

A new study confirms the safety of calcium supplementation in adult women, and fails to show any association between calcium supplementation and an increased risk of heart disease.

## Calcium supplements don't increase cardiovascular disease risk in women

Osteoporosis has been called the silent killer and affects nearly 50 million Americans to some degree. Because of this, calcium supplementation has been widely recommended since much of the population falls short of dietary recommendations. However, some reports published during the past several years have argued that supplement use may increase the risk of cardiovascular disease.

In a new study published in *Osteoporosis International*, researchers examined the independent associations between supplementation of calcium and cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk. CVD includes coronary heart disease (CHD) and stroke. The researchers took information from a very large prospective study of 74,245 women in the Nurse's Health Study. All women were free of CVD and cancer at the beginning of the study, and calcium supplement intake was assessed every 4 years. One significant advantage to this study is the long follow-up time (24 years) and large number of cardiovascular events (4,565) from which to draw potential associations.

The research failed to show any independent associations between calcium supplementation and the risk of CVD. In fact, after adjusting for age, BMI, dietary calcium, vitamin D intake, and other CVD factors, the women who supplemented with a dose of at least 1 gram per day had an 18% lower risk of CVD than those who did not use calcium supplements. There was no significant difference in the risk of stroke incidence between the groups, but the women taking calcium supplements had a 29% lower risk of CHD than non-supplement users.

The findings of this large prospective study do not support the assertion that calcium supplementation increases the risk of CVD in women.

Paik JM1, Curhan GC, Sun Q, Rexrode KM, Manson JE, Rimm EB, Taylor EN Calcium supplement intake and risk of cardiovascular disease in women. *Osteoporos Int*. 2014 May 7.