

Topic Team Training – Magnesium Deficiency

A community pharmacy environment that fosters teamwork ensured high levels of consumer satisfaction. This series of articles is designed for you to use as guide to assist your team in focusing on meeting ongoing CPD targets and to identify any training needs in order to keep the knowledge and skills of you and your team up to date.



We are going to focus on Magnesium and highlight the benefits as

- May reduce blood pressure
- May improve mood
- May help control blood sugar
- May reduce heart disease risk

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The below information, considerations and checklist provides support to enable you to

run a team training session and identify opportunities for learning within the topic of Magnesium Deficiency.

Magnesium is an essential mineral needed for over 300 chemical reactions in the body, including regulating blood sugar levels and pumping the heart. It's also a vital co-factor nutrient for other minerals (helping them to do their job) including chromium and calcium. Without magnesium, these other minerals do not work efficiently.

The average healthy adult requires around 270-400mg of magnesium per day, but research has shown that on average 50% of Irish people do not get enough Magnesium in their diets. In fact, magnesium deficiency is one of the most common nutritional

deficiencies in adults today, and this is associated with an increased risk of conditions such as diabetes, poor absorption, chronic diarrhoea, coeliac disease and 'hungry bone syndrome'.

According to the College of Naturopathic Medicine, 10 signs someone may be lacking in magnesium are:

1. Tiredness
2. Twitching eyes, muscle spasms, restless feet and leg cramps (including at night)
3. Sugar or chocolate cravings (cacao beans are high in magnesium)
4. Constipation
5. Pre-Menstrual Tension (PMT) and spasmodic period pain
6. Recurring headaches or migraines
7. Depression or low mood
8. Feeling edgy, tense or anxious
9. Sleep issues especially falling asleep
10. Cardiovascular issues such as high blood pressure or irregular heartbeat

Adults who get less than the recommended amount of magnesium are more likely to have elevated inflammation markers. Inflammation, in turn, has been associated with major health conditions such as heart disease,

diabetes, and certain cancers. Also, low magnesium appears to be a risk factor for osteoporosis.

There's some evidence that eating foods high in magnesium and other minerals can help prevent high blood pressure in people with prehypertension.

Intravenous or injected magnesium is used to treat other conditions, such as eclampsia during pregnancy and severe asthma attacks. Magnesium is also the main ingredient in many antacids and laxatives.

The recommended dietary allowances (RDA) for magnesium, as suggested by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland are:

Ages 19–30

Men: 400 milligrams (mg)

Women: 310 mg

Ages 31 and Older

Men: 420 mg

Women: 320 mg

Pregnant and lactating women should consume more magnesium. Depending on age, the recommended dietary allowance (RDA), or the amount needed to reach sufficient levels, for these women ranges from 310 to 400 mg.

Consider:

- The benefits of efficient magnesium consumption on the immune system and overall health
- How to spot magnesium deficiency in customers to get them the help they need
- OTC medicines that may cause magnesium deficiency
- The importance of good magnesium intake for everyone and the recommended allowances
- Lifestyle issues that may be impacting on the immune system
- When to refer customers to the pharmacist.

Key Points:

Check your pharmacy team are aware and understand the following key points:

- The pharmacy team knows to be sensitive in dealing with customers who may feel vulnerable
- The team knows which groups of customers are likely to be at risk of magnesium deficiency
- The health conditions associated with poor magnesium intake
- My pharmacy assistants can meet the points in this training checklist.

Actions:

- Ensure efficient sign posting to discreet consultation areas within the pharmacy for further help and advice
- Ensure that I know the recommendations for magnesium intake and supplements for each customer depending on sex and age
- The recommended allowances for pregnant women
- Are we confident about raising issues of vitamin deficiency with customers?
- Can we provide good advice on dealing with magnesium deficiency?
- Train the team to meet all the above considerations