

Wellness

REVIEW

Vitamin D, Vitamin Sunshine



Why Is Something So Simple, So Hard to Get?

When we think of Australia and New Zealand, we think of surf, sun and sand, beautiful climates and the great outdoors. With vitamin D readily available from the sun, why are so many people deficient in this important vitamin? An estimated 73% of adults suffer from inadequate vitamin D levels, with almost 60% of women living in southern areas being completely deficient during the winter/spring months. Are we spending too much more time indoors? Are we obsessed with the need to cover up and use sunscreen every time we step outside? With so many factors influencing vitamin D, what can you do to ensure you and your family have adequate vitamin D levels?

Delving Into Vitamin D

Vitamin D is a fat soluble vitamin naturally derived from UVB waves from the sun. Dietary sources are limited and include oily fish and egg yolks. Vitamin D is well known for its role in maintaining the health of bones and improving calcium absorption; but D is so much more than this! It helps improve immunity; reducing the frequency of colds and flus, and managing more serious autoimmune conditions. Vitamin D also improves muscle strength and can reduce fractures in the elderly. Did you realise that low levels of vitamin D have also been associated with an increased risk of certain cancers and other chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease and diabetes? Interestingly, vitamin D may even help support healthy moods and is a beneficial part of the treatment for depression.

D Deficiency Is Widespread

It may be quite alarming to find out that so many of your family, friends and others in your community may be suffering from a vitamin D deficiency. With our main source of vitamin D coming from sunlight, keep a special eye out for those you know who may be at greater risk of deficiency. They include people who are older, housebound, darker skinned individuals, and those who wear covered clothes, work indoors or regularly avoid sun exposure.

You also need to keep in mind where you live, your climates and the seasons. It may be harder to get adequate vitamin D from the sun at certain latitudes and in southern areas where UV levels are lower. During the colder months, you may need to spend more time outdoors to obtain vitamin D; compared to summertime, when several minutes of sun exposure daily may be sufficient. With our position under the hole in the ozone layer, getting the sun exposure required for optimal vitamin D synthesis may present risks to skin health. Supplementation with vitamin D may be a safer option for many.

Not All Ds are the Same

With many different types of vitamin D available, you may be mistaken in thinking that they are all the alike. However, not all products are equal! Being a fat soluble vitamin, vitamin D is prone to oxidation and deterioration, so it is important to use a high quality vitamin D with proven stability. Your Practitioner will help you select the most appropriate vitamin D for your needs, in a form that is readily available for your body to absorb to gain the many benefits.

Asking the following questions can help you be confident you are acquiring a good quality vitamin D:

- What conditions has it been stored in? Being exposed to high temperatures, humidity, air or light are factors that may affect the quality of vitamin D.
- Is the vitamin D in a specialised antioxidant oil base to enhance stability and absorption?
- Has it been tested using real time stability testing, to ensure it stays fresh up until the expiry date?
- Has it been tested for the presence of contaminants?

Speak to your Practitioner today about a vitamin D that ticks all of your boxes.

Recommendations for Achieving Optimal D Levels

In order to achieve and maintain optimal vitamin D levels, here are a few simple steps:

- If getting sun exposure, aim for 6 to 7 minutes mid-morning or mid-afternoon during warmer months, and 7 to 40 minutes at noon during winter; arms and shoulders should be visible, and without sunscreen. Be aware that UV levels are highest between 11am and 3pm so be cautious going out uncovered for longer than this.
- If you know you are low in vitamin D and you wish to avoid the sun, it may be more appropriate to correct a deficiency with a supplement to quickly and safely build up your vitamin D stores.
- If you're unsure about your current vitamin D levels, ask your Practitioner about how to get your levels assessed.

Put D Back in Your Day

Vitamin D is critical for the health of your entire body. With so many people deficient in this essential vitamin, it is important to get your levels assessed to ensure they are not low. Vitamin D deficiencies can have negative effects on your health and may increase your risk of chronic disease. If your vitamin D levels are low, talk to your Practitioner today. Make it a priority to build up your vitamin D stores with a high quality supplement and healthy sun exposure, and take another step closer to optimal health.

Call us today to find out if you are getting enough vitamin D.