

Orthopaedic Connection

Bone Health and Vitamin D

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

Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

As an Orthopaedic Surgeon it is my responsibility to keep abreast of much more than diagnosing and treating bones, joints, tendons, etc.

It also includes Musculoskeletal Health which includes lots more than “fixing things surgically”.

I want you to learn lots more than how I diagnose and repair broken parts. OK let’s go.

Hardly a week passes without hearing or reading something about Vitamin D, the “sunshine pill”. It gets confusing and so like big government, I’m here to help!!

Articles you may see say that Vitamin D goes way beyond its benefit to bones. I don’t want to take the space to list all the claims.

If some of the claims are eventually proven to be true it will be wonderful, but the truth presently is we don’t really know for sure if Vitamin D supplements prevent non skeletal health issues, but rest assured a lot of people continue to work on it.

What We Know

Long term Vitamin D insufficiency causes weak bones and a greater risk of having fractures. If your Vitamin D level is too low you are not going to be able to absorb Calcium in the gastrointestinal tract. That is a bad thing. There is a very effective blood test to accurately measure the Vitamin D level in the body.

OK Who Needs Testing

- Patients being treated for Osteoporosis or Osteopenia
- Darker skin pigment
- Patients who are overweight
- Older people (if you consider yourself elderly!)
- Minimal (no) exposure to sunlight
- Chronic illness
- Dietary deficiency
- Patients in long term care

The Test

It is a blood test. It is called 25-hydroxy Vitamin D. It can be done in most labs with a doctor’s order of course.

If Vitamin D Is Low And You Do Nothing

Well, you don’t absorb Calcium as you should and bones weaken. The body needs a certain amount of Calcium in the blood also. When Calcium in the blood goes too low, the parathyroid glands in your neck become over active and cause Calcium to come out of the bones to meet the blood’s needs. Ugh! Bones become even weaker.

Ounce of Prevention

None of this has to be if you and your doctor are aware. Getting enough Vitamin D seems like an easy task. There are a huge number of people (see list) who are deficient and need a supplement.

What You Need To Know

1. Vitamin D deficiency is common which can also cause fatigue, lethargy, bone pain and muscle weakness.
2. The blood test is the only way to tell if you are deficient.
3. Ten minutes of sun - you make 200 i.u. of Vitamin D
4. Best dietary sources - fortified milk, juices salmon, tuna.
5. If your level is low, 2000 i.u. of Vitamin D per day (available at any pharmacy).

It can only help you. What are you waiting for?

My patients put their trust in me and what I do improves the quality of their lives.

Office Website and Gratiot County Herald Archive

Wow! Your window to the Orthopaedic and musculoskeletal world opens at www.orthopodsurgeon.com. It contains the Website Library of information, Your Orthopaedic Connection and GCH archive of all previous articles.

You will be amazed at all the helpful information it contains.

All of the information pertains to everything I treat in the office and hospital.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush