

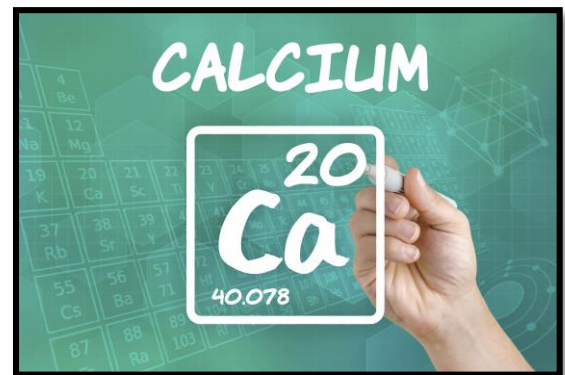
Calcium Supplements and the Risk of Heart Disease

Commonly recommended to elderly people and women who have gone through menopause, calcium supplements may actually be doing more harm than good.

A recent meta-analysis involving 12 000 participants has found that calcium supplements administered at a dose of greater than or equal to 500 mg/day are associated with a 30% increased risk of heart attack, and smaller increases in the risk of stroke and mortality.

The authors concluded that the widespread use of calcium supplements means that even a small increase in the incidence of cardiovascular disease could translate into a large burden of disease in the population.

What does this mean for those taking calcium supplements for the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis? It seems as though calcium supplements have only a modest overall efficacy (about 10%) in reducing the incidence of fractures. It is suggested that a reassessment of the role of calcium supplements in the management of osteoporosis is needed.



Source: British Medical Journal

<http://www.bmj.com.ezproxy.cmcc.ca/content/341/bmj.c3691?view=long&pmid=20671013>