

## *Orthopaedic Connection*

### **Vitamin D. You Again!**

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

#### *Transforming patient information into patient understanding.*

Vitamin D is a very popular subject that is frequently written about online, in newspaper and magazines. It gets confusing because it is somewhat controversial with some articles praising Vitamin D and others panning it saying the benefit of supplemental Vitamin D is way overrated.

#### **Please Demystify**

O.K, I will. Those extolling Vitamin D supplements have gone beyond the issue of skeletal health.

Vitamin D is *believed* to affect immune function, mental performance and muscle strength. It also apparently improves insulin function and has a role in the body's inflammatory process.

While Vitamin D may be beneficial in treatment of these conditions, there really is no absolute evidence to support its use for non-skeletal health issues. It may be a benefit, but we really don't know for sure.

The benefit of Vitamin D to bone health however is absolutely unquestioned.

#### **Are You Deficient?**

Maybe. A lot of people are. To be certain it is possible to check the Vitamin D level in the body with a blood test. The test is for 25-hydroxy Vitamin D. It is the only way to determine Vitamin D deficiency.

Never mind all the little letters after the numbers! I have left them out.

< 20 deficient

20 – 30 low

30 – 50 good level for most people.

#### **What Does Vitamin D Do?**

If your Vitamin D level is low your body is not going to be able to absorb the calcium you need.

#### **Diet and Sunlight**

Sources of Vitamin D

- fortified dairy and non dairy products
- fish such as salmon and tuna
- yogurt
- ten minutes in the sun = 200 IU of Vitamin D.

#### **Not Always Easy**

Getting enough Vitamin D would seem to be easy, right? Well, no apparently because so many patients are deficient. Patients with chronic illness are usually deficient. Also deficient are those with limited exposure to sunlight, the elderly, people with dark skin and those who do not have a diet containing much Vitamin D.

Many of my patients have 2 or 3 of these risk factors.

#### **What To Do**

If there is a chance you may be deficient, you have to get a blood test for 25-hydroxy Vitamin D. If you are deficient your Doctor is the best one to advise you how to catch up. If you are not deficient and not taking a supplement you must be doing something right with your diet and sunlight exposure.

### **Supplement of Vitamin D**

If you want to take a supplement and your level is in the low or normal range, I tell my adult patients to take 2000 IU of Vitamin D3 every day. Period. I know it is a bit higher than some recommendations, but I feel it is the best number for most of my patients.

### **Gratiot County Herald Archive and Office Website**

I hope what you have read has raised questions. No problem!

Please log onto [www.orthopodsurgeon.com](http://www.orthopodsurgeon.com). It has a huge amount of musculoskeletal information in the Website and the Archive of all previous GCH articles.

Check it out and be amazed what you can learn.

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

Dr. Haverbush