

## **The Calcification of America: It's Good for Business**

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Henry Schroeder, MD observed that “minerals are the spark plugs of life.” However, with all of his scientific wisdom and medical experience, he didn't clarify whether there are priorities among minerals and their healthy metabolism. Guy Abraham, MD gave us some clues in his 1982 article that, in essence, pointed to a major health problem with the excessive calcification of the American people. He pointed out that magnesium is necessary for the proper healthy metabolism of calcium, i.e. putting calcium into the bones and not into the soft tissues. Any metabolic breakdown or disturbance in calcium metabolism that deposits this mineral into soft tissues joints, arteries, and organs rather than bone is a significant health problem. Are there laboratory data that support the view that, as Dr. Abraham observed over 30 years ago, our population is heavily over calcified?

The Hair Tissue Mineral Analysis (HTMA) provides the mineral data that validate Dr. Schroeder's and Dr. Abraham's wisdom and medical experience. Over 35 years ago, the pioneering HTMA research of Drs. Paul Eck and David Watts led to a much deeper understanding of (1) the problem of soft tissue calcification and (2) how pervasive the calcification problem had become, producing serious health consequences both mentally and physically. What Eck and Watts realized is that learning to understand the basic workings of the mind/body's mineral system makes so many health issues much clearer. This was especially true of the problem of soft tissue calcification.

HTMA data reveal that 80 % of the population has slow metabolic type mineral patterns that are characterized by elevated levels of calcium. These elevated calcium levels reflect soft tissue calcium depositions. The tissue location of these calcium deposits are likely to vary in different individuals. Calcium spurs on the heels or the spine are common locations. Calcium deposits in the arteries contribute to cardio-vascular disease. Calcium deposits in the joints contribute to arthritis. Calcium deposits in the kidneys contribute to renal disease. High calcium levels in HTMAs are also associated with psychological problems that manifest as depression, bipolar disorder, post-partum depression, ADD, anxiety and panic disorder, anger and rage reactions, and higher risks for addictions.

If excessive calcification is so unhealthy, how did this come about that such a large proportion of the population now shows clear signs of calcification in HTMAs? When we take an historical perspective, we can begin with the heavy marketing of dairy products in the last century. People were led to believe that they needed a lot of dairy products in their daily diet to be sure that they were taking in adequate amounts of calcium to build strong bones and teeth.

Are there other factors that are known to contribute to soft tissue calcification? Female contraceptives have played a substantial role. Estrogen in the birth control pill tends to raise copper levels in cells and tissues, often to excessive levels resulting in excess copper storage in the liver and in the brain. Copper IUDs also had the effect of building up excess copper levels. As excess copper builds up in these organs, the copper tends to raise the soft tissue calcium levels. Hormone replacement

therapy with estrogen had the same effect as estrogen in the “pill”, namely, increasing copper levels that, in turn, raised the soft tissue calcium levels.

During the past 25 years, there has been a strong push to detect trends towards osteoporosis with X-ray screening of bones. These screening procedures often detected “osteopenia”, an early stage of osteoporosis that could be treated with powerful drugs such as Fosomax or Actonel that altered bone metabolism. Extra calcium supplementation was also recommended with these drugs. These calcium supplements also added to soft tissue calcification. Conspicuous by its absence was any mention of the importance of magnesium for healthy calcium metabolism and depositing calcium in the bones.

More recently, vitamin D deficiency has been detected in blood serum tests on a massive scale with doctors prescribing large doses of vitamin D. So much vitamin D supplementation is adding to the soft tissue calcification problem.

Other problems associated with elevation of HTMA calcium levels and soft tissue calcification are thyroid and adrenal gland dysfunctions, usually hypothyroid and adrenal burn out.

We have a better understanding of how stress impacts our mineral system and, ultimately, our mental and physical health. We know that stress quickly depletes magnesium and brings on symptoms of magnesium deficiency. These may include atrial fibrillation and other cardio-vascular problems. Glucose regulation and addiction problems also occur with magnesium deficiency.