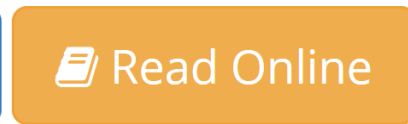


The Magnesium Solution for High Blood Pressure (The Square One Health Guides)

By Jay S. Cohen



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Migraine headaches afflict more than 30 million people in the United States, including 6 million children. Magnesium is an element that is one of the main building blocks of the body. It is involved in hundreds of body and cellular processes. Yet the great majority of Americans are deficient in magnesium. Because magnesium is essential for normal nerve, muscle, and blood vessel functioning, magnesium deficiency leads to a multiplicity of medication conditions, first and foremost migraine headaches and high blood pressure. The Magnesium Solution for Migraine Headaches explains how magnesium deficiency leaves people vulnerable to migraine attacks, how to use magnesium to overcome this vicious condition, how magnesium is safer and as effective as many prescription drugs, the best types of magnesium products to use, and the dosages that are appropriate for men and women of different ages. Dr. Jay S. Cohen is nationally renowned for his work on avoiding medication side effects via the use of better and safer natural therapies.

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Editorial Review

Review

"A timely rebuttal to the pill-first argument."

(ForeWord Reviews)

About the Author

Jay S. Cohen, MD, is an Associate Professor (Voluntary) of Family and Preventive Medicine at the University of California, San Diego. Dr. Cohen is a widely recognized expert on prescription drugs and their natural alternatives. He has published scientific papers in leading medical journals and has written articles for *Newsweek*, *Bottom Line Health*, and *Life Extension Magazine*. A highly sought-after speaker, Dr. Cohen is also the founder of the Center for the Prevention of Medication Side Effects, which offers commentary on current issues in medical care.

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According to the Joint National Committee on the Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure?the recognized experts on treating hypertension?"the goal of prevention and management of hypertension is to reduce morbidity and mortality by the least intrusive means possible."

Over 50 million Americans and 800 million people worldwide (20 percent of the adult population) have high blood pressure (hypertension). Nearly 90 percent of us will develop hypertension in our lifetimes. Hypertension is a devastating disease that damages blood vessels, causing heart attacks, strokes, and other cardiovascular diseases. For this reason, many experts consider high blood pressure more dangerous than high cholesterol. Moreover, many of the severe complications of diabetes stem from the high blood pressure that frequently accompanies it. In short, hypertension is one of the most destructive?and most inevitably destructive?diseases of human beings.

The experts on the Joint National Committee quoted above emphasize the importance of using "*the least intrusive means possible*" for treating hypertension, but in fact mainstream medicine relies almost entirely on powerful prescription drugs even when other safer, proven natural methods are all that are needed. This book is about a safe, natural, inexpensive, non-drug method for treating hypertension that has been proven effective scientifically, yet is routinely overlooked by most doctors. This book is about a simple natural element: magnesium.

When considering any treatment, whether a natural substance or a drug, you should consider the evidence. Is it convincing? Does the treatment make sense? Have studies been done? What do experts say? As you will see in this book, the evidence in all of these regards is huge and convincing for magnesium, and the experts recommending magnesium are many, representing both mainstream and alternative medicine from both the academic and clinical wings.

Scientific evidence is important, but as every medical textbook teaches, the ultimate test is how well a treatment works for individual patients. As we have seen again and again in recent years, many promising

drugs with outstanding research have proved ineffective for some patients or toxic for others, necessitating disuse or outright withdrawal. Magnesium's safety has been established over six decades. Today, magnesium is commonly used in cardiac care units for heart arrhythmias. It is used intravenously in maternity units to treat the dangerous effects of eclampsia in pregnant women.

The irony is that despite magnesium's long use in these medically high-risk situations and an extensive body of evidence from magnesium research spanning more than half a century, few medical schools teach doctors anything about magnesium's value for everyday conditions like high blood pressure and migraine headaches. As a result, most doctors aren't aware of magnesium's effectiveness for these common, often difficult-to-treat disorders. Yet, magnesium has proven its value not only in studies, but in the offices of doctors who have learned about it. If you go to a conference on integrative medicine and ask the brightest and best doctors about magnesium, they will relate dozens of experiences of using magnesium with excellent results.

My own experience mirrors this. For example, one day at the University of California, San Diego (where I'm on faculty), I got into a conversation with another professor, Fred. Although Fred exercised regularly and was in good shape, he had developed high blood pressure. "I'm eating more vegetables and fruit," Fred told me, "but my doctor still wants me to take medication. I don't want to."

Like many people, Fred was concerned about side effects, which occur frequently with antihypertensive (blood pressure-lowering) drugs. Indeed, studies have shown that half of the people started on antihypertensive drugs quit treatment within a year, most often because of side effects. Most people quit within ninety days. Drugs that affect blood vessels affect many systems of the body, so side effects can be difficult to avoid.

