

Vitamin D and its benefits

gwinnettcounty
Cooperative Extension
Education Resource

*By: The University of Michigan
Cooperative Extension*

Imagine a nutrient that could help prevent the following diseases:

- Colon Cancer
- Breast Cancer
- Prostate Cancer
- Pancreatic Cancer
- Diabetes
- Crohn's Disease
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Osteoporosis
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Ulcerative Colitis
- Asthma
- Lupus



Too good to be true? That's the potential promise of Vitamin D, a nutrient that was once thought to be limited to the prevention of rickets in children and severe bone loss in adults.

Vitamin D is known as "the sunshine vitamin" because it is naturally produced in our bodies when our skin is exposed to sunlight. Spending 10 to 15 minutes outside daily or at least two times per week with face, arms, legs, or back exposed to sun (without sunscreen) is sufficient for our bodies to make Vitamin D. It is also found in certain foods such as cod liver oil, salmon, tuna, eggs and fortified milk, margarine, cereals, orange juice, and yogurt. Vitamin D also helps your body use calcium.

How much vitamin D do we need in one day?

As we age it becomes harder for our skin to make vitamin D. Therefore, we need more vitamin D as we age. Currently, the daily recommendations for both men and women are as follows (the IU means international units):

- Pregnancy: 200 IU
- Birth to age 50: 200 IU
- Ages 50 to 70: 400
- Ages 71 + : 600 IU

Because of new research, the recommended amount could increase to 1,000 to 2,000 IU per day! Taking more than 2,000 IUs of Vitamin D is toxic. Consult with your doctor before you take a Vitamin D supplement.

Can I get too much Vitamin D?

Yes, overdosing with Vitamin D can cause a reduction in appetite, vitamin poisoning, lethargy, and kidney damage. It is a fat soluble vitamin and cannot be quickly excreted through urine.