



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Coral Calcium

This information describes the common uses of Coral Calcium, how it works, and its possible side effects.

Tell your healthcare providers about any dietary supplements you're taking, such as herbs, vitamins, minerals, and natural or home remedies. This will help them manage your care and keep you safe.

## What is it?

Coral calcium has not been shown to treat or prevent cancer, and is not superior to other forms of calcium supplements.

Coral calcium supplements contain calcium and magnesium. However, there is no evidence that these supplements are any better than typical calcium supplements available at lower cost. In addition, claims that coral calcium can maintain a proper pH balance in the human body or that it has anticancer properties are not supported by scientific evidence.

Please see our entry on [calcium](#) for more information about getting this mineral through diet or from supplements.

## What are the potential uses and benefits?

- **To treat arthritis**  
No laboratory or clinical studies have evaluated coral calcium for arthritis.
- **To prevent cancer**  
This claim is not backed by research.
- **To treat diabetes**  
No scientific evidence supports this use.
- **To alleviate fatigue**  
This use is not supported by any evidence.
- **To prevent and treat osteoporosis**  
One animal study suggests that the effects of coral calcium are largely similar to those of calcium carbonate.

## What are the side effects?

- Constipation
- Flatulence
- Chalky taste
- Dry mouth

- Nausea

## What else do I need to know?

### Patient Warnings:

- The FTC has prohibited marketers of coral calcium products from making disease treatment and cure claims in advertising.
- Tests on a number of coral calcium supplements by an independent lab identified one that contained excessive amounts of lead.

### Do Not Take if:

- You have high blood levels of calcium or low blood levels of phosphate: Patients should consult their doctor before taking calcium supplements.

### Special Point:

- Coral calcium supplements may cost more than other calcium supplements that have similar effects on the body.
- Oral coral calcium supplements should not be confused with the coral matrix used in surgery and bone grafting.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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