Calcium and Mineral Deficiency With AFib

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One Mineral Deficiency Associated with AFib

Over the years, I've seen many patients who have had a problem with atrial fibrillation or AFib. This is a condition in which the two parts of your heart that create your heartbeat – the atria – are not beating in time and right on schedule. The left atrium and right atrium are beating too fast and irregularly. Did you know that calcium and AFib can be connected; read on to learn more about that.

Nutritional Shortages Tied to AFib

From a nutritional perspective, AFib may occur because there are several imbalances between vitamins and minerals. These imbalances can cause electrical imbalances. One of the most important minerals to correct and prevent AFib is calcium. Calcium helps regulate the heartbeat and assists in blood clotting.

Many people think that the only purpose of calcium is the building of bones and teeth but it's also quite important for heart function. Calcium deficiency is very common, especially in the elderly population. It causes symptoms such as muscle cramps and numbness and tingling in the arms and legs. Joint pains, insomnia, irritability of the nerves and muscles, heart palpitations and a slow pulse rate. In severe deficiency, hemorrhaging, slow blood clotting, tooth problems and osteoporosis (brittle bones) occurs.

Stop the Excess Coffee Consumption

Coffee may be tied to AFib as well. One of my patients had been drinking five cups of coffee daily and felt his heart fluttering in his chest. He knew intuitively that the coffee was causing it. I advised him to cut out the coffee slowly to avoid caffeine withdrawal symptoms and increase his calcium and magnesium. The two minerals work well together; magnesium increases the absorption of calcium.

One reason why coffee can cause AFib is that coffee tends to be an acidic liquid. Acidic foods and beverages will pull calcium out of the bones just to metabolize them. Other acidic foods include sweets and processed foods, two types of foods common in many people's diets today.

After about a week, my patient's AFib was gone.

The amount of calcium needed per day depends on whether or not you're male or female. Females who are pregnant or lactating need 1200 mg to 1500 mg daily while males generally need 800 mg (along with females not lactating or pregnant). You'll find about 250-300 mg of calcium in a cup of yogurt or milk; however, there's no magnesium there with the calcium and will still need half the amount of calcium intake as magnesium. I.e., if you need 800 mg of calcium per day, the corresponding amount of magnesium will be 400 mg.