

D3: *The Sunshine Vitamin*

Dr. Joseph Mercola

It is estimated that up to 85% of people have insufficient levels of vitamin D and are unaware of their deficient state.

While conventional media and medicine promote sun avoidance, doing so can actually put your health in grave danger and cause vitamin D deficiency!

The Role of Vitamin D in Disease Prevention

A growing body of evidence shows that vitamin D plays a crucial role in disease prevention and maintaining optimal health. There are about 30,000 genes in your body, and vitamin D affects nearly 3,000 of them, as well as vitamin D receptors located throughout your body.

According to one large-scale study, optimal vitamin D levels can slash your risk of cancer by as much as 60 percent. Keeping your levels optimized can help prevent at least 16 different types of cancer, including pancreatic, lung, ovarian, prostate, and skin cancers. Moreover, vitamin D can build your defenses against cancer by:

- Enhancing the self-destruction of mutated cells (which can replicate and cause cancer).
- Slowing down the production and spread of cancer cells.
- Helping in the differentiation of cells (cancer cells are not differentiated).
- Preventing the formation of new blood vessels from pre-existing ones (this can help stop the progress of benign

tumors into cancerous ones).

Vitamin D can also help reduce the risk of other conditions as well, including type 2 diabetes, chronic inflammation, age-related macular degeneration (the leading cause of blindness), and Alzheimer's disease.

Vitamin D also exhibits its infection-fighting abilities in the treatment of tuberculosis, pneumonia, colds, and flu. It can also improve seizure control in epileptics.

While scientists refer to vitamin D as a vitamin, it is actually a steroid hormone obtained from sun exposure, food sources, and supplementation. Common types of vitamin D are vitamin D2 and D3. Compared to D2, vitamin D3 is 87 percent more effective, and is the preferred form for addressing insufficient levels of vitamin D.

The Vitamin D Epidemic in the United States

Today, many Americans are found to be in a serious deficiency state. Over 95 percent of senior citizens in the US may possibly be deficient, along with 85 percent of Americans. The late winter average vitamin D level was found to be about 15 to 18 ng/ml, which is far below optimal levels.

Cases of vitamin D deficiency are also seen more frequently in individuals (of all ages) that have increased skin pigmentation, including those whose ancestors are from Africa, the Middle East, or South Asia.

This deficiency problem also applies to people who often use sun protection, or those who spend more time indoors than outdoors. Regardless of skin pigmentation, deficiency can be even worse if they live in northern latitudes, as there is very little sun exposure.

The Vitamin D and Vitamin K2 Connection

Another critical point to remember is you shouldn't take any vitamin D supplement without taking vitamin K2. Vitamin K2 deficiency is connected to vitamin D toxicity symptoms, which includes excessive calcification that can contribute to the hardening of your arteries.

One of the functions of vitamin K2 is to direct calcium to areas in your body where it is needed, such as your bones and teeth. It also functions to keep calcium away from areas where it shouldn't be, including your soft tissues and arteries.

According to Dr. Kate Rheaume-Bleue, author of *Vitamin K2 and the Calcium Paradox: How a Little Known Vitamin Could Save Your Life*:

“When you take vitamin D, your body creates more of these vitamin K2-dependent proteins, the proteins that will move the calcium around. They have a lot of potential health benefits. But until the K2 comes in to activate those

proteins, those benefits aren't realized. So, really, if you're taking vitamin D, you're creating an increased demand for K2. And vitamin D and K2 work together to strengthen your bones and improve your heart health.

...For so long, we've been told to take calcium for osteoporosis... and vitamin D, which we know is helpful. But then, more studies are coming out showing that increased calcium intake is causing more heart attacks and strokes. That created a lot of confusion around whether calcium is safe or not. But that's the wrong question to be asking, because we'll never properly understand the health benefits of calcium or vitamin D,

unless we take into consideration K2. That's what keeps the calcium in its right place"

The optimal ratios between vitamin D and K2 have yet to be determined. However, Dr. Rheaume-Bleue recommends that for every 1,000 IUs of vitamin D, you can benefit from about 100 to 200 micrograms of vitamin K2.

Healthy Sun Exposure

I strongly recommend ample sunlight exposure as your main source of vitamin D, as the sun provides beneficial UVB wavelengths that are needed to optimize your levels.

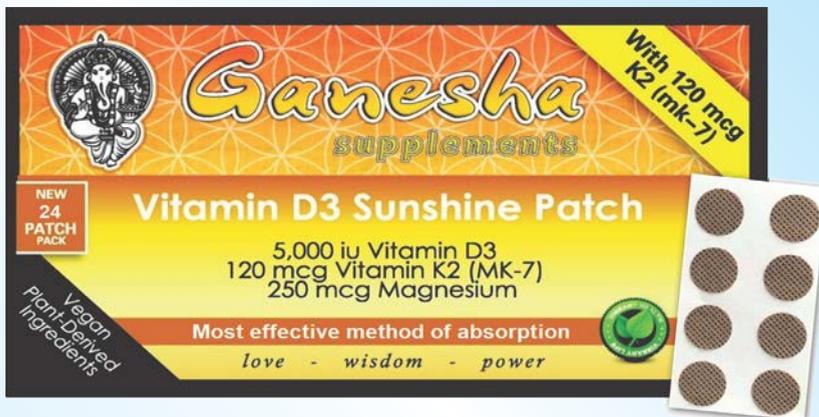
Although most dermatologists will tell you to avoid the sun to prevent diseases like cancer, exposure can actually aid in skin

cancer prevention—and there are studies confirming this. Mela-noma occurrence is found to decrease with greater exposure to direct sunlight.

The sun emits two types of wavelengths at different periods in a day: UVA rays and UVB rays. Your body requires UVB for vitamin D production. UVA rays, on the other hand, have longer wavelengths and can penetrate the ozone layer, as well as clouds and pollution. Frequent exposure to this type of wavelength increases your risk of skin cancer and photoaging. In those times of the year when UVB rays are very minimal, it may be wise to take a high-quality vitamin D3 supplement. ■

*Excerpted from: Mercola.com/
article/vitamin-d-resources.htm*

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Diego Seliman, Owner
GaneshHerbs.com
info@ganeshherbs.com