Leg Cramps, Dry Cough, and More

What if I told you that calcium is a powerhouse nutrient that has incredible effectiveness OUTSIDE the bones? Yes, 99% of our calcium is used to maintain the healthy growth and density of bones and teeth. But what about that other 1% of calcium – what does it do?

A specific type of calcium, especially when given with quality magnesium, has tremendous impact on muscle strength and endurance, steadies heart rhythm (which helps prevent heart attacks), reduces or even eliminates PMS, cures cold sores and fever blisters, takes care of muscle cramps, relieves restless leg syndrome, and can even get rid of chronic, dry coughs. I have recommended this unique type of calcium for many years, and it definitely works on problems both big and small, so I chose it as the subject of this Terry Talks Nutrition®.

Calcium – Outside the Bones

The special form of calcium I recommend for issues OUTSIDE of bone health is calcium lactate. Calcium is undeniably important and essential for building bones, but the rest of the body – the “soft tissue” – needs calcium, too.

Calcium is important to our muscles because it plays a key role in the way our muscles flex and contract. This is why it is so valuable to athletes or anyone who is physically active.

When calcium is released into the muscles, as it is during exercise, it serves as a signal for them to contract and work. After the exercise or physical labor is done, the muscles signal a return to a relaxed state. Calcium goes back to being on “stand by”. However, if you’ve used up your stores of calcium during exercise, your muscles will be unable to respond quickly and effectively. Plus, they won’t relax properly, and you’ll probably get muscle cramps and the characteristic “twitching” at night. Calcium lactate has been recommended for over 50 years to relieve nighttime leg cramps and reduce muscle twitching.

In a clinical study of trained male and female cyclists taking either calcium lactate or placebo (no treatment), calcium lactate increased blood bicarbonate levels (the amount of carbon dioxide in the blood as it is transported to the lungs to be expelled), making the exchange of oxygen to muscle tissue more efficient. Not surprisingly, it also increased athletic performance – significantly. The time to exhaustion and total work increased 17% compared to the placebo group.

I’d also recommend calcium lactate for anyone who deals with restless leg syndrome (RLS). If you’ve noticed an aching or tingling in your legs – especially when you try to get to sleep at night – calcium lactate is an absolute must. Of course, RLS can happen when you’re just trying to sit still at work, too. Either way, calcium lactate will help leg muscles relax properly, so you can focus on getting your work done, or just getting a good night’s sleep.

Additionally, calcium has been shown to reduce symptoms of premenstrual syndrome – in some cases, lowering the severity by 48% overall. For the aches and pains associated with PMS, the individuals using calcium reported a 54% decrease in symptoms compared to a 15% increase for those using a placebo.

Calcium Lactate, Viral Infections and Dry Coughs

Have you noticed you often get a fever blister or a cold sore just before a big event? (It almost always seems to happen to a bride right before her wedding day.) That’s because stress causes damage to the cells in your body and weakens your immune defenses. This is important when you’re dealing with viral intruders that use the cells to replicate. In the same way that having a good, solid foundation for your home helps it weather storms, strong cells repel viruses. Calcium lactate – along with magnesium – helps fight both virus-caused irritations like fever blisters, and non-viral compromises to respiratory health, too.

Children often get a dry, hacking cough after a cold. In such instances, calcium lactate works wonders. In a clinical study of trained male and female cyclists taking either calcium lactate or placebo (no treatment), calcium lactate increased blood bicarbonate levels (the amount of carbon dioxide in the blood as it is transported to the lungs to be expelled), making the exchange of oxygen to muscle tissue more efficient. Not surprisingly, it also increased athletic performance – significantly. The time to exhaustion and total work increased 17% compared to the placebo group.

TERRY’S BOTTOM LINE:
The calcium (in the lactate form) outside your bones plays a dynamic role in a wide variety of health symptoms.

Combined with magnesium and zinc, these nutrients are effective for:

- Increased muscle endurance
- Relief of PMS
- Cold sores
- Muscle cramps
- Restless Leg Syndrome
- Children’s bone growing pains
- Chronic viral infections
- Alleviating dry coughs in children and adults

Here is the formula I suggest:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrient</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calcium (as calcium lactate)</td>
<td>250 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnesium (as magnesium citrate)</td>
<td>50 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinc (as zinc gluconate)</td>
<td>6 mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendations:

Adults: 6 capsules daily, when needed. May increase when additional support is needed. For cold sore/fever blisters/canker sores – for a day or two take 4 capsules, 3 times a day.

