



THE 'SUNSHINE VITAMIN' BENEFITS OF VITAMIN D

There are many studies which document vitamin D's benefits including:

- * reduction of risk of cancer, multiple sclerosis, autoimmune disorders, osteoporosis, and Type II diabetes
- * adequate blood levels of vitamin D increase survival rates of women with breast cancer
- * improving overall immune function

SOURCES OF VITAMIN D

Naturally, we get vitamin D from the sun. The only foods with considerable amounts of naturally occurring vitamin D are egg yolks and fatty fish. In Canada, many dairy products are supplemented with Vitamin D. Unfortunately, it is impossible to get the levels of vitamin D which have been proven to be protective from food alone. This is why it is important to get vitamin D from a supplement, especially during Canadian winters.

SUN EXPOSURE

It is important to balance the risk of sun burn and skin cancer with the benefits of vitamin D. To obtain enough vitamin D, get healthy doses of sunlight – 20 minutes, three to four times a week on your face, chest, arms and back. Get your sun exposure during the morning and evening to avoid burning. If you burn easily, get shorter periods of sun exposure more frequently.

RECOMMENDED DOES OF SUPPLEMENTAL VITAMIN D

- * Canadian Cancer Society suggests 1000-2000 IU of vitamin D daily.
- * The Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors recommends 2000-4000 IU of vitamin D daily.
- * Researchers are currently studying the positive effects of high dose vitamin D supplementation (50,000 IU daily)
- * Breastfed infants need to be supplemented with 400-1000 IU of vitamin D daily.
- * Those with darker skin may need to take more Vitamin D since their skin is less able to make vitamin D from the sun.

Have your Vitamin D levels tested to ensure you're taking the appropriate dose.

Source: Dr. Amanda Guthrie, BSc, ND, Naturopathic Doctor
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