

Continued Interview with Dr. Khalsa...

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How damaging to your health can a vitamin D deficiency be?

As a physician specializing in yoga and holistic healing, most readers would be surprised (or shocked to know) that I am also deficient in vitamin D.

As an avid athlete, you would think the New Mexico sun would provide plenty of optimal UVB exposure year round. However, sunlight is not enough, and I am diligent about wearing sunscreen which blocks 98% of UVB.

My vitamin D levels were just under the cut-off for optimal calcium absorption. That means I was only absorbing, at best, 15% dietary calcium. I was way off base from the levels it would take to decrease breast cancer risk, as research has shown.

What was your personal plan for correcting your deficiency?

I now take 5,000 IU of Vitamin D3 daily. I will be getting rechecked in less than a month. I'll keep you posted on my progress!

So you are saying that even physicians like yourself, who are vigilant about maintaining their health - are advocates and teachers of yoga, are consistent about taking their multi-vitamins, etc - even they can have a vitamin D deficiency?

Yes, that is exactly right. In general, I advise my patients to obtain their vitamins and minerals from whole foods, and if additional supplements are needed, to purchase the most reputable source. Given that the medical literature supports this philosophy, of obtaining nutrients from food, and the fact that vitamins in past research have shown no added benefit, physicians are skeptical about the Vitamin D 'hype'. I have given talks to my colleagues and initially they viewed vitamin D as the "new vitamin C".

The fact that vitamin D3 is a *hormone* makes them pause and think critically about the mounting evidence in favor of vitamin D3. Most of my colleagues, including the medical director of one of our local cancer centers, are now checking their patient's levels, as well as their own, and taking vitamin D3 themselves. The information is still evolving, and over the next decade we will know more. The exciting, yet also frustrating, thing about medicine is that it changes every day. Next week I may have a completely different report! But I really admire all the effort you, (Ginger), are doing in gathering data, up to date information that constantly changes, and informing women of all this. We must take care of ourselves, our families and our communities.

What should I do?

Get your vitamin D level checked. Print the resources we have given you, just in case your doctor is not familiar with the latest research on D3. Evidence or "proof" is very important in medicine, and we need to have research which backs up the claims about vitamin D deficiency.

Where should I go to get a vitamin D supplement if I have a deficiency?

<http://www.Vitamindcouncil.org>

<http://www.Vitamindrevolution.com>

Here are some additional resources you can take with you to your doctor, which support the use of vitamin D3.

What about deficiencies in infants ages 6-9 months?

So far, at least from Purity Products, there are no liquid formulations for infants. The most important source of nutrition for infants is mother's milk. When breastfeeding mothers are vitamin D deficient, there will naturally be less to pass on through the milk. So the best source for infants is through adequate supplementation of all breastfeeding mothers.

For information regarding vitamin D and the flu:

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/blog/60-second-science/post.cfm?id=vitamin-d-deficiency-linked-to-more-2009-02-23>

Other Research & References

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