Children (age 2-12): 2 to 6 capsules daily, when needed.

More...

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a full day of playing outside in the sun due
to the depletion of calcium from the soft
tissues. The free-radical damage and energy
expended conspire to set up the perfect
situation for a dry, hacking cough that has
nothing to do with a cold or virus, but has
everything to do with simply exhausting the
body’s resistance to bronchial irritations.
Calcium lactate helps replenish the calcium
in the soft tissues while magnesium helps
relax muscles – keeping spasmodic coughs
at bay.

Magnesium –
A Magnificent Mineral
Magnesium is one of the minerals we need
for everything: cellular energy, metabolism,
muscle strength, heart health, and, of course,
our natural immune defenses. A deficiency
of magnesium can lead to numbness and
tingling, muscle contractions and cramps,
hypertension, and in severe cases, abnormal
heart rhythms.
Magnesium has been found to enhance
physical performance across the board, as
well as help the muscles in the body relax
following exercise. That means you don’t
get that “tightness” from exercise or regular,
repeated physical activity like you might be
required to do for work. It also reduces
oxidative stress and inflammation – the two
primary causes of all disease. Magnesium is
excellent at relieving pain, too. It does this
by blocking a pain receptor called the NMDA
receptor. It’s great to have on board after a
workout (or to take preemptively before one)
to keep your muscles from tightening up.

Our bodies tend to burn through minerals
at a very fast rate when we are physically
active – so these minerals aren’t going to
build up in the body as you might imagine. In
fact, one study with ultra-endurance athletes
showed that individuals in the study – and
by extension anyone participating in heavy
activity – were very likely to be deficient in
magnesium as well as zinc, one of the other
critical minerals in this formula.

In this case, even though the participants’
nutrient intake was generally adequate,
these minerals – magnesium and zinc –
were a problem, especially for male athletes.

Other studies on the effects of magnesium
have found that it helps people suffering from
headaches and premenstrual syndrome,
too, so aside from its effects on physical
endurance, it is simply an excellent nutrient
to partner with calcium lactate.

Zinc – for Muscles and More
Generally, if a person is deficient in one
mineral, they are deficient in many of them.
Zinc is no exception.

Zinc helps the body heal muscles, tendons,
and ligaments in the event of small tears
that often happen when we’re active. Without
adequate zinc, however, these
tears can keep you from being active again.
In models of wounds or tissue stress, zinc
concentrations at the injured site peak after
a few days, usually around the time you
notice the strain the most.

Zinc deficiency reduces blood glutathione
levels. Glutathione is a natural antioxidant
produced by the body that protects our
cells from oxidative damage, which can
be heavy during times of intense exercise,
when the muscles require oxygen-rich red
blood cells.

Zinc is a required nutrient for T-lymphocyte
(white blood cell) activity. It helps our
body’s natural “guards” keep out potentially
dangerous invaders, including bacterial and
viral infections. It is what is known as an
“immunomodulator”, which means it assists
the immune system when the situation
demands it, but otherwise simply helps us
stay healthy.

Because zinc gluconate is not bound
as tightly, it is more readily available
to protect muscle tissues and support the
immune system, which is the reason why I
recommend it in this combination.

Calcium Means More than
Healthy Bones
It’s important to remember that minerals
– like all nutrients – have more than one
function in the body. Calcium is certainly a
prime example. By all means, I recommend
taking a properly-formulated calcium,
vitamin D, and mineral supplement for
healthy bones. But beyond bone health,
calcium plays a role in such a variety of
body systems that it makes sense to also
supplement with calcium designed for
use OUTSIDE the bones! It helps keep our
muscles moving, and our immune system
running smoothly. Magnesium – so often
cited for heart health benefits, is a must for
muscle relaxation, free-radical protection,
and respiratory health. And zinc, often listed
last, but never the least of these, is critical
for muscle and immune health – and those
are just two of its many roles!

Look for a supplement that provides the right
combination and the right types of these
minerals. Calcium lactate with magnesium
citrate in a 5 to 1 ratio for proper absorption,
and zinc gluconate for ready use by the body.
With this formula, you can avoid the aches
and pains that keep you from getting good
sleep at night, stop restless leg syndrome,
shore up your body’s immune defenses so
that stress doesn’t catch you off-guard,
and help your children stay healthy after a
long day of outside play. It’s an incredibly
effective standby that I’ve recommended for
years, and I urge you to give it a try.