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Vitamin D – More Important Than We Knew

Vitamin D has many more crucial functions than we knew just a few years ago. The amount needed in our blood is higher than we thought. We cannot get enough from the sun alone during half the year. Therefore we need more in our daily diet than the FDA standard set many years ago.

The majority of the adults in the US are **Vitamin D deficient**. Recent studies of the general population showed:

70 % of people north of the 40th parallel (all of Iowa) are Vitamin D deficient

80 % of people in Florida and Southern California are Vitamin D deficient (They wear sun block)

90 % of people living in Nursing Homes are Vitamin D deficient

In Iowa we can only make Vitamin D from sunlight about 6 months of the year. Even then you must expose enough skin to the mid-day sun and avoid sun block (and risk skin cancer).

We now know that **Vitamin D deficiency will often cause the following problems:**

Poor absorption of Calcium from our diet

Poor deposition of Calcium into our bones

Poor nerve function or Neuropathy (numbness and tingling)

Poor Balance and poor Muscle strength

Fibromyalgia-like symptoms

Depression

A doubling of the death rate among women treated for breast cancer

We suspect, but have not yet proven, that Vitamin D helps prevent several cancers

National Osteoporosis Foundation states that we need a **minimum of 800 to 1000 units of Vitamin D daily**. Many researchers and osteoporosis physicians recommend 1000 to 2000 units daily. The old FDA minimum standard on Multiple Vitamin bottles is 400 units, which is at best half of the new minimum. **Vitamin D2** is often contained in the more expensive Calcium Plus D preparations at levels of 100 or 200 or rarely 400 units per tablet. Check the label carefully. **Vitamin D3 is available in 1000 unit tablets for less than 4 cents each**. **Vitamin D3** is easier for the body to convert to the active form, but either D2 (from plants) or D3 (from animals) will work. Some Fish Oil products contain Vitamin D as well as Omega 3s. Check the label carefully.

You can find out **your Vitamin D level from a blood test for 25-hydroxy Vitamin D**. The original “normal” level was 15 to 40. Now the recommendation of the latest National Osteoporosis Foundation Symposium on the “ideal” level is “at least 32 and possibly 40”. No known toxicity or toxic level has been found, but the upper end of the new “normal” is 90 or 100.

Vitamin D is a stored vitamin. Therefore, if you have a long term deficiency, you will need to fill up your storage areas before you will use (not store) your entire daily intake. We commonly use 50,000 unit tablets of Vitamin D2 every M, W, F for severe deficiency. We often need 600,000 to 1,200,000 units to correct a severe deficiency.

Remember that no bone health medication can work well without Calcium and Vitamin D.

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