

Magnesium

Magnesium is an essential mineral required for normal body functioning. It is found in many common foods, especially in leafy green vegetables, legumes (beans and peas), nuts, seeds and whole grains. Magnesium is also a saline laxative that can be used to relieve constipation. Saline laxatives are substances that are not absorbed well by the small intestine and therefore remain in the colon. There they draw water into the colon to soften the stool. Magnesium also has a mild stimulatory effect on the colonic muscles, making it easier to have a bowel movement.

Magnesium supplements can be purchased to complement magnesium consumed in the diet. Supplements are sold as several kinds of salt such as magnesium citrate, magnesium sulfate and magnesium chloride. You should not take a magnesium supplement in combination with other laxatives containing magnesium, with antacids, or if you have impaired kidney function. Do not choose a magnesium supplement that also contains calcium, as this may worsen constipation.

Below is a table showing the magnesium content of some common foods containing relatively high amounts of the mineral. The recommended daily intake of magnesium is around 400 mg for adult males and around 300 mg for adult females.

Food	Serving Size	Amount of Magnesium (mg)
Nuts and Seeds		
Almonds, raw	1 ounces	81
Brazil nuts	1 ounce	64
Cashews, dry roasted	1 ounce	75

Flaxseed	2 tablespoons	70
Hazelnuts, raw	1 ounce	49
Peanut butter, smooth	2 tablespoons	50
Peanuts, raw	1 ounce	50
Pecans	½ cup	66
Pine nuts	1 ounce	66
Pistachios	½ cup	74
Pumpkin seeds	1 ounce	151
Sesame seeds	2 ounces	64
Sunflower seed	¼ cup	127
Walnuts	1 ounce	57
Beans and Peas		
Black beans	1 cup	120
Black-eyed peas	1 cup	86
Cowpeas, black-eyed	1 cup	86
Garbonzo beans	1 cup	79
Green peas	1 cup	46
Kidney beans, canned	1 cup	70
Lentils	1 cup	70
Lima beans	1 cup	126
Navy beans	1 cup	107
Pinto beans	1 cup	70
Refried beans	1 cup	83
Soybeans	1 cup	150
Vegetarian baked beans	1 cup	80
White beans	1 cup	134
Vegetables		
Artichoke	1 cup	101
Avocado	1 large	50
Baked potato w/ skin	1 medium	50
Beet greens	1 cup	98
Beets, boiled	1 cup	39
Broccoli, steamed	1 cup	39
Brussels sprouts, boiled	1 cup	31
Collard greens, boiled	1 cup	32
Green beans, boiled	1 cup	31
Kale, boiled	1 cup	24
Okra	1 cup	92
Parsnips	1 cup	45
Pumpkin, canned	1 cup	56
Seaweed, kelp	3.5 ounces	121
Seaweed, Spirulina	3.5 ounces	195
Spinach	1 cup	156

Summer squash	1 cup	43
Sweet potatoes, canned	1 cup	56
Swiss chard	½ cup	56
Tempeh	4 ounces	88
Tofu	3.5 ounces	37
Tomato	1 cup	20
Tomato paste	1 cup	134
Turnip greens	1 cup	32
Fruits		
Banana	1 medium	30
Coconut, dried	2 ounces	52
Dates	3 dates	39
Figs, dried	4 figs	44
Kiwi	1 medium	23
Plantain	1 medium	66
Raisins	½ cup	25
Raspberries	1 cup	22
Grains		
Barley, whole grain	1 cup	158
Bran flakes	½ cup	40
Cornmeal	1 cup	155
Millet	1 cup	106
Oat bran	1 cup	221
Oatmeal	1 cup	112
Oatmeal, instant fortified	1 cup	55
Quinoa	1 cup	178
Rye flour	1 cup	70
Shredded wheat cereal	2 biscuits	55
Wheat bran	2 tablespoons	45
Wheat flour	1 cup	166
Wheat germ	2 tablespoons	35
Whole wheat bread	1 slice	25
Whole wheat macaroni	1 cup	42
Dairy		
Chocolate milk	1 cup	33
Fat free milk	1 cup	27
Plain yogurt	8 ounces	45
Reduced fat 2% milk	1 cup	27
Whole milk	1 cup	24
Seafood		
Halibut	3 ounces	90
Oysters	3 ounces	49
Rockfish	1 fillet	51

Salmon, Chinook	4 ounces	138
Scallops	6 large	55
Shrimp	4 ounces	39
Tuna	3 ounces	54
Spices		
Baker's chocolate,	1 square	95
Blackstrap molasses	2 teaspoons	29
Chili powder	2 tablespoons	26
Cocoa powder	2 tablespoons	52
Curry powder	2 tablespoons	32

Disclaimer: This document is not intended to take the place of the care and attention of your personal physician or other professional medical services. Talk with your doctor if you have Questions about individual health concerns or specific treatment options.

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Michigan Bowel Control Program
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