

# Preventing Vitamin D Deficiency

By Dr. Arjuna Veeravagu, ND, RAc

It was a beautiful sunny spring and summer in the lower mainland and hopefully most of us were able to receive enough safe sun exposure to increase our bodies' vitamin D stores. Now that the grey skies are upon us the days are lacking sunlight and we will find a significant decline in our vitamin D levels. Since we produce the vitamin only through our skin's direct exposure to sunlight, taking a vitamin D supplement through the winter is necessary for many people to maintain optimal levels.



## The Importance of Vitamin D

There is a growing volume of evidence showing that low vitamin D levels correlate with a higher incidence of many different diseases. According to the physician-led Vitamin D Council, “current research has implicated vitamin D deficiency as a major factor in the pathology of at least 17 varieties of cancer as well as heart disease, stroke, hypertension, autoimmune diseases, diabetes, depression, chronic pain, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, muscle weakness, muscle wasting, birth defects, periodontal disease, and more.” With the deficient vitamin D now clearly linked to so many different conditions, assessing and correcting the deficiency has the potential to be a massive benefit to our public health.

## Assessing Vitamin D Levels

When beginning any vitamin D treatment protocol—whether through sunlight exposure, supplementation, or both—consult a physician familiar with proper testing and dosage guidelines.


The optimal dose of light exposure and/or vitamin D for one person may be toxic to another. The 25-Hydroxy Vitamin D

Blood Test is the best marker of the body's vitamin D stores and should be ordered for patients interested in vitamin D treatment. Periodic testing can ensure that your vitamin D stores remain in the optimal range for disease prevention.

## Increasing Vitamin D Levels

The two ways to significantly increase the body's vitamin D stores are sunlight exposure and vitamin D supplementation—food sources are not sufficient to optimize levels of D in the body. Supplementation should be in the form of cholecalciferol (Vitamin

D3), which is inexpensive, natural and most effective in raising D stores. The daily dosage of D3 required for attaining therapeutic blood levels of vitamin D is usually much higher than the standard 400 IU previously recommended, and must be specifically determined for each individual by blood testing.

Optimizing vitamin D levels may be an important public health measure that could reduce the incidence of many common diseases. It is a natural, safe and effective way to dramatically decrease our overall risk of serious illness. Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way you can maintain healthy vitamin D levels during our cloudy winter season. 

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