

Ask Leyla: Is my doctor recommending too much calcium?



Q: My doctor advised me to take 1,200 mg of calcium daily for bone health. Is this the correct dose? No other vitamins or minerals were mentioned.

A: The recommendation made by many doctors to take that dose—or an even higher dose like 1,500 mg a day—has been debunked. Maybe they didn't get the memo. We no longer advise taking such high doses of calcium. Even for individuals with osteoporosis, we no longer advise taking more than 500 mg per day.

While calcium is the most abundant mineral in bone, adding more doesn't build stronger bones. In fact, high doses of supplemental calcium may wind up in places like coronary arteries—contributing to plaque. It can also accumulate in breast tissue and show up on imaging tests as suspicious calcifications—often a gateway to more invasive testing and treatment. And think about this: on a typical metabolic panel blood test, calcium deficiency is rarely seen in this country. So why the relentless high dose advice? Guidance like this.

The delivery of calcium to the bones depends on other micronutrients such as vitamin D, magnesium, and vitamin K (especially K2), along with a nutrient-dense diet. Beneficial omega-3 fats and an overall healthy microbiome are also critical in maintaining bone integrity. Simply taking a calcium supplement alone won't help

strengthen bones without these supporting nutrients which play a critical role in healthy bone turnover.

So when it comes to calcium supplementation, more is not necessarily better.

In addition to optimizing diet, a qualified nutritionist can help you navigate and choose the appropriate supplements *and doses* based on your unique biochemistries to support bone health.

To your health!

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