

# Hypercalcemia



## What Is Hypercalcemia?

Hypercalcemia happens when there is too much calcium in your blood. Certain glands in your neck help to control how much calcium is in your body. When these glands don't work the way they should, you could get hypercalcemia. Other causes include:

- Certain health conditions, like cancer
- Certain medicines, like lithium
- Being bedridden
- Taking too many calcium and vitamin D supplements



## What Are the Warning Signs of Hypercalcemia?

Too much calcium can cause damage to your body. If you have a mild form, you might not have any signs or symptoms. If it is more severe, symptoms may include:

- Kidney stones
- Extreme thirst and frequent urination
- Stomach pain and constipation
- Feeling sick to your stomach and throwing up
- Broken bones and bone pain
- Muscle weakness
- Irregular heartbeat
- Confusion and feeling tired



## How Is Hypercalcemia Diagnosed?

- You may need a blood test to see if you have too much calcium in your blood and if your glands are working the way they should.
- A urine test can measure the amount of calcium in your urine.
- X-rays and other imaging tests of your lungs or bones can show other causes of hypercalcemia, such as cancer.



## How Is Hypercalcemia Treated?

You might not need any treatment if you have mild symptoms. You and your doctor should monitor your condition over time. This is to be sure that your bones, kidneys, and other organs stay healthy. Medicine can control some of the symptoms and reduce damage to your body. Some people require surgery to remove the glands that aren't working the way they should. If another health condition is causing the hypercalcemia, it should be treated.

Hypercalcemia can be a medical emergency. If you have extremely high calcium levels in your blood, you may need to be hospitalized. This is so a doctor can reduce your calcium levels and monitor you regularly.

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## Questions for My Doctor

- What is causing my hypercalcemia?
- How severe is my hypercalcemia?
- What are my treatment options?
- What are the side effects of treatment?
- What can I do to reduce the symptoms of hypercalcemia?
- How will having hypercalcemia affect my everyday life?
- Are there any foods I need to stop eating?



## Bottom Line

- Hypercalcemia happens when there is too much calcium in your blood. Too much calcium can damage your kidneys and weaken your bones. It can also affect how your heart and brain function.
- Many people do not have symptoms. The most common symptoms are kidney stones, thirst, digestive issues, broken bones, feeling tired and weak, and irregular heartbeats.
- If you have mild hypercalcemia that does not cause any symptoms, you might not need treatment. If your symptoms are more severe, you may need to have surgery to remove your glands.
- If the hypercalcemia is caused by another health condition, that condition will need treatment. Any damage to your kidneys or bones will also need treatment.

**For More Information**

- **Medline Plus:** [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000365.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000365.htm)

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