

August 28, 2007

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Life Extension Update Exclusive

Meta-analysis confirms calcium supplements reduce fracture risk

In what has been called a landmark study, researchers at the University of Western Sydney reviewed data from 63,897 participants in 29 clinical trials to reaffirm that calcium supplements reduce the risk of fractures in older individuals. Their report was published in the August 25, 2007 issue of *The Lancet*.

The meta-analysis, conducted by Dr Benjamin Tang and his associates at the University of Western Sydney Centre for Complementary Research, included randomized trials that evaluated the effect of calcium supplements or calcium combined with vitamin D on fracture risk and bone mineral density in subjects over the age of 50. Calcium supplementation was found to be associated with a 12 percent lower risk of all types of fractures, and high compliance with the supplement regimen doubled the reduction. A daily dose of 1200 mg of calcium with 800 international units of Vitamin D was associated with the greatest benefits.

In trials of osteoporotic patients that reported the supplements' effects on bone density, calcium and vitamin D were associated with a reduction in the rate of bone loss in both the hip and spine.

"The research provides clear evidence that calcium supplements decrease fracture rates and loss of bone density in older people," Dr Tang stated. "The efficacy of calcium supplements in reducing the risk of fractures later in life is comparable to more established preventative medicines such as aspirin and statins, which are widely taken to reduce the risk of cardiovascular events such as strokes and heart attacks."

"The results showed the importance of starting supplements early in life, at around the age of 50, when bone mineral loss begins to accelerate." Dr Tang continued. "Persistence in particular pays off as people who reported taking their supplements at least 80 per cent of the time experienced a 24 per cent reduction in fractures. For those who were less rigorous with their routine the benefit was cut in half."

"Calcium supplements are relatively cheap to dispense, but the impact they have on your health and well being later in life is priceless," he concluded.

Health Concern

Osteoporosis

Many studies have shown that calcium can reduce bone loss and suppress bone turnover. Calcium intake is a foundation of osteoporosis prevention (Kasper DL et al 2005). Calcium requires the presence of vitamin D for maximum absorption. Although calcium is readily available in dairy products and other dietary sources, many Americans are calcium deficient. There

are a few possible explanations for calcium deficiencies:

- Decreased vitamin D availability, possibly due to kidney or liver problems or insufficient exposure to sunshine (ultraviolet radiation)
- Decreased gastrointestinal tract absorption due to stomach or intestinal problems
- Increased loss of calcium from the kidneys
- Increased loss of calcium from the colon and bowels
- Low dietary calcium intake
- Medications that inhibit calcium absorption

There are many forms of calcium on the market, including the common calcium carbonate, calcium gluconate, and calcium citrate. Of these, calcium citrate is the most easily absorbed and a good way to receive supplemental calcium. It may also turn out that not only is supplementation vital to preventing and treating osteoporosis but that the timing of the supplementation is important. For example, in a study of healthy volunteers, two doses of 500 mg calcium and 400 IU vitamin D taken six hours apart produced a more prolonged decrease in serum parathyroid hormone levels (low levels of which indicate adequate calcium levels) than a single dose with the same total amounts of calcium and vitamin D.

http://www.lef.org/protocols/metabolic_health/osteoporosis_01.htm

Featured Products

Calcium Citrate with Vitamin D3

Calcium is an essential mineral that is often inadequately supplied, inefficiently absorbed, or excreted faster than it is being assimilated. The citrate salt of calcium has been documented to be well absorbed and utilized by the body.

<http://www.lef.org/newshop/items/item00412.html>



Bone Restore

A problem overlooked by most doctors is that loss of bone density is associated with deficiencies of not just calcium, but a host of other nutrients including magnesium and vitamin D3. In order for calcium to prevent bone loss, adequate amounts of vitamin D3, zinc, manganese and other nutrients should be available so that calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus can be incorporated into the bone matrix. Another issue that many people are not aware of is that many forms of calcium do not absorb particularly well.

<http://www.lef.org/newshop/items/item00811.html>



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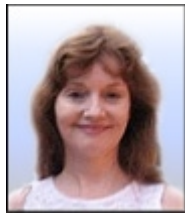
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