



HEALTH HIGHLIGHT

MIGRAINES AND HEADACHES: THE MAGNESIUM DEFICIENCY LINK

There are more than 300 different kinds of headaches. Medical science distinguishes between a tension headache and a migraine as the following:

- **Tension headache:** Dull, pressing to pulling pain over the whole head.
- **Migraine headache:** Throbbing and pulsating most likely on one side only. Often accompanied by nausea and vomiting.

Both kinds of headache are often associated with hypersensitivity to light and noise.

The magnesium link

Magnesium deficiency is present in 50% of migraine patients, with several EU and US guidelines recommending magnesium for the prevention of migraines.

Magnesium deficiency leads to hyperexcitability of muscles and nerve fibres and may result in tension in the shoulder and neck area, which can cause tension headaches. While in migraines, contraction of the smooth muscles in the blood vessel walls may cause narrowing and restricted blood flow to the brain. Therefore, an adequate intake of magnesium is needed in those prone to migraines and headaches.

Where do you get magnesium from?

Magnesium is in a wide range of foods, with good sources including green leafy vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds and whole grains, but as stated earlier, people suffering from headaches and migraines may be magnesium deficient, and supplementation may also be required.

Foods naturally contain magnesium in an organic form, such as magnesium citrate. Magnesium citrate occurs as a building block in the body and is therefore well tolerated, fast-acting and available as a supplement to the diet.

What is the preferred form of magnesium to take?

Not all magnesium supplements are the same. The ideal supplement is magnesium citrate, which is found naturally in the body and so is well tolerated and fast-acting. Water-soluble magnesium citrate taken as a drink helps to increase the absorption of magnesium across the intestinal wall and into the cells, where magnesium is needed the most.



Research has found that magnesium citrate supplementation can reduce the frequency and intensity of migraine attacks.