

# Calcium Deficiency in Body: Hypocalcemia

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## Editorial

Calcium is a mineral that is necessary for life. In addition to building bones and keeping them healthy, calcium enables our blood to clot, our muscles to contract, and our heart to beat. About 99% of the calcium in our bodies is in our bones and teeth. Every day, we lose calcium through our skin, nails, hair, sweat, urine and feces. Our bodies cannot produce its own calcium. That's why it's important to get enough calcium from the food we eat. When we don't get the calcium our body needs, it is taken from our bones. This is fine once in a while, but if it happens too often, bones get weak and easier to break.

Hypocalcemia, also known as calcium deficiency disease, occurs when the blood has low levels of calcium. A long-term calcium deficiency can lead to dental changes, cataracts, alterations in the brain, and osteoporosis, which causes the bones to become brittle. A calcium deficiency may cause no early symptoms.

Many people are at an increased risk for calcium deficiency as they age. This deficiency may be due to a variety of factors, including:

- Poor calcium intake over a long period of time, especially in childhood
- Medications that may decrease calcium absorption
- Dietary intolerance to foods rich in calcium
- Hormonal changes, especially in women
- Certain genetic factors

It's important to ensure proper calcium intake at all ages. Women need to increase their calcium intake earlier in life than men, starting in middle age. Meeting the necessary calcium requirement is particularly important as a woman approaches

menopause. During menopause, women should also increase their calcium intake to reduce the risk of osteoporosis and calcium deficiency disease. The decline in the hormone estrogen during menopause causes a woman's bones to thin faster. The hormone disorder hypoparathyroidism may also cause calcium deficiency disease. People with this condition don't produce enough parathyroid hormone, which controls calcium levels in the blood.

Severe symptoms of hypocalcemia include:

- Confusion or memory loss
- Muscle spasms
- Numbness and tingling in the hands, feet, and face
- Depression
- Hallucinations
- Muscle cramps
- Weak and brittle nails
- Easy fracturing of the bones

Calcium deficiencies can affect all parts of the body, resulting in weak nails, slower hair growth, and fragile, thin skin. Calcium also plays an important role in both neurotransmitter release and muscle contractions. So, calcium deficiencies can bring on seizures in otherwise healthy people. If you start experiencing neurological symptoms like memory loss, numbness and tingling, hallucinations, or seizures, make an appointment to see your doctor as soon as possible.

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