

In a newly published study of adults at high risk for heart disease, magnesium intake was inversely associated with cardiovascular, cancer and all-cause mortality.

High magnesium intakes reduce cardiovascular and cancer mortality risk

Previous research has shown that magnesium plays a role in maintaining healthy blood pressure, inhibiting platelet aggregation, modulating inflammation, and is important for normal vascular health. In a recent study published in the Journal of Nutrition, researchers sought to assess the association between magnesium intake, cardiovascular disease (CVD) and mortality risk in a Mediterranean population at higher risk for developing heart disease.

The study included 7,216 men and women aged 55-80 years that were at high risk of CVD. Participants were randomly assigned to Mediterranean diets supplemented with nuts or olive oil or a control low-fat diet.

After an average follow-up time of about 5 years, there were 323 total deaths documented. Of those, 81 deaths were attributed to cardiovascular disease (stroke, heart attack, heart disease), and 130 deaths to cancer.

Compared to lower magnesium consumption (average 312 mg/day), the subjects in the highest third of intake (average 442 mg/day) had a 59% reduced risk of death from CVD, a 37% decreased risk of death from cancer, and a 34% reduction in all-cause mortality.

In this study of Mediterranean adults, high intakes of magnesium in the diet reduced overall mortality and deaths from cardiovascular disease and cancer. It is estimated that only about 20-30% of U.S. adults are currently meeting the recommended intake of magnesium in their diets.

Marta Guasch-Ferré et al. Dietary Magnesium Intake Is Inversely Associated with Mortality in Adults at High Cardiovascular Risk. First published November 20, 2013, doi: 10.3945/jn.113.183012.