

News

Subscribe |

Mobile

Google USA TODAY stories, photos and more



Home

News

Travel

Money

Sports

Li

News: Communities | Education | Nation | Military | Election 2012 | Religion | Health & Wellness | Washington | Wor

Calcium supplements may raise heart attack risk

Vid

By Janice Lloyd, USA TODAY

Updated 14h 42m ago

Recommend < 771

137

5



Reprints & Permissions

Fired
empl
discri

Taking a calcium supplement to help prevent bones from thinning puts people at a greater risk for heart attacks, says a report out today in the journal *Heart*.

The study of approximately 24,000 people between the ages of 35 and 64 found participants who took regular calcium supplements were 86% more likely to have a heart attack than those who didn't take supplements. Those who took only calcium supplements were twice as likely to suffer a heart attack as those who didn't take any vitamin supplements. Calcium supplements have been linked to kidney stones and bloating in other studies, according to the [National Institutes of Health](#).

USA TODAY

Calcium pills are among the most common supplements available at stores in the USA.

Sponsored Links

"Calcium supplements have been widely embraced by doctors and the public, on the grounds that they are a natural and therefore safe way of preventing osteoporotic fractures," the authors write. "We should return to seeing calcium as an important component of a balanced diet."

The study, primarily undertaken to determine if calcium supplements modify cardiovascular risk factors, found no direct link between the supplements and heart attacks, nor did they identify brands of supplements. Participants answered questions about their use of supplements and their diet during an 11-year study of their health.



Mo:

Stor

Po

Ca

An

Zir

Ex

Vide

Ra

Ra

Ra

LifeLock® Official Site

Protect your Family's Identity. Get LifeLock Ultimate™
LifeLock.com

4-Point Heart Attack Rule

When These 4 Things Happen, You're About to Have a Heart Attack.

www.newsmax.com

QUAN Top Stock Pick

Hot Industry, Smart Company - Could Explode, Buy Shares Now!

www.QuantumInnovators.com

Buy a link here

The study did not look at what caused the heart attacks, but the authors write: "Supplements cause calcium levels to soar above the normal range, and it is this flooding effect which might ultimately be harmful."

"Doctors who work with the elderly and people who are postmenopausal routinely tell them to take a calcium supplement," says Linda Russell, a rheumatologist and osteoporosis specialist at Hospital for Special Surgery in New York. "It's really time to re-examine that philosophy. Other studies about calcium have been suggesting this in recent years, but maybe this study really should get doctors to rethink this approach."

Strategies for preventing bone thinning in postmenopausal women have recently come under review; the Food and Drug Administration warned in the *New England Journal of Medicine* May 9 about the risks associated with some bisphosphonates and how long patients should take them. Some bisphosphonates, widely prescribed to treat osteoporosis and prevent fractures, have been linked to a rare kind of atypical fracture in the femur.

"It's very important for people to be vigilant, keep track of their medications and to talk with their doctors," says Elizabeth Shane, a professor of medicine at Columbia University's Department of Medicine in New York and spokesperson for the American Society of Bones and Mineral Research. "The knowledge base is continually changing."

Russell says she reevaluates a patient's need for bisphosphonates every year. "The benefits still far outweigh the risks," she says. "They're proven to prevent fractures. But the field is really opening up. Bisphosphonates slow bone loss, while some newer drugs will make bone."

Shane recommends bisphosphonates for patients with osteoporosis. She also advises her patients to get their calcium naturally from their diet in small doses so it is absorbed throughout the day, and to use a supplement only to make up a difference if they fall short of the daily requirement.

For a postmenopausal woman between ages 51 and 70, when developing osteoporosis becomes a greater danger, the recommended range is 1,000 to 1,200 mgs daily. After age 71, the requirement for men and women is 1,200 mgs, according to the NIH.

"Walk into any drugstore and these calcium supplements just jump off the shelves at you," says Russell. "But by taking foods high in calcium four times a day, you should get all that you need."

Pho
Ed
Fo
NA

Mo:

Sig

Top
and

Mo:

Pol
stat



New
Edition

Reprin
Index |

Be sure, she adds, to make sure most is low in fat, like low- or non-fat yogurt, cheese and milk products. If dairy is a problem, consider kale, Chinese cabbage, broccoli, and juices and grains fortified with calcium.

"For the time being, until it becomes more clear, people should start shifting over to meeting their calcium needs through diet," she says.

For more information about [reprints & permissions](#), visit our FAQ's. To report corrections and clarifications, contact Standards Editor **Brent Jones**. For publication consideration in the newspaper, send comments to letters@usatoday.com. Include name, phone number, city and state for verification. To view our corrections, go to corrections.usatoday.com.

Posted 14h 56m ago | Updated 14h 42m ago



More from USATODAY

Roofer kicks co-worker off roof, saves him from electrocution [USATODAY.com in News](#)

Attack on girl, 7, by 5th-grader caught on video [USATODAY.com in News](#)

Sidecar app makes multitasking easier on smartphones [USATODAY.com in Tech](#)

Report: 4 witnesses revised accounts in Trayvon Martin case [USATODAY.com in On Deadline](#)

HP job cuts: 27,000 by 2014 in major restructuring [USATODAY.com in Tech](#)

More from the web

11 Ways to Lower Cholesterol [Lifescript](#)

Spanish Mixed Grill with Rice Salad [Rachael Ray Show](#)

10 Ways of Boosting Up Your Internet Speed [Windstream Business Blog](#)

Obama's Secret White House Exposed in New Book [Newsmax.com](#)

Vitamin D Affects Genes for Cancer, Autoimmune Diseases [HealthCentral.com](#)

[?]

USA TODAY is now using Facebook Comments on our stories and blog posts to provide an enhanced user experience. To post a comment, log into Facebook and then "Add" your comment. To report spam or abuse, click the "X" in the upper right corner of the comment box. To find out more, read the [FAQ](#) and [Conversation Guidelines](#).