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Doctors & patients are saying about 'A-Fib.com'...

"A-Fib.com is a great web site for patients, that is unequaled by anything else out there."

Dr. Douglas L. Packer, MD, FHRS, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN

"Jill and I put you and your work in our prayers every night. What you do to help people through this [A-Fib] process is really incredible."

Jill and Steve Douglas, East Troy, WI

"I really appreciate all the information on your website as it allows me to be a better informed patient and to know what questions to ask my EP."

Faye Spencer, Boise, ID, April 2017

"I think your site has helped a lot of patients."

Dr. Hugh G. Calkins, MD Johns Hopkins, Baltimore, MD

Cardiovascular Benefits of Magnesium: Insights for Atrial Fibrillation Patients



by Steve S. Ryan, PhD

THIS ARTICLE WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN 2014, UPDATED IN 2016; LAST UPDATED: JUNE, 2021

What if there was a magic pill that would improve by 34% your chances of living a long, healthy life, you'd check it out, right?

Well, it's not a pill, nor a medication. It's magnesium—a mineral naturally present in many foods. Magnesium is important for anyone with a high cardiovascular risk (including patients with Atrial Fibrillation).

Magnesium is chronically lacking in most diets. Almost everyone with A-Fib is magnesium deficient.

Magnesium is one of the most common nutritional deficiencies. It's chronically lacking in most diets. Almost everyone with A-Fib is magnesium deficient. (Also see my article: [Mineral Deficiencies—Magnesium.](#))

Reduced Risks of Cardiovascular and Cancer Mortality

New insights come from researchers in Spain who carefully monitored the diets of 7,216 men and women between the ages of 55-80 (an age range more likely to develop A-Fib). The people in the highest third of magnesium intake (442 mg/day) were 34% less likely to have died from any cause over a five-year period. And they had a 59% reduced risk of cardiovascular mortality, plus a 37% reduction in cancer mortality.

In contrast, most US adults ingest only about 270 mg of magnesium a day, well below the modest magnesium RDAs (Recommended Daily Allowance) of 420 mg for adult males and 320 mg for adult female. This creates a substantial cumulative deficiency over months and years.

In the above Spanish study, the highest average intake of magnesium (442 mg) was barely above the minimum RDA level for adult males. But a recommended daily dosage of magnesium is a minimum 600 mg/day, preferably 800 mg.

Marta Guasch-Ferré wrote me that many individuals in her study (289) consumed more than 600 mg of magnesium/day. In this Spanish Mediterranean population, the intake of magnesium was relatively high. They ate a lot of fruits, vegetables and nuts.

Cardiovascular Benefits of Magnesium

The authors of this study discussed why the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) was lowered by ingesting more magnesium. "Hypertension is a strong risk factor for CVD, and it is known that magnesium can lower blood pressure. Also, magnesium intake may inhibit platelet aggregation, modulate inflammation, and improve endothelial function."

A Harvard study indicated that higher intakes of magnesium were linked with a 22% reduction in the risk of ischemic heart disease.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) lists the benefits of magnesium as keeping heart rhythm steady (like antiarrhythmic A-Fib meds), maintaining normal muscle and nerve function, supporting a healthy immune system, and keeping bones strong. It's also needed for healthy blood pressure and blood sugar management.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has stated that magnesium is important in the maintenance of normal

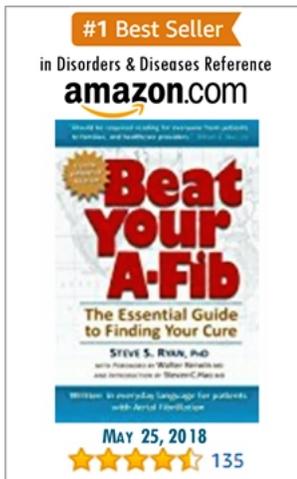
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Doctors & patients are saying about "Beat Your A-Fib"...

"If I had [your book] 10 years ago, it would have saved me 8 years of hell."

Roy Salmon, Patient, A-Fib Free,
Adelaide, Australia

"This book is incredibly complete and easy-to-understand for anybody. I certainly recommend it for patients who want to know more about atrial fibrillation than what they will learn from doctors...."

