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It is well known that diet plays an important role in the development of type 2 diabetes, but less is known about the influence of specific nutrients on non-Western populations. A report published in the March 2009 issue of the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition revealed a protective effect of calcium and magnesium against diabetes in a large group of Chinese women.

HIGH MAGNESIUM AND CALCIUM INTAKE LINKED TO LOWER DIABETES RISK

The study involved 64,191 women from the Shanghai Women's Health Study. All women lived in Shanghai, China. Analysis of dietary questionnaire responses determined calcium and magnesium intake.

Women whose intake was in the highest group at an average of 649.6 milligrams per day had a 27 percent lower risk of diabetes than those whose intake was in the lowest group at 277.5 milligrams. Women whose intake of magnesium was highest at an average of 318.1 milligrams per day experienced a 20 percent lower risk compared with those in the lowest category of intake. Dairy intake was also related to a lower risk of type 2 diabetes.

The researchers did not have information on vitamin D intake, but the protective effect of dairy products could be partly due to their vitamin D content as well as calcium. The combination of vitamin D and calcium has been associated with a reduction in the risk of type 2 diabetes in previous research.

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