

Orthopaedic Connection

The Orthopaedic Surgeon and Vitamin D

By Thomas J. Haverbush, M.D.
Orthopaedic Surgeon

Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

What do Orthopaedic Surgeons have to do with Vitamin D? As it turns out - everything.

In the next 2 or 3 weeks you are going to learn lots more than you ever knew about Vitamin D, the Sunshine Vitamin.

Research about how much Vitamin D is needed daily has often been confusing and "how much you need" depends on what you read or who you talk to.

What opened many people's eyes was a report in the highly respected Internal Medicine journal *Archives of Internal Medicine*. A nationwide survey found that there are a huge number of people who are Vitamin D deficient.

41% of men are Vitamin D deficient and 53% of women are Vitamin D deficient.

Three groups of people are particularly prone to deficiency:
post menopausal women
Black Americans
the elderly

In case you are saying, "That's nice, now what's for lunch", please keep reading.

This deficiency is an ominous warning about America's bone health. If that isn't bad enough, Vitamin D is known to have several other critical functions that most patients are completely clueless about.

- **Cancer**
Vitamin D has an important role in immune function, cell growth and death, and reducing inflammation. In this way adequate doses of Vitamin D can inhibit cancer cell growth. The strongest evidence for the protective effect of Vitamin D is with colorectal cancer.
- **Mental Performance**
Studies in older adults show Vitamin D deficiency is associated with low mood and worsened mental performance as well as greater

severity of dementia. Clear thinking and memory are definitely improved with good Vitamin D levels.

- Immune Function
Vitamin D deficiency has been connected to increased risk of pneumonia, bacterial infections and gum disease.
- Multiple Sclerosis
Lower risk of MS with adequate Vitamin D levels.
- Pregnancy
Good levels of Vitamin D lower the incidence of hypertension in pregnancy.
- Muscle strength, Co-ordination
Adequate Vitamin D levels help maintain muscle strength and co-ordination in elderly persons
- Insulin
Vitamin D helps maintain proper insulin levels thereby preventing diabetes.
- Fracture Prevention
Patients with higher values of Vitamin D have a significantly decreased risk of fracture especially hip fractures in the elderly.
- Heart Attack and Stroke
Lower incidence of vascular problems if Vitamin D levels are adequate.
- Arthritis
Inflammation and pain of arthritis are more easily controlled.

I hope we are off to a good start and I have gotten your interest. There is much more to say. Please continue with us next week.

As always, for much more valuable information about all things Orthopaedic and musculoskeletal that I treat, log onto our office website www.orthopodsurgeon.com that can take you to Your Orthopaedic Connection.

Our goal is simple - To help people live more pain free, functional lives.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush