

Vitamin D has impacted the media lately, what does this fat-soluble vitamin have to offer?

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Vitamin D is either absorbed in the intestine from food or through sun exposure on the skin. The liver and kidneys convert vitamin D to its active form called calcitriol. Food sources include **cod liver oil, salmon, mackerel, herring, eggs** and **vitamin D enriched milk**. Exposure from the sun depends on the pigment of the skin. A fair skinned person may only need up to 45 minutes per week vs a darker skin could need up to three hours per week to meet requirements in summer months.

Vitamin D is known for its role in calcium absorption from the intestine and its active role in helping the body build and maintain bone structure and prevent osteoporosis and rickets. It has been associated with a decrease in incidence of multiple sclerosis cases in countries where sunshine and therefore vitamin D is more plentiful.

In recent studies it has been showing promising effects in cancer prevention. Studies have surfaced suggesting that higher vitamin D levels were linked to a lower risk in developing cancer particularly in post-menopausal women. Another study in May suggested that women who consumed more calcium and vitamin D before menopause showed less risk in developing breast cancer.

The Canadian Cancer Society is now recommending 1000 IU per day in fall and winter for adults living in Canada. To date, the society is wanting to do further investigation to find firm answers on the health benefits of vitamin D. This dosage is based on a growing research body pointing towards its profound effects of reducing risks of colorectal, breast and prostate cancers.

The use of Vitamin D for prevention of rickets has been known for years now. It is now surfacing with many other health benefits, particularly in cancer prevention. Sources of this age- old vitamin are through sun and diet exposure. Here's to sunshine and fish to give us our vitamin D!

References:

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