

From the publishers of The New England Journal of Medicine



Save time and stay informed. Our physician-editors offer you clinical perspectives on key research and news.

[Home](http://www.jwatch.org/) (Link to: <http://www.jwatch.org/>) > [Specialties](http://www.jwatch.org/specialties.dtl) (Link to: <http://www.jwatch.org/specialties.dtl>) > [General Medicine](http://general-medicine.jwatch.org) (Link to: <http://general-medicine.jwatch.org>) > Summary and Comment

## High Supplemental Calcium Intake Is Associated with Cardiovascular Death

*But elevated risk was only in men and only for death from heart disease.*

Calcium intake, both dietary and supplemental, is encouraged to improve bone health, and many older adults take calcium supplements. Recent randomized trials of supplementation suggest an association with cardiovascular disease (CVD), but the studies are heterogeneous, and results are mixed. In this prospective cohort study, U.S. researchers assessed baseline calcium intake — including dietary recall and calcium supplements and calcium-containing antacids and multivitamins — in 390,000 older adults (mean age, 61). About 50% of men and 70% of women used calcium-containing supplements. Median daily dietary intake of calcium in both men and women was 700 mg.

During 12 years of follow-up, researchers identified 12,000 CVD-related deaths. In analyses adjusted for multiple CVD risk factors, supplemental calcium was associated significantly with CVD-related death in men but not in women: In men, daily calcium supplementation of >1000 mg, compared with no supplement use, was associated with 20% higher risk for CVD-related death, with the excess risk entirely attributable to heart disease. Calcium intake was not associated with death from cerebrovascular disease.

**Comment:** The lack of an association between CVD-related death and calcium supplementation in women is puzzling, in light of at least some recent randomized trials ([JW Gen Med Aug 31 2010](http://general-medicine.jwatch.org/cgi/content/full/2010/831/1) (Link to: <http://general-medicine.jwatch.org/cgi/content/full/2010/831/1>)). Although more study is needed to clarify these risks, a safe recommendation for both men and women is to eat a healthful diet of calcium-containing vegetables, legumes, and low-fat dairy products rather than take supplements.

— **Thomas L. Schwenk, MD** (Link to: [http://general-medicine.jwatch.org/misc/board\\_about.dtl#aSchwenk](http://general-medicine.jwatch.org/misc/board_about.dtl#aSchwenk))

Published in [Journal Watch General Medicine](http://general-medicine.jwatch.org) (Link to: <http://general-medicine.jwatch.org>) February 26, 2013

### Citation(s):

Xiao Q et al. Dietary and supplemental calcium intake and cardiovascular disease mortality: The National Institutes of Health–AARP Diet and Health study. *JAMA Intern Med* 2013 Feb 4; [e-pub ahead of print].

(<http://dx.doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2013.3283> (Link to: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2013.3283>))

Larsson SC. Are calcium supplements harmful to cardiovascular disease? *JAMA Intern Med* 2013 Feb 4; [e-pub ahead of print]. (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2013.3769> (Link to: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2013.3769>))

### Your Remark:

Reader Remarks are intended to encourage lively discussion of clinical topics with your peers in the medical community. We ask that you keep your remarks to a reasonable length, and we reserve the right to withhold publication of remarks that do not meet this standard.

The editors of Journal Watch may respond to Reader Remarks, but we cannot promise to respond to a particular remark.

Remark subject:\* 


Your remark:\*

*Fields marked with an \* are required.*

Name as you'd like it to appear:

First & middle initial:\* Last:\* 

Email address (will not

be published):\* Professional specialty:\* Place of work (optional): 

Submitting a comment indicates you have read and agreed to the [remark guidelines](http://www.jwatch.org/misc/remark_guidelines.dtl) (Link to: [http://www.jwatch.org/misc/remark\\_guidelines.dtl](http://www.jwatch.org/misc/remark_guidelines.dtl)) and declare:\*

No competing interests 

Or, the following competing interests (for example, financial stakes or professional relationships):

PRIVACY: We will not use your email address, submitted for a comment, for any other purpose nor sell, rent, or share your e-mail address with any third parties. Please see our [Privacy Policy](http://www.jwatch.org/misc/privacy.dtl) (Link to: <http://www.jwatch.org/misc/privacy.dtl>).

**CLEAR****CONTINUE**

CLEAR erases anything you've added in any part of the form. CONTINUE allows you to check your entire post (and edit it if necessary) before submitting.

To ensure that your Reader Remark is not formatted as one long paragraph, precede new paragraphs with either a blank line or an indentation.

## Article Tools

[Print this article](#)[PowerPoint Slide Set](#)[E-mail](#)[Facebook](#)[Twitter](#)[ShareThis](#)

## Reader Remarks

[Remark on this article](#)[Other articles in General Medicine with remarks](#)

All articles with remarks on site  
Notify me when remarks on this article are posted

## GUIDELINES FOR 2013

Keep current all year with the most recent recommendations

- [Revised Guidelines: ST-Segment-Elevation Myocardial Infarction](#)
- [AHA Issues Ischemic Stroke Guidelines](#)
- [2013 Pediatric Immunization Schedule Released](#)
- [2013 Adult Immunization Schedule Released](#)
- [Endoscopy for Esophageal Cancer Surveillance: Best Practices](#)
- [ACOG Recommends Routinely Screening Women for Reproductive and Sexual Coercion](#)
- [Care of Late Preterm Infants](#)
- [Pediatrics Type 2 Diabetes Guidelines Published](#)
- [WHO Issues New Guidelines on Sodium and Potassium Intake for Adults and Children](#)




## Journal Watch Newsletters

Available in 13 specialties with convenient delivery and **10 free online CME exams**.

Subscribe Now!

---

Copyright (Link to: <http://www.jwatch.org/misc/copyright.dtl>) © 2013. Massachusetts Medical Society (Link to: <http://www.massmed.org>) . All rights reserved.

Follow Us  (Link to: <http://www.jwatch.org/facebook>)  (Link to: <http://www.jwatch.org/twitter>)  
 (Link to: <http://blogs.jwatch.org/>)

 (Link to: <http://www.nejmgroup.org>)