

## Calcium & Kidney Stones

One question we always get is regarding intake of Coral Calcium and does it create problems such as Gall or Kidney stones. An adequate daily intake of calcium (1,000-1,500 mg) along with magnesium and potassium works to control blood pressure by helping to regulate the amount of sodium your body retains. Taking too much calcium (three to four times the usual dose) can lead to such side effects as constipation, dry mouth, a continuing headache, increased thirst, irritability, loss of appetite, depression, a metallic taste in the mouth, and fatigue. To answer your question, yes, in normal doses it probably would be fine to take coral calcium supplements without concern of kidney stones in order to reduce your risk of bone thinning as long as you take them with lunch and dinner and follow some simple dietary suggestions that will help reduce your risk of kidney stone formation. Kidney stones form when urine becomes highly concentrated and the calcium oxalate it contains crystallizes (both the calcium and the oxalate come from the diet). The resulting stones then pass out of the body but en route can cause severe pain (usually in the lower back, flank and groin), difficulty urinating, blood in the urine, nausea and, sometimes, fever.

The best way to avoid kidney stones is to drink lots of water, at least six to eight glasses daily. The water dilutes the urine, reducing the risk of crystallization. You also should avoid food containing oxalate, unless you also take calcium in food or supplement form so that the calcium will bind with the oxalate making it less likely to be absorbed by the body and cause oxalate kidney stones.. Foods high in oxalate include spinach, beet greens, nuts, chocolate, and strawberries.

Coral calcium itself isn't a problem as far as kidney stones are concerned. In fact, studies have shown that the more calcium-containing foods you eat, the lower your risk of kidney stones. This was confirmed during a four-year prospective study involving more than 45,000 male health professionals with no history of kidney stones found that the men who consumed a calcium-rich diet (>1300mg calcium) experienced a 44% lower risk of symptomatic kidney stones than men who consumed 516mg calcium/ day (27). Similar findings were found in a study that followed more than 91,000 women with no history of kidney stones for 12 years (28). The women who consumed more than 1100mg calcium a day were 35% less likely to develop stones than those who consumed 430mg calcium/day or less. Another prospective study of more than 81,000 women with no history of kidney stones associated intake of calcium with decreased risk of kidney stones.

Calcium-rich foods diets may help to reduce the risk of kidney stones.

Researchers believe that calcium binds with oxalate in the intestine which cannot absorb the combination. The calcium oxalate then is eliminated with fecal matter. This lowers the amount of calcium and oxalate your body otherwise would have to eliminate in urine and prevents crystallization of calcium oxalate in the kidneys.

The researchers who conducted the study speculated that calcium supplements should always be taken with food, and usually not at breakfast, the meal least likely to contain foods with oxalates. As a result, the calcium will then be able to bind with oxalate in the intestines, decreasing chances that both will be present, and decreasing the opportunity for them to crystallize in the urine and cause kidney stone formation.

True, this speculation is just a theory, but most experts think that the suggestions are worth a try and unlikely to backfire and result in kidney stone formation.

But, if you have a history of coral calcium - kidney stones, be sure to drink lots of water, avoid caffeine which seems to increase urinary calcium, decrease intake of animal protein which increases the risk of stone formation, limit your salt intake (salt increases urinary calcium excretion), consume potassium and bran fiber in foods, because both can reduce urinary levels of calcium.