

the better nutrition magnesium evaluation

When the body feels stress, it shifts into "Red Alert: Reprioritize" mode, otherwise known as "Fight or Flight." This means that its normal workload – things like digestion, absorption, elimination, assessment, metabolism – take a back seat to its "fight or flight" efforts. And today, this happens a lot more than you may be aware of because stress, by the body's definition, is not just the bad stuff. The body reacts to all your good stress this exact same way too! Thus, the expression "Life Happens" could really be "Stress Happens" and you need to help your body manage that stress better.

To help your body manage stress better, more often, you need enough magnesium in your cells. Magnesium plays an essential stress management role. When stress happens, calcium enters the cell. Magnesium needs to be there to push calcium back out, thereby turning off the stress response and enabling relaxation.

Who isn't getting enough magnesium? Most of us. >70% of US adults currently do not meet the recommended daily allowance (RDA) for magnesium. That's not better! Food preferences, intolerances, processing, soil health and intake of other nutrients are just some of the reasons when magnesium intake is too low.

Are you giving your body enough magnesium daily? Take this quiz to find out.

Section A:

How often are you getting magnesium in from food?

ALWAYS | **SOMETIMES** | **NEVER**
>5 days/wk | 2-4 days/wk | < 1x wk

Nuts / Seeds

Cashews: 3 Tbsp; Almonds: 2 Tbsp; Peanuts: ½ cup; Hemp seeds: 1 Tbsp;
Pumpkin seeds: ½ cup; Sesame seeds: 3 Tbsp; Sunflower seeds: ¾ cup;
Cacao nibs/powder: 4 tbsps; Dark chocolate (>65%): 2 oz

Greens

Spinach: ¾ cup cooked;
Swiss Chard, Beet, Turnip Greens: 3 cups chopped, cooked

Whole grains (not flour)

Oatmeal: 1 ½ cups, cooked; Brown Rice: 1 cup cooked; Quinoa: 1 cup cooked;
Buckwheat: 1 cup cooked; Millet, 1 cup cooked;

Beans / Legumes

Kidney: ½ cup; Pinto: ½ cup; Black: ½ cup; Navy: 1 cup; Lima: 1 cup;
Tempeh: 1 cup; Edamame: 1 cup;

Section B:

Do you drink these beverages and / or take these supplements?

ALWAYS | **SOMETIMES** | **NEVER**
>5 days/wk | 2-4 days/wk | < 1x wk

Coffee (> 8 oz, or 1 shot espresso)

Caffeinated green, black, oolong tea (> 16 oz)

Soda or diet soda (any)

Milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, ricotta, dairy kefir (>6 oz)

Juice or Non-dairy milk fortified with calcium (>8 oz)

Calcium > 50 mg/day

Magnesium oxide – any

Section C:

Tell us a little about yourself:

YES | NO

Do you feel:

Backed Up - Constipated or bloated

Exhausted - You have trouble getting to sleep or staying asleep, & never feel really rested

Achy - head, shoulders, muscles, joints

Cranky Pants - PMS or Peri/Menopausal

Sick - heart and/or auto-immune disease, diabetes, GERD or high blood pressure

Recovering - local or full anesthesia surgery, modified or inactive from an injury, post-natal (gave birth in the last 6 months)

Depressed - Taking supplements, medications or working with a practitioner to address

Stressed - on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being cucumber cool & 10 being hot red pepper you are a 9-12

YES | NO

Does your activity include:

Lift weights >1 week

Bodyweight bearing exercise (like yoga) > 1 week

Sitting in-place for more than 2 hours at a time > 1 week

Airplane travel > 1 flight / month



What do your answers say about your magnesium nutrition?

In section (A): Where do you get your magnesium and how often?

