

Vitamin D: Beating the Winter Blues is Only the Beginning

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We love living in the Pacific Northwest: the mountains, ocean, forests and plains, and yes, even the rain. We know that our damp climate contributes to the lush greenery surrounding us. We accept our soggy seasons as the price well paid to reside amidst such awe-inspiring beauty. But is there a hidden cost to spending such a significant amount of time without seeing that bright beautiful sun?

It is estimated that fifteen minutes spent in peak summer sunshine can provide up to 1,000 IU (international units) of Vitamin D*. Potentially one of the oldest hormones in existence, the benefits of maintaining optimal levels of Vitamin D in our system has been documented by countless studies over the last few