronary calcification and is required to bind calcium into the matrix of your bone, and [without it, vitamin D may actually encourage heart disease](#). Nearly everyone has been found to be deficient in Vitamin K2. Vitamin K2 has been shown to extend your lifespan ([Rotterdam Study](#)) and reduce your risk for heart attack ([Prospect Study](#)). Optimize your vitamin K through a combination of dietary sources (leafy green vegetables, fermented foods like natto, raw milk cheeses, etc.) and a K2 supplement, if needed.
4. Make sure you do weight-bearing exercise, which has profound benefits to both your skeletal and cardiovascular systems. My favorite is the [Peak Fitness](#) system.
5. Consume a variety of fresh, local organic whole foods, including vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, organic meats and eggs, and raw organic unpasteurized dairy. The more foods you consume raw, the better nourished you will be. Minimize [sugar](#) and refined grains. [Avoid low fat diets, which are known to impair calcium absorption](#).
6. Consider a high-quality omega-3 fatty acid supplement—my favorite is [krill oil](#).
7. Make sure you are getting enough restorative [sleep](#) each night.
8. Handle the stress in our life since it has a significant impact on your physical and mental well being. My favorite de-stressing tool is the [Emotional Freedom Technique \(EFT\)](#).

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