Each serving is about 100mg and most adults need about 400mg daily. So when you review your intake answers, see if you are getting in a minimum 4 servings from one of these ways (1) 4 servings of the same food, (2) one serving of four foods, (3) some combination that gets you to at least four servings of these foods

ALWAYS: You are likely already doing a better job of getting in enough magnesium from foods. Awesome! Review your answers for the next sections to see if your other choices or lifestyle means you need to adjust your supplement plan.

SOMETIMES: You are doing well, but you could do better with your magnesium food intake or look to balance it with a better supplement. Checkout the [Better Magnesium Menu](#) for more ideas as well as review the answers for the sections below.

NEVER: You should try adding some of these magnesium-rich foods more often. The [Better Magnesium Menu](#) can help.

For sometimes, never answers, you may benefit from adding magnesium as a supplement. We can build your Better Supplement Plan or you can head to [The Better Nutrition Supplement Store](#) to see our recommendations. .

In section (B):

ALWAYS & SOMETIMES: Your other foods, beverages and supplemental nutrition make it important for you to get in enough magnesium (or a better form of magnesium), both to counteract calcium and also to help the body relax better.

- Calcium is what helps muscles contract and also produces the stress response (known as "fight or flight" it is really important for our body to run better). Calcium works in opposition to magnesium. The foods and beverages noted here are typically good or excellent sources of calcium (quantity, not necessarily quality) so if you are consuming them it is extra important to evaluate your calcium using The [Better Calcium Evaluation](#) as well as work to balance them with magnesium rich foods like those in this evaluation. Likewise, if you take a calcium supplement you will want to make sure that you are getting a better balance of calcium and magnesium more often (from foods, beverages, and supplements).
- Not all magnesium supplements are created equal. There are many different forms to choose from, but I don't recommend magnesium oxide, so consider a different source or a blend that includes citrate or glycinate etc.
- Caffeine can be great for us, but as a stimulant it can also produce tension throughout the body. Use the [Better Caffeine Evaluation](#) to help assess if your intake is better or needs attention, but if you consume it, it is important that you do better on your magnesium intake to help turn off that tension.

NEVER: Your other food, beverage and supplement choices don't indicate a need for more magnesium, but you may want to use The [Better Calcium Evaluation](#) as well to assess your needs and intake of this key mineral too.

In section (C):

YES: to one or more of the questions: What you do impacts the need for your nutrition to help your body recover better. Likewise, how you are feeling and what you are dealing with health-wise will provide information that may indicate your magnesium intake isn't where it needs to be to help you feel better.

- If you answered YES to feeling depressed and are not currently working with a professional, we encourage you to reach out to your doctor for a referral or to call 911 if you are having thoughts about harming yourself.
- Because magnesium works in our cells to turn off the stress response it plays a major role in our better health. If you've answered yes, to any of the health questions you should discuss your total magnesium intake with a practitioner or request a consult with a better nutrition provider.
- Activity is great for us but especially when we kick it into high gear or fly high into the skies we can make it harder on the body to relax. Your answers here may indicate that you will benefit from magnesium (foods, supplements, or skin and bath products) at strategic times to help your body feel and run better.
- Sometimes a nutrient isn't the better option or what's needed to help with stress or PMS or depression or to help you feel better. We love journaling as well as doing breath work and meditation to help signal the body that it should STRESS LESS. One better breathing technique is the 4-7-8 where you breathe in through your nose for a 4 count, hold it for 7 count, then exhale for an 8 count. Try 10 cycles of 4-7-8 and see how you feel!

NO: to all of these questions: We love that you are feeling good! Nothing about your activity and health indicate a need for increased magnesium intake. But quick question, how come you aren't lifting weights or doing body-weight bearing exercise? As we age, the body needs extra attention and effort to build and retain lean body mass. Plus, your muscles support your body to help prevent falls as well as maintain posture and protect bones. Get after it!

Got more questions based on your evaluation?

Share them with us in [The Better Nutrition Program Facebook Group](#)

or send us an email through the website.

You deserve better!



All materials developed and reviewed by Ashley Koff RD at times in conjunction with other leading healthcare practitioners.
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