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CALCIUM SUPPLEMENTS AFTER MENOPAUSE: RISK OF KIDNEY STONE?

Osteoporosis is a silent evil that threatens lives of the elderly, especially after menopause in women. The weakened bones may easily break by a simple fall and this can be the beginning of a series of bad events that ultimately cause disability. That is why prevention is so important in older women. Calcium supplements, which are usually combined with vitamin D, are the first line of preventive measures. But does too much calcium in blood cause any problem? Like kidney stones? To answer this question, Dr Haghighi and his colleagues in Tehran started a research project on women at the age of menopause. The participants received calcium and vitamin D supplements for 1 year and their urine was examined for calcium levels. Dr Haghighi and colleagues reported that calcium levels were not different in these women after 1 year. They also reported that only 1 out of 53 women had a kidney stone after 1 year. This means calcium supplements are not likely to lead to the formation of kidney stones. The chance of having a stone after 1 year, however, needs to be compared with another group of women with no calcium supplementation, as kidney stone formation may be as common as 1 in 53 in all women at this age.

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HOW MANY KIDNEY I CAN HAVE?

Kidney transplantation is the best option for most patients lose their kidneys. But the transplanted kidneys usually have a limited potential to stay in good condition for a long time. Many patients may lose the transplant kidney after 10 to 15 years, and they will again need replacement for their kidneys. The chances of living long enough is even lower on dialysis in those who go back to hemodialysis units after losing their transplanted kidneys. Therefore, in many cases the patient will be considered for another kidney transplant. But the question is that how many times one can get a new kidney. In theory, there is no limitation, other than some surgical technique difficulties because of multiple previous operations and the need for stronger medications after transplantation. In really, there are some cases of more than 1 or 2 repeat kidney transplantations. Dr Nourbala and his colleagues in Tehran have reported their experience with a 4th transplant in a man who received his first transplant at the age of 18 years and then lost his transplanted kidneys 3 times. They transplanted a 4th kidney when the patient was 49 years old and until the time of their report, he was doing well after 3 years of having his new kidney. The researchers believe that with advancements in surgical techniques and medicine, nowadays, patients with kidney disease can have several transplant surgeries.

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