

Module 2.3 - Magnesium citrate and vitamin C

Welcome back to Module 2 of The Constipation Masterclass.

In this video we will be discussing our first level of supplemental support for constipation - using magnesium citrate and vitamin C in combination to achieve a well-formed bowel motion daily. This is the gentlest option and we encourage everyone to start here and try to make this level work for them.

In the following 3 videos we will be discussing different forms of magnesium supplementation, in combination with vitamin C or herbal ingredients that help with shifting constipation. These are products we typically recommend to clients in our clinical practice. Each combination is a little 'stronger' than the one before so we recommend starting with this combination first, then progressing onto the others if needed.

You may like to refer to your handouts for this module for more detail as we work through the slides.

All supplement recommendations should be reviewed by your doctor or health practitioner before use to ensure they are right for you. If you are pregnant or nursing your safest choice for supplementation is likely Level 1 - magnesium citrate and vitamin C. Again, you will need to confirm this with your practitioner.

The products listed are example brands and products that both I and my clients have used. For most products, there are a number of reputable brands on websites like Amazon and iHerb that provide quality products for you to select from. Focus on the specific ingredients and not so much on the brand.

Example brands for magnesium citrate are Natural Factors and Pure Encapsulations. For vitamin C; Thorne Research for an unbuffered version which is pure ascorbic acid or Life Extension for a buffered version of vitamin C that generally works better for anyone with upper GI symptoms like reflux. Links to where you can access these products are provided in the handout, specific to Australia and New Zealand, USA and Canada and the UK. If you live outside of these countries you can still look for these brands or alternative products that contain the same ingredients.

Let's talk through dosages and titration. Again, I'd recommend having your handouts for this module available because they include lots of detail to help with this. Titration basically means adding in a supplement really slowly and by small increments each day so you can track tolerance and how much product is required for you. If you add in more than 1 product

at a time, or move straight to maximum dose it's hard to know what's working. Titration helps us track whether a product is helpful and at what quantities and frequency.

As a reminder, you can use the Magnesium Needs Self-Assessment handout to work out your estimated daily magnesium need for constipation so you know the approximate level of magnesium you are building up to when titrating.

Basically, we are titrating, or increasing very slowly, to 1-4 capsules or around 150-600mg of magnesium citrate 1-2 times daily, and 2-4 capsules or around 500-1000mg of vitamin C 1-2 times daily.

This is not an exact science so you will need to experiment and play around with the quantities listed. In general, takes up to 1 week or more to work out the ideal amount of magnesium citrate and vitamin C you need for chronic constipation. This is because the levels of magnesium citrate and vitamin C need to build up in your body before they become effective with drawing liquid into your stools.

Listen to your body and use symptoms as a guide. Try titrating as follows and only increase your dosage if the desired effect of a well-formed bowel motion daily is not achieved:

Day 1: Start magnesium citrate, 1 capsule with a full glass of water before breakfast and at least 1 hour after dinner.

Day 2: Increase magnesium citrate further, 2 capsules with a full glass of water before breakfast and at least 1 hour after dinner.

Day 3: Start vitamin C, 1 capsule with a full glass of water before breakfast and at least 1 hour after dinner. To be really clear, vitamin C is adding to the magnesium citrate you are already taking.

Day 4: Increase vitamin C, 2 capsules with a full glass of water before breakfast and at least 1 hour after dinner.

Day 5: Hold supplements here and note whether there is any change in bowel motions. It can take up to 3 days for magnesium to start working so we don't want to increase too quickly and cause very loose bowel motions. This might be all the product you need to achieve a well formed bowel motion daily. If this is the case that's great and you can stop here. If not, please move on.

Day 6: If there is still no change in bowel motions, please increase magnesium citrate, 3 capsules with a full glass of water before breakfast and at least 1 hour after dinner. Vitamin C continues.

Day 7: Hold supplements here and note whether there is any change in bowel motions.

Day 8: If there is still no change in bowel motions, please increase magnesium citrate, 4 capsules with a full glass of water before breakfast and at least 1 hour after dinner. If this dose doesn't work within 3 days, you will likely need to upgrade to Level 2.

To help with titration, we have included a table that lists the days and what you should be taking each day as you move through the titration process. This is a visual representation of what I have just spoken through.

If you haven't noticed any change in your bowel motions using the maximum doses we have recommended so far, and you feel comfortable doing so or have discussed with your practitioner, you may like to consider increasing magnesium citrate further by 1 capsule before breakfast and after dinner each day until you achieve a well-formed bowel motion. Please don't exceed 1600mg of magnesium citrate daily.

If you are at the very maximum quantities for both magnesium citrate and vitamin C and still aren't achieving a well-formed bowel motion daily after at least 3 days at the highest dose, you will need to move onto Level 2 covered in the next video.

In your handouts we have included information about problem solving considerations and contraindications.

For magnesium citrate, please don't exceed 1600mg of magnesium total per day and aim to keep below 1200mg. If you struggle with taking too many capsules with breakfast and dinner you can divide your magnesium into 3 doses and add the third dose 1 hour or more after lunchtime.

We have included the WebMD Magnesium Citrate Side Effects and Interactions for you to review.

Vitamin C is considered safe for most people and you can likely take up to 5,000mg daily. Please don't supplement with vitamin C if you have a history of kidney stones, heartburn, reflux or upper GI symptoms that are exacerbated by vitamin C.

Again, we have listed the WebMD Vitamin C Side Effects and Interactions for you to review.

As with all supplements, it is recommended to consult with your doctor or health practitioner before use.

If you are unable to achieve a well-formed bowel motion daily using magnesium citrate at the quantities indicated by the 'Magnesium Needs Self-Assessment' handout and the upper levels of vitamin C indicated in the titration plan, please review the next video for Level 2 supplementation support for clearing constipation.