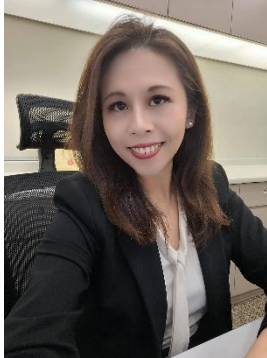


## What Is Magnesium Good for

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- Magnesium is an essential mineral that supports hundreds of chemical reactions or body processes.
- It helps with regulating muscle and nerve function, blood sugar levels, and blood pressure as well as making protein, bone, and DNA, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH).
- Magnesium also helps activate vitamin D, which is important for bone health and the immune system.
- Recommended daily intake of magnesium — anywhere from **310 to 420 mg for adults.**
- Food sources: The mineral is found in abundance in vegetables especially dark leafy greens such as spinach, kale, and collard greens ,whole grains and beans.
- Active people need to be especially vigilant about their magnesium intake — the mineral is lost through sweat.
- Stress also depletes magnesium stores: It typically lives inside cells in the body, but when anxiety strikes, it migrates outside cells as a protective mechanism to help you cope. During a physical stressor such as getting your period — the body excretes magnesium in response. Some things you might do to help deal with the tension, such as drinking extra cups of coffee to stay energized or having several glasses of wine to relax, also impair levels of the mineral. Too much caffeine and alcohol can deplete magnesium in our bodies.

## Magnesium Health Benefits

### 1. Reduces Muscle Cramps

When you're working out, your brain tells your muscles to fire by signalling a release of calcium from a structure inside your muscles; that calcium causes the muscle fibers to shorten and contract (thus, the cramping or soreness), explains Dr. Locke. But magnesium "serves as the 'Yin' to calcium's 'Yang,'" counteracting the calcium and, in turn, allowing your muscles to relax in preparation for the next contraction, she says. So, the more magnesium available to offset calcium's buildup, the fewer the cramps.

### 2. Supports Heart Health

A 2018 review of studies suggests that higher levels of magnesium in the body are associated with a reduced risk of certain cardiovascular diseases (i.e. hypertension or stroke). "Magnesium increases nitric oxide in the blood, which helps to relax blood vessels and soothe muscles," including those in your heart, explains Dr. Locke. And in doing so, magnesium is believed to help lower your blood pressure, which is key in preventing heart disease. Magnesium helps you maintain a stable heartbeat.

### 3. Alleviates Depression

Low levels of magnesium have been linked to an increased risk of depression.

### 4. Reduces Risk of Kidney Stones

In addition to drinking plenty of water, keeping up with your magnesium intake might also help you steer clear of kidney stones. The mineral helps to offset the buildup of calcium in your kidneys.

### 5. Helps Ease Migraines

A daily intake of 600 mg of magnesium reduced migraine frequency by 42 percent.

### 6. Improves Sleep

### **Symptoms to look out for low magnesium:**

- Grogginess, fatigue, and lethargy
- leg cramping
- sugar cravings
- high blood pressure
- anxiety
- constipation
- trouble sleeping
- appetite changes
- flu-like symptoms

### **Magnesium food sources**

- Almonds (80 mg per 1 oz serving)
- Pumpkin Seeds (156 mg per 1 oz serving)
- Dark chocolate (43 mg per 1 oz serving)
- Black Beans (60 mg per 1/2 cup serving)
- Tofu (126 mg per 1/2 cup serving)
- Leafy Greens (78 mg per 1/2 cup serving)

### **Supplements**

There are several forms of magnesium supplements available, so you can target your specific problem.

For instance, if you have constipation, magnesium citrate can help relieve it.

Athletes or those who experience muscle cramping should opt for magnesium glycinate.

Magnesium threonate crosses the blood-brain barrier, so it's the best option if you have migraines, trouble sleeping, or anxiety.

Typical start dose of 200 to 400 milligrams per day, but be sure to talk to your health care provider before you start supplementing.

## **Give Yourself a Break**

Anything that reduces stress will help with your magnesium status. Make time to do the things that calm you — take a walk outside, do a workout you love, or spend time having fun with friends.

Drinking plenty of water to keep your body hydrated, eating protein and healthy fats with meals and snacks to help keep your blood sugar stable, and getting at least seven hours of sleep a night.

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### **About the author:**

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Dr Chrystal Fong is listed on the editors list of health screening providers on Health365, a healthcare, wellness and aesthetic medicine publishing agency in Asia. She has a special interest in health prevention and incorporates sports psychology and lifestyle medicine principles in her health screening and advocacy in health promotion.

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