

Health Matters

Tips On Enjoying The Benefits Of Vitamin D

(NAPSA)—From helping to maintain healthy bones and teeth to interacting with key enzymes that regulate many activities in the body, vitamin D plays a number of important roles in supporting good health.

However, research indicates that most people are deficient and even those who take vitamin D in the form of a supplement may not be taking it at the dosage required to get all its benefits.

This is significant, since a vitamin D deficiency may increase your risk for several conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, stroke, cancer and even depression.

Fortunately, there's reason to believe that preventing a vitamin D deficiency may be as simple as following three easy steps.

Step 1: Take the Right Dose of Vitamin D

According to Michael A. Smith, M.D., a senior health scientist with Life Extension—a well-known anti-aging and longevity research organization—most people need between 2,000 and 5,000 IU daily to obtain optimal blood levels (50–80 ng/ml). “If you're counting on conventional multivitamins, you're probably going to fall way short,” says Dr. Smith.

That's because most conventional multivitamins contain somewhere around 400 IU, which is not going to do much to raise your blood levels or help you prevent disease. Consequently, a vitamin D supplement becomes necessary.

But even at that, taking the suggested dose may still not be enough for certain people. The Life Extension analysis found that a number of their members fell short even after following their dosing suggestions. This is why step two is very important.

It's important to note that higher dosages of vitamin D are not appropriate for everyone, especially for individuals with severe kidney disease, sarcoidosis, or high blood calcium levels. It's essential to check with your doctor first.

Step 2: Take Vitamin D With Fat and Your Largest Meal

Due to its chemical makeup, vitamin D needs fat for proper absorption. So when taking it, make sure you do so with a fatty meal.

Also, there are indications that



Those taking vitamin D as part of a multivitamin may not be taking it at a dosage level high enough to get all the benefits the vitamin has to offer.

it should be taken with your largest meal of the day. This can make a big difference in how well it's absorbed.

A study conducted by the Cleveland Clinic Foundation showed that taking vitamin D with the largest meal increased blood levels by 50 percent compared to taking it on an empty stomach or with a light meal.

Step 3: Follow Up With a Vitamin D Blood Test

The only way to find out if you have a vitamin D deficiency is to get a 25-hydroxy vitamin D blood test. It measures the active form of D that is actually circulating in your blood.

“Before testing, take your target dose of vitamin D for at least 30 days,” says Dr. Smith, the host of the “Healthy Talk” program on www.RadioMD.com. “This way, it can build up in your system and you'll get an accurate assessment. Also note that it doesn't matter if you take the test in the morning or evening.”

Smith also pointed out that many insurance companies provide coverage for this test. That being said, if yours doesn't, you may want to consider paying for it as an investment in your health. It's affordable, it's essential and it shouldn't cost you more than \$50.

The Bottom Line

All it takes is three easy steps to maximize your vitamin D levels. Don't let a simple oversight cost you an easy ticket to disease prevention.

For more information about vitamin D, visit www.LEF.org/VitaminD3 or call toll-free at 1-866-491-4992.