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The full report is titled “Effects of Calcium Supplementation on Body Weight and Adiposity in Overweight and Obese Adults. A Randomized Trial.” It is in the 16 June 2009 issue of *Annals of Internal Medicine* (volume 150, pages 821-829). The authors are J.A. Yanovski, S.J. Parikh, L.B. Yanoff, B.I. Denkinger, K.A. Calis, J.C. Reynolds, N.G. Sebring, and T. McHugh.

Can Calcium Pills Help People Lose Weight?

What is the problem and what is known about it so far?

Researchers have found that persons who eat less dairy foods weigh more. The finding suggests that calcium may be related to weight. Small research studies hint that calcium supplements might promote weight loss for persons already on a weight-loss diet. It would be important to know if taking calcium pills promotes weight loss because they are widely available, inexpensive, and safe, and persons might use them to lose weight and prevent illness that comes from weighing too much.

Why did the researchers do this particular study?

To see if calcium supplements prevent weight gain or promote weight loss.

Who was studied?

340 otherwise-healthy overweight and obese persons.

How was the study done?

The researchers weighed each participant. They then randomly assigned half of the participants to take calcium pills with meals and the other half to take placebo pills. The researchers collected information about participants' weight and diet over the next 2 years and compared weight change in the 2 groups.

What did the researchers find?

Both groups gained weight and did not differ in weight change.

What were the limitations of the study?

The study used calcium pills, and findings might be different if high-calcium food was used instead. Most participants were women, so the findings might not fully reflect effects in men.

What are the implications of the study?

Calcium supplements do not promote weight loss or prevent weight gain in persons who are overweight or obese.

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