

Calcium: Miracle Mineral or Overused Supplement?

For years the medical community has shouted fears of a low calcium society. News articles send messages that American teens are falling far short of their RDA, while older adults are downing calcium supplements in a mad dash to cut off osteoporosis at the pass. But do we really need the 1000 to 1500mg per day that so many doctors are recommending, or could our society be overdosing on this natural mineral? According to a recent study, calcium supplementation may actually increase the risk of heart attack and stroke in otherwise healthy postmenopausal women; the very group that is told to bone up the most in the name of osteoporosis prevention…

Previous research had suggested that calcium might protect against vascular disease by cutting blood cholesterol levels, but the results of this five-year study out of New Zealand showed that the opposite may be true. The team’s researchers proposed that the risks of calcium supplementation might outweigh any supposed bone building benefits, at least in women over the age of 70. They reported that supplements could raise the risk of a heart attack by accelerating hardening of the blood vessels, a process known as calcification.

Pro-calcium doctors are claiming that the results are not clinically significant, calling for further studies. Yet, the evidence against overloading on calcium does seem to be mounting. Read Related Articles:Calcium pills ‘raise heart risk’ Is High Calcium and Vitamin D Intake Harmful?Strong Bones, Thinking Outside of the CartonPrunes, an Unsung Osteoporosis HeroSurprising Secrets to Strong BonesHow much calcium do I really need?