

Why Vitamin D Deficiency May be Killing You: How Cancer, Heart Disease and Diabetes are All Made Worse When you Lack Vitamin D

By: Aurora Geib, Natural News

Most clinicians and even many people understand that getting the right amount of vitamin D is important for good bone health. In fact, up until the 1930s, the bone disease rickets was a serious health threat, thanks to inadequate levels of the D vitamin. But until recently, few understood the other significant roles that vitamin D plays in maintaining good health and preventing diseases.

To date, low levels of the vitamin have been linked with increased risks of cancer, heart disease, immune system disorders, high blood pressure, multiple sclerosis, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis and diabetes. (1)

Multiple studies have been conducted to examine why vitamin D deficiency may be playing such a major role in these serious health problems, and what researchers have found is surprising.

The Role of Vitamin D in Preventing Cancer

Researchers have been interested in the role of vitamin D in preventing cancer for years, ever since epidemiological studies revealed that people who lived in southern latitudes where sun exposure was more prevalent also had lower levels of certain cancers. Because exposure to UV rays helps the body synthesize vitamin D, researchers theorized that it was these increased levels of vitamin D that helped prevent the development of cancer.

Scientific studies of the effects of the vitamin on cancer cells have found that vitamin D acts in several ways, including decreasing the growth of cancer cells and stimulating the death of those cells. (2)

Other studies have shown a direct link between levels of vitamin D and the development and prevention of colorectal cancer, and some clinicians recommend that cancer patients take vitamin D supplements in order to improve their chances of fighting the disease.

The Role of Vitamin D in Preventing Heart Disease

Several studies have been conducted linking low levels of vitamin D to an increased risk of heart disease including heart attack, peripheral artery disease, congestive heart failure and atherosclerosis, and many studies have also shown that taking vitamin D supplements may play a role in reducing that risk. For instance:

- A study conducted by researchers at Harvard found that people who had low levels of vitamin D were twice as likely to have a heart attack as those who had adequate levels of the vitamin. (3)

- Researchers in Utah looked at vitamin D levels and heart disease in nearly 30,000 men and women and found that those with lower levels of the vitamin were more likely to have cardiovascular disease than those with adequate levels. (4)

To date, the cause-and-effect mechanism between vitamin D and cardiovascular disease remains unclear, but researchers believe that the vitamin may work to decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease by preventing some of the symptoms and conditions that cause it, such as helping to control blood pressure and preventing damage to the arteries. (5)

The Role of Vitamin D in Preventing Type II Diabetes

Type II diabetes occurs when the body has difficulty managing and using sugar intake. Left unmanaged, type II diabetes can cause loss of vision, poor circulation, high blood pressure and other health issues, and it can contribute to the development of heart disease.

Several studies have supported a link between adequate levels of vitamin D and better tolerance and management of blood glucose, or sugar. Although researchers are not entirely clear how vitamin D accomplishes its role in preventing diabetes, they believe it may have to do with the vitamin's ability to help the body synthesize calcium, which plays a major role in glucose and insulin regulation.

Ignoring your vitamin D intake can result in an increased risk of many diseases, so making sure that you're getting enough is important. To make sure that you're getting enough, eat foods that are high in vitamin D (fatty fish are the primary source). Sun exposure can also help the body produce vitamin D on its own, but prolonged exposure to UV rays comes with its own set of risks, and during the winter months, getting enough sunlight can be problematic for most people.

Because of the limited natural sources of vitamin D, many men and women find that they can enjoy the benefits of adequate vitamin D levels by taking a supplement. When choosing supplements, make sure that they're from a reputable source to ensure that concentration levels are stable and correctly represented.

Sources:

(1) <http://ods.od.nih.gov>

(2) <http://www.cancer.gov>