

Magnesium and Your Diet

Magnesium is a mineral that helps build bones and protein, produces energy, helps control blood sugar, and keeps your heart muscle working well.

How much magnesium do you need?

The table below tells you how much magnesium you need every day.

Group	Magnesium per day
Infants (0–12 months)	30–75 mg
Children (1–13 years)	80–240 mg
Teenagers (14–18 years)	360–410 mg
Women (19–70+ years)	310–320 mg
Pregnant and breastfeeding women	310–400 mg
Men (19–70+)	400–420 mg

Food, pills, or both?

Many foods have magnesium in them. Eating a variety of foods, including dark green vegetables, nuts, seeds, whole grains, milk, and legumes, will help most people get enough (see the table above). Magnesium is lost when foods are cooked, so cook foods in a small amount of water for the shortest possible time.

Some people need to take a magnesium supplement if they have health problems or take medicine that causes lower blood levels of magnesium. Talk to your healthcare provider before taking a magnesium supplement.

If you need a supplement, it helps to choose foods that are high in magnesium, but often food is not enough to replace taking a magnesium supplement.

Magnesium supplements can be prescribed as tablets, slow release tablets, or liquid. Supplements are usually taken 3–4 times a day to keep blood levels of magnesium normal. Magnesium supplements may cause diarrhea in some people.

What are food sources of magnesium?

Eat a variety of foods from Canada's Food Guide each day. The foods below are sources of magnesium.

Vegetables and fruits	Magnesium (mg)
Spinach, cooked, ½ cup (125 mL)	83
Swiss chard, cooked, ½ cup (125 mL)	80
Beans, yellow, cooked, ½ cup (125 mL)	69
Beet greens, boiled, ½ cup (125 mL)	52
Potato, baked with skin, 1 medium	49
Artichoke, cooked, ½ cup (125 mL)	37

Grain foods	Magnesium (mg)
Muffin, raisin bran, 1 medium	79
Cereal, oat bran, cooked, 1 cup (250 mL)	65
Quinoa, cooked, ½ cup (125 mL)	63
Cereal, bran (non-flake), 15 g (¼ cup/ 60 mL)	49
Wheat bran, 2 Tbsp (30 mL)	45
Rice, brown, cooked, ½ cup (125 mL)	44
Cereal, bran flakes, 30 g (¾ cup/ 175 mL)	43
Wheat germ, plain, 2 Tbsp (30 mL)	35
Bulgur, cooked, ½ cup (125 mL)	31
Rice, wild, cooked, ½ cup (125 mL)	28
Bread, whole wheat, 1 slice	27
Cereal, bran flakes with raisins, 30 g (½ cup/ 125 mL)	25
Pita, whole wheat (½ pita)	22

Protein foods	Magnesium (mg)
----------------------	-----------------------

Beans, peas, and lentils

Black-eyed peas, dry, cooked, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL)	121
Soybeans, mature, cooked, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL)	109
Lima beans, dry, cooked, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL)	93
Black beans, cooked, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL)	89
Navy beans, cooked, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL)	80
Soybeans (edamame), frozen, prepared, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL)	73
Baked beans in tomato sauce, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL)	64
Lima beans, cooked, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 mL)	59
Chickpeas or garbanzo beans, cooked, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL)	58
Kidney beans, dry, cooked, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL)	55
Lentils, cooked, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL)	53

Meat, poultry, and fish

Mackerel, baked/broiled, 2½ oz (75 g)	73
Pork loin, broiled, 2½ oz (75 g)	23
Chicken breast, 2½ oz (75 g)	22
Halibut, baked/broiled, 2½ oz (75 g)	21

Milk, dairy, and soy foods

Tofu, cubed, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (150 g or 175 mL)	40–80
Soy beverage, fortified, 1 cup (250 mL)	30
Milk, 1 cup (250 mL)	28
Yogurt, plain, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL)	22

Peanuts, nuts, and seeds

Pumpkin seeds, shell off, roasted, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 mL)	317
Brazil nuts, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 mL)	133
Nuts, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 mL) almonds, pine nuts (pignolias), cashews, mixed nuts	78–98
Peanut butter, smooth, 2 Tbsp (30 mL)	55
Hazelnuts, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 mL)	48
Pumpkin seeds, shell on, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 mL)	43
Sunflower seeds, shell off, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 mL)	43
Sesame seeds, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)	33