Because of my expertise on medication side effects, many people with hypertension have contacted me over the years asking how to find treatment they can tolerate for this destructive disease. They had tried drug after drug and got reaction after reaction and, finally, reluctantly, quit treatment. This is such a common story. My answer to such questions is reflected in my medical journal articles, books, website (www.MedicationSense.com), and in the lectures I have been asked to give at major medical conferences and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. My message consistently is about starting medications, including antihypertensive medications, at the very lowest effective doses. These doses are often 50 percent lower than those recommended by the drug companies and prescribed by doctors.

Lower doses cause fewer side effects. Some people are very sensitive to prescription drugs and do not need the strong standard doses recommended by the pharmaceutical industry. Other people need strong drug doses, but that does not mean their bodies are prepared to handle such potent doses from the start. My research demonstrates the effectiveness of these lower doses, many of which were proven effective in the drug companies' own studies, but are not marketed or even mentioned in medication package inserts or the *Physicians' Desk Reference* because drug companies like to keep dosing simple for doctors. Simple dosing translates into better sales. But it does not translate into better treatment or fewer side effects. That is why for most cases of hypertension, I advocate a "start-low go-slow" approach, and my books tell people exactly how to do this. Other experts, especially experts on hypertension, agree with this method.

However, since my own enlightenment about magnesium in 1999, I recommend taking magnesium first. Why start with strong, expensive, side-effect prone drugs when natural substances often work? From the words of Hippocrates to Thomas Edison to thousands of experts today, healing should begin with good nutrition, then natural supplements. If these do not work, then prescription drugs have a definite role. But too often today, the medical system begins with drugs. This is backwards for mild or moderate hypertension. That is why many patients today are seeking other choices, as Fred sought from me.

Fred needed treatment. At times, his blood pressure rose to 170/110 mmHg (mmHg = the unit of measure for the pressure required to raise mercury one millimeter in a sphygmomanometer, or blood pressure gauge). His diastolic pressure was always at least 100. These are high-risk levels. So I told him about magnesium. Fred was very interested. He read the studies I sent him. He got the magnesium supplement I suggested and started to take it, beginning with a low dose and increasing it gradually, as I advised.

Two months later, Fred reported that his blood pressure was normal. "My diastolic is back to 80, and even under stress it doesn't go over 90."

Knowing that Fred had tried many things, I asked, "What helped you the most?"

He replied, "I attribute the improvement to losing some weight and especially to the magnesium."

Fred was pleased. He had achieved his goal without drugs, without side effects, and without the time and expense of repeated medical visits. "My doctor is amazed," he added.

I wasn't. Since the 1960s, more than 1,000 articles on magnesium have been published in medical journals. The results are clear: Magnesium is essential for normal vascular functioning. Blood vessels require magnesium to operate properly. Deficiencies of magnesium are common and underlie many common disorders today. One of these disorders is hypertension. It is shocking, frankly, how little people know?how little *doctors* know?about this vital mineral.

One of these doctors was my best friend and one of the leading psychopharmacologists?doctors who specialize in the use of psychiatric medications?in America. Dr. Tony Weisenberger had developed high blood pressure over recent years and was taking prescription drugs. After hearing me talk about magnesium for a while, he finally decided to try it. At its highest, Tony's blood pressure had been 135/90 mmHg, which is high. Months later, on magnesium and off prescription drugs, his blood pressure was a very safe 106/60.

Not everyone responds to magnesium this impressively. Magnesium is not a panacea. Prescription drugs are sometimes necessary. Fred's numbers indicate that he may need a low dose of a prescription drug in the future. But why start with powerful, expensive, side-effect prone drugs when safer, natural methods might suffice? And even if prescription drugs are needed, so is magnesium for your blood vessels to function optimally. Besides, with magnesium, you may need fewer drugs or lower doses, both of which can reduce your risk of side effects, and your drug costs.

Adopting magnesium into the mix of antihypertensive therapies should not be difficult. Doctors are already well aware of the importance of another natural element, potassium, and they recommend it regularly to hypertensive patients. Unfortunately, doctors don't know that to obtain potassium's full effects, magnesium is also essential. Or, that when they prescribe diuretics that wash out potassium, magnesium is washed out too, worsening people's magnesium deficiencies and causing more vascular dysfunction in the long run. We must somehow balance doctors' knowledge of pharmacology with an equal knowledge of physiology, so that doctors will have greater awareness and respect for the natural substances the body uses to maintain health.

I have written this book to provide balance to patients' and doctors' awareness of the possibilities. This book provides you and your doctor with all of the information you need to understand why magnesium is essential for helping to prevent and treat high blood pressure, what you can expect from taking magnesium, and how to take it effectively. This is vital information not only because, unlike drugs, magnesium has virtually no side effects at proper amounts, but magnesium also exerts hundreds of other important effects required for the healthy functioning of your cells and body systems. Magnesium is a key player in the normal functioning

of nerves, muscles, blood vessels, bone, and the heart. So when you take magnesium, you not only help your blood pressure, but also help every cell and system in your body.

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