

Northwest women at highest risk for vitamin D deficiency

Hopefully, most of you reading this article are taking a much higher dose of vitamin D than the miniscule 600 IU recommended by the new RDA. Maybe you've read about its significant health benefits, or perhaps your doctor has put you on a high dose because you tested deficient. Or worse yet, you're suffering from a disease or condition with a known link to vitamin D deficiency; such as breast cancer, ovarian cancer, colon cancer, lung cancer, multiple sclerosis (MS), depression, and even skin cancer.

And what links vitamin D deficiency to so many serious diseases? The answer lies within the true nature of vitamin D. Which is: vitamin D is a vitamin, but once activated in the body, becomes a powerful hormone capable of turning genes on and off. Genes which are responsible for cancer detection, which can reduce tumor size, protect against autoimmunity, regulate blood pressure, reduce inflammation, provide an overall sense of well-being and much more.

Because vitamin D is not inherent in our body, our skin is brilliantly designed to harness the power of sunlight and synthesize vitamin D. For fair skinned persons a 15-30 minute exposure will yield upwards of 15,000 IU of vitamin D. It isn't likely, evolutionarily speaking, that our bodies would allow such a grand production of D if it wasn't needed.

And with our major source of vitamin D coming from the sun, it's important to note that not all sunlight is created equally. Afternoon, evening and wintertime sunlight for anyone above the 35th parallel, is not hot enough or strong enough to synthesize vitamin D. What this means for the PNW, with an annual average of 29 clear summer days, is the health effects on our cloudy region have been tragic.

Did you know that Washington State has the highest rate of breast cancer diagnosis in the country? Did you know that rates of Multiple Sclerosis are higher in the PNW than anywhere in the world? Did you also know that MS is almost completely unheard near the equator where strong, hot sunlight is plentiful year round?

The good news is natural sunlight is not the only source of vitamin D. And while food fortification is a negligible source, a good quality supplement, in a high enough dose, can effectively raise your levels and activate the miraculous system of health protection our bodies came designed with.

Dr. Messer's book; [Powerful Medicine: Vitamin D; Shedding Light on a Worldwide Health Crisis](#) is a national awarding winning finalist for books on cancer. It's available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and at the NW Women's Conference.

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