

Vitamin D is one of several major cancer fighters. Two new meta-analysis studies (meta-analysis combines data from multiple reports) showed that people with the highest levels of vitamin D had the lowest risk of breast cancer. The reverse is also true. Those with the lowest levels of vitamin D had the highest risks of breast cancer. Many Americans over 50 are deficient in vitamin D.

A study has shown that 600 IUs (international units) of vitamin D is sufficient to lower the risk of pancreatic cancer by 41 percent. Studies have also shown that vitamin D is effective against Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, and tuberculosis. As a matter of fact, recent studies find that low vitamin D levels are associated with much higher risks of developing multiple sclerosis.

Although the current recommended daily allowance of vitamin D is 400 IUs (international units), a recent study found that by raising the amount considerably will reduce the risk of developing colon cancer by 50 percent. It doesn't matter if the extra vitamin D comes from the sun or from food or supplements. Edward Gorham, Ph.D., a research epidemiologist with the Naval Health Research Center in San Diego, found from his studies that 1,000 IUs to 2,000 IUs of vitamin D daily will achieve this 50 percent reduction of colon cancer risk.

Vitamin D is found in animal foods such as liver and egg yolks and in fatty fish such as salmon. Cod liver oil is an excellent source of this vitamin. Too much vitamin D can be toxic. Vitamin D from sunlight and unfortified food sources are not a problem. Toxicity can be a problem when the source of vitamin D is from supplements fortified foods (milk, yogurt, margarine and breakfast cereals.)

Researchers from the Moore Cancer Center at the University of California San Diego say that if vitamin D levels among the world population were increased, 600,000 cases of breast and colorectal cancers could be prevented each year. 150,000 of those cases are in the United States alone.

Vitamin D and Chronic Disease

Growing up I remember spending hour upon hour playing outside-especially during the spring and summer months. As a matter of fact, my brothers and sisters were not unique in that respect. Every family enjoyed the outdoors in the sun.

In those days there was no media blitz warning people to beware of the sun for fear of developing skin cancer. So naturally people spent more time in sunlight without rubbing layers of sunblock on themselves.

'In 1989, around the time autism began to rise, the American Medical Association's (AMA) Council on Scientific Affairs first warned about the dangers of sun exposure, advising mothers to "keep infants out of the sun as much as possible." In 1999, when autism rates really exploded, the American Academy of Pediatrics went further, advising mothers always to keep infants out of direct sunlight, use sun protective clothes and sunblock, and make sure children's activities minimize sunlight exposure. Quite inexplicably, they said there was "no evidence" such "rigorous

sun protection" would affect vitamin D levels. By 2002, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported such efforts were quite successful: "protection from sun exposure is reported for a high proportion of children" (<http://www.vitamindcouncil.org/health/autism/role-of-sunlight.shtml>.)

Sunlight is the most efficient means for renewing the body's stores of vitamin D. The production of vitamin D from the ultraviolet rays of the sun (UVB) making contact with the skin beats any oral intake of it by a factor of 10! As a matter of fact, a fair-skinned person bathing in the sun for about 20 minutes will produce 20,000 IUs (international units) of vitamin D. But, the darker a person's skin, the more sun exposure is necessary. An African-American needs to spend two or more hours in the sun to create an equivalent amount of vitamin D.

Critical sunlight exposure becomes even more important for those of us who live in the northern latitudes. Sunlight is not as strong and is almost nonexistent in the winter months. Dr. Joseph Mercola (www.mercola.com) believes that the imbalance between omega-6/omega-3 fatty acids standard in the American diet is the cause of a higher risk of developing skin cancer from excess sun.

Dr. Mercola says, "But, even with the potential increase in skin cancer, most skin cancers are relatively benign when compared with breast, colon, and prostate cancers that lack of sun exposure is associated with. So you can't have it both ways. Avoid the sun and don't change your diet and you may lower your risk of skin cancer, but increase your risk of far more common and deadlier cancers. So why not change the fat content of your diet and use sensible sun exposure guidelines and reap the benefits of sunlight?"

