

Vitamin D and Osteoporosis: How this 'Miracle' Vitamin can Restore Optimum Bone Health in Men and Women

By Aurora Geib, Natural News

More than 50 million Americans suffer from osteoporosis, literally "porous bones," a condition that occurs when your body doesn't replace bone cells that are lost naturally over time. (1) Lose too much bone, and your bone density drops, making you much more prone to fractures, especially as you age. Vitamin D has been identified as a primary role player in preventing osteoporosis. Here's how it can help you prevent the disease:

Vitamin D and healthy bones

Nearly everyone understands that calcium is important for developing healthy, strong bones: Calcium helps bones remineralize and make new bone cells to prevent weaknesses and fractures. But many people are unaware that, without adequate vitamin D, calcium would be unable to do its job.

Calcium is one of the most prevalent and most important minerals in your body, and about 99 percent of the calcium that your body contains is found in the teeth and bones. (2) We get calcium from the foods we eat, but once we consume those foods, the calcium needs to be absorbed into the blood and tissues in order to do its job.

Vitamin D helps calcium be absorbed into the blood stream so it can travel to the bones and other parts of the body where it can be used. Without vitamin D, your body would not be able to absorb enough calcium to produce new bone cells and keep your bones strong.

In addition to helping prevent bone loss, vitamin D can also help prevent fractures by strengthening muscles and nerves, making bone-breaking falls less likely to occur.

The link between vitamin D and osteoporosis

People who develop osteoporosis tend to have significantly lower levels of vitamin D in their blood compared to people who don't have the disease. (3) Several studies have examined this link to determine whether taking vitamin D supplements can help prevent the disease from occurring. So far, the results of these studies have been encouraging.

For instance, in one study from the United Kingdom, researchers found that women who took vitamin D supplements had stronger, denser bones than women who were not given the supplement, suggesting that supplementation may provide a viable way to prevent the bone loss that typifies the disease. (4) Likewise, a study from the U.S. looked at older patients with and without osteoporosis and found that those who took vitamin D supplements had a significantly lower level of fractures than those who did not take the supplements. (5)

Are you at risk for osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis can affect anyone, but some people have characteristics or habits that place them at greater risk for developing the disease. These are the primary risk factors for developing osteoporosis:

- Female gender (women are about twice as likely as men to have osteoporosis)
- Older age
- Caucasian or Asian race
- Family history
- Small bone structure
- Low sex hormone levels
- Overactive thyroid, parathyroid or adrenal glands
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Smoking
- Excessive use of alcohol
- Poor diet/eating disorders
- Use of some medications, including steroids and some medicines for cancer, depression, immune disorders, gastric reflux and seizures

Especially if you have one or more of these risk factors, taking vitamin D may help prevent or slow the bone loss and loss of bone density that can result in osteoporosis. (6)

Getting enough D

We can get vitamin D from some of the foods we eat, including fatty fish and milk, and we can also get vitamin D from sun exposure. The ultraviolet rays in sunlight cause changes in our skin which help chemicals called previtamin D convert into vitamin D that can be used by our bodies. However, sunscreen, shade and seasonal changes can all have an impact on how much UV exposure our skin receives. In fact, several studies have shown that decreased sun exposure during the winter months results in lower levels of vitamin D and, subsequently, higher numbers of fractures. (7) (8) (9)

Because modern diets and lifestyles can prevent us from getting enough vitamin D through these natural sources, taking a supplement can be an important part of making sure that the body receives enough of the vitamin to help prevent bone loss and to experience other benefits of the vitamin.

Vitamin D helps build strong bones, and it can also help the body in other ways, including strengthening the immune system, preventing diabetes, treating high blood pressure -- even decreasing the risk of certain types of cancer. If you're concerned that you may not be getting enough vitamin D in your regular routine, taking a vitamin supplement could be an ideal solution for ensuring that you're experiencing all the benefits of this miracle vitamin.

Source:

(1) <http://nof.org>

(2) <http://nof.org>

(3) <https://www.vitamindcouncil.org>

(4) <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>

(5) <http://www.nejm.org>

(6) <http://www.mayoclinic.org>

(7) <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>

(8) <http://jn.nutrition.org>

(9) <http://osteoporosis.org.za>