

Vitamin D - What You Need to Know

This month I would like to talk about one of the most important and powerful nutrients in nature, Vitamin D. Vitamin D is currently one of the most researched nutrients in the world. In our office we are seeing great results with Vitamin D. Here are some facts about this amazing nutrient.

First, Vitamin D is not really a vitamin, but a hormone. It is involved in numerous body processes, including calcium metabolism, immune function, reduction of pain, anti-inflammatory action, etc.

In my practice I rarely see people with acceptable Vitamin D levels in their blood. This includes people who spend a fair amount of time outside. Many of my colleagues tell me they see deficiencies in their patients as well. For this reason, I recommend everybody have a blood test for Vitamin D levels. The test is inexpensive (about \$45.00). The most current research indicates that optimal blood levels are somewhat higher than what was previously considered ideal.

A Vitamin D level below **25 nmol/L** is an indication of a state of **Severe Deficiency** which may result in active mineral loss from the bones, leading to osteoporosis as well as other health problems.

Levels between **30 and 50 nmol/L** in the blood indicate a **Deficiency** and may result in significant muscle weakness as well as other health problems.

Levels between **50 and 80 nmol/L** indicate an **Insufficiency**. For the elderly, a level of **Insufficiency** may be anything **under 100nmol/L**.

For **Normal** cellular function a blood Vitamin D level **greater than 80 nmol/L** is necessary.

A level of **125 or higher nmol/L** is necessary for “**storing**” Vitamin D in your body. It is important to have Vitamin D stored for periods when sunlight is scarce and food sources of Vitamin D are inadequate.

How much is too much? The government recommended daily intake of Vitamin D is 400 IU (International Units). Many traditionally trained doctors become overly concerned about Vitamin D toxicity when intake is higher than 400 IU a day, but no toxicity has been reported with Vitamin D blood levels even as high as 500 nmol/L. In fact, the issue of toxicity is largely exaggerated, according to the most current research. If you went outside on a summer day in your swimsuit and stayed out just long enough to get pink (not burned), your body would make between 10,000 and 50,000 IU of Vitamin D. That is many times higher than the RDI of 400 IU.

Dr. Reinhold Vieth states that human toxicity probably begins to occur after chronic daily consumption of about 40,000 IU a day. Even then, many cases of so called toxicity are actually due to Vitamin D sensitivity. Sensitivity is usually caused by some underlying disease such as sarcoidosis and some cancers.

What can Vitamin D do for you? Here are some of its benefits.

- Higher blood levels of Vitamin D are associated with much lower incidence rates of colon, breast, ovarian, kidney, pancreatic, and aggressive prostate and other cancers.
- Vitamin D helps prevent and reverse osteoporosis
- It helps in cases of psoriasis
- Vitamin D boosts the immune system to fight off infections and prevent illness.
- It can be used to help prevent and treats Multiple Sclerosis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Types I and II Diabetes, Hashimoto's Hypothyroid and Graves Disease and other autoimmune diseases.
- It helps lower high blood pressure and reduces heart attack and stroke risk
- It aids in controlling chronic pain
- It helps seasonal depression
- Vitamin D can increase muscle strength up to 20%
- It increases the seizure threshold in epilepsy
- It may prevent and ameliorate Autism

Current literature recommends an adult take up to 10,000 IU per day and that children four to twelve years old may take 4000 IU a day. However, we recommend everyone have a blood test to first determine their Vitamin D levels and then repeat the test at regular intervals until the desired blood level is achieved.

To be able to produce enough Vitamin D from the sun, a person would need to go out at a time when their shadow is shorter than their height. A sunshine angle that creates a shadow longer than a person's height may not be adequate to produce Vitamin D in the body. It is not advantageous to stay in the sun long enough to burn. It's best to come back inside at the first sign of pink skin.

The question of sun blocks or sunscreen often comes up when talking about Vitamin D and the sun. Recent research indicates that sun blocks are harmful and may actually increase the rate of skin cancer. While you do not want to let your skin get burned, we do not recommend the use of sunscreen. Research also indicates that a deficiency of omega 3 fats in relation to the Omega 6 fats is a major factor in skin cancer. A wide brimmed hat and a light colored long sleeved shirt and pants are a good alternative to sunscreen when outside long enough to get burned. A big beach umbrella may also prove helpful.

The time of cold weather is here, bringing with it colds and flu. Vitamin D goes a long way in preventing these.

Another Note: If, in spite of preventive measures, illness still strikes, there are a couple of options that will almost always knock out the flu or a cold before it gets going. We recommend **Guna Flu** (a homeopathic medicine) and **Allimax**, for treating an acute flu or cold. These are both very effective. A $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp to 1 tsp. serving of **XPC** nutritional powder each day is beneficial for strengthening the immune system. We have all these products available in our office.

Copyright 2010 – Dr. Vernon S. Redd