Up until the sunlight/skin cancer scare tactics of the AMA and the CDC (Centers for Disease Control), 90 percent of vitamin D came from sunlight. Today what little we get comes predominately from our diets. And believe it or not, the American Cancer Society (ACS) is opposed to vitamin D supplementation. According to the strategic director of nutritional epidemiology, no one should take supplements to prevent cancer!

The AI (adequate intake) which has been established for vitamin D is as follows:

- * ages 19 thru 50- 200 IUs
- * ages 51 thru 69- 400 IUs
- * ages 70 plus- 600 IUs

Many non-traditional medical practitioners-those not wed to the AMA, sunscreen manufacturers and/or the pharmaceutical industry-think that those numbers are woefully inadequate. They contend that 1,000 IUs or more are necessary in today's society. One epidemiologist found from his studies that 1,000 to 2,000 IUs of vitamin D were necessary to achieve a 50 percent reduction in colon cancer risk.

Consider the following-vitamin D has been shown by studies to be effective against breast, prostate and other forms of cancer, Parkinson's disease, Multiple Sclerosis, and tuberculosis. As a matter of fact, vitamin D has been shown to prevent 77 percent of all cancers! And the most

efficient and readily available source of it, sunlight, is absolutely free of charge.

Sadly, many people have been frightened of the sun by news of the development of skin cancer by those who stand to gain by treating disease and selling sunscreen concoctions which themselves contain carcinogenic substances. One of the consequences of such negative advertising is that pregnant and soon to be pregnant women have a vitamin D deficiency.

This translates into a high percentage of their newborns being deficient too. The deficiency existed even though most of the women (90%) took their prenatal vitamins during pregnancy. Another consequence is that breast cancer is the number one cancer killer of women.

A recent study concerning vitamin D deficiency among pregnant women revealed another disturbing statistic. The study which was performed by researchers from the University of Pittsburgh shows that 80 percent of African-American women and 92.4 percent of their newborns were vitamin D deficient. This is compared with about 50 percent white women and 66.1 percent of their newborns. Researchers say that the children of mothers with low vitamin D levels may be at a greater risk of developing rickets, a softening of the bones, type 1 diabetes, and asthma.

One possibility for the disparity between African-American women and white women is that organizations such as the American Cancer Society and the American Medical Association are not educating African-Americans about sun exposure. Darker complexions which is caused by greater levels of melanin require longer exposure to sunlight than lighter-skinned individuals to achieve the same results.

This lack of education is a virtual death blow to African-American women from breast cancer and to African-American men from prostate cancer. African-American men are 60 percent more likely to develop prostate cancer than whites, and twice as likely to die from it than any other group.

Breast cancer is more prevalent in white women than African-American women. However when a young, African-American woman does develop breast cancer, she is a lot more likely to have a highly aggressive and deadly form. "It's been long known that breast cancer in African-American women is a far less common disease than in white women. But when it occurs, it seems to be more aggressive and harder to treat," said study co-author Dr. Lisa Carey of the University of North Carolina's Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Since 77 percent of all cancers (breast, colon, prostate, and others) can be prevented, why don't the ACS and government agencies provide that information to the American people? The answer is there is a conflict of interest. They have links to the pharmaceutical industry. Cancer prevention as opposed to treatment would represent billions of dollars in lost revenue to Big Pharma.

It is much more profitable to 'treat' cancer over a patient's lifetime rather than cure the disease and forever lose that patient. So the ACS pretends to look for a cure while fully aware of the

research and studies proving the potency of vitamin D and sunlight.

Vitamin D is vital to your health. Be proactive and get adequate sunlight for your skin type. For those living in northern climates, supplementation may be necessary in the winter months. The vitamin D in most supplements and in milk is the synthetic form, D2 (ergocalciferol.)

The natural form of vitamin D, D3, is converted by our bodies 500 percent faster than D2. That being said, I recommend getting supplemental vitamin D from cod liver oil. The brand I use (Carlson's) is very good and it contains lemon oil to appeal to those who hate the taste of cod liver oil.

However, get enough sunlight exposure when the weather permits. And remember, the darker your complexion, the more sunlight you need. The high prostate cancers in African-American men and high breast cancers in African-American women can be addressed by much more sunlight than we have been accustomed to getting.