Pierre Jais, M.D. Professor of Cardiology, Haut-
Lévêque Hospital, Bordeaux, France

"Dear Steve, I saw a patient this morning with your book [in hand] and highlights throughout. She loves it and finds it very useful to help her in dealing with atrial fibrillation."

Dr. Wilber Su,
Cavanaugh Heart Center, Phoenix, AZ

"...masterful. You managed to combine an encyclopedic compilation of information with the simplicity of presentation that enhances the delivery of the information to the reader. This is not an easy thing to do, but you have been very, very successful at it."

Ira David Levin, heart patient,
Rome, Italy

"Within the pages of Beat Your A-Fib, Dr. Steve Ryan, PhD, provides a comprehensive guide for persons seeking to find a cure for their Atrial Fibrillation."

Walter Kerwin, MD, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center,
Los Angeles, CA

bone, teeth, and protein synthesis; the reduction of tiredness and fatigue; electrolyte balance; normal energy-yielding metabolism; neurotransmission, and muscle contraction. Other studies support magnesium's benefits for metabolic pathways, blood pressure, reducing the risk of stroke, and reducing the risk of colon cancer.

A Harvard study indicated that higher intakes of magnesium were linked with a 22% reduction in the risk of ischemic heart disease (IHD—clots, stroke).

Food and Water Insufficient Sources of Magnesium

Almost anyone reading this article should probably be taking more magnesium. Ideally you should get the magnesium you need from the food and water you consume. But the reality is magnesium has been depleted from our soil by over farming.

In addition, we're no longer bathing in natural water that is high in magnesium nor are we drinking spring or mineral water that's high in magnesium. Instead, we're drinking and bathing in tap water that's devoid of magnesium.

Depletion of our Magnesium: We are also susceptible to losing the little magnesium we do have. We lose magnesium through the pressures of our modern lifestyles. We have to work a lot to afford the basic necessities of life. We're under a lot of daily stress and stress depletes your magnesium levels.

Another way we lose magnesium is from the prescription drugs we take.

Recommended Dosages

Between the loss of magnesium and the lack of sources of magnesium through food and water, most of us probably need some form of magnesium supplement.

Aim for more than the bare minimum RDA (420 mg for men, 370 mg for women). A recommended dosage is 600 mg-800 mg/day. (For example, 200 mg three times a day and 200 mg at bedtime.) But start off with very low dosages. Excess magnesium or magnesium sensitivity can cause loose stools and diarrhea which is counterproductive, because of the loss of electrolytes.

Topical forms of magnesium can be used in addition to oral magnesium supplements (or instead of). These include Magnesium oil and Epsom Salts soaking baths or foot baths.

Six Months to Replenish magnesium levels

It may take as long as six months to replenish your intracellular magnesium levels. (Check with your doctor. But because magnesium is a natural substance and not a medication, some US doctors won't consider magnesium as a viable therapy.)

US consumers are waking up to the benefits of magnesium. US sales of magnesium supplements grew by 15% from 2010 to 2011.

Your doctor should be able to test you for intracellular magnesium. (Blood serum tests are misleading. They remain relatively stable [at about 1%], even though working intracellular magnesium levels may be low.) To learn more about the distinction between serum and intracellular magnesium levels, see the article, [Low Serum Magnesium Linked with Atrial Fibrillation](#).

A faster way to improve your magnesium levels is with a magnesium IV. Magnesium IVs are used in Europe in the ER to restore normal heart rhythm in patients with A-Fib, but not generally in the US. Dr. Julian Whitaker in Newport Beach, CA performs this therapy (www.drwhitaker.com).

Continue Magnesium Supplements?

Even if you don't have A-Fib or you have been made A-Fib free by a catheter ablation, you should still probably consider increasing the amount of magnesium you are taking, through food and/or supplements.

Added 6/5/21:

Dale G. writes, "...magnesium taurate has stopped my A-Fib attacks (last one August 12, 2019, so coming up to two years). I had 7 episodes during the 2019 Summer. They lasted up to an hour but all stopped on their own. I also have completely stopped drinking...I'm a 52-year old male...For several years I had noticed I had ectopic beats and a slightly irregular heartbeat. I didn't seek any medical advice on this and kind of buried my head in the sand! At some point those ectopics progressed to A-Fib. I now also run 5ks twice a week. The combination of these things seems to have sorted me out for now. But I'm convinced that the Mg is a major component. Good luck to one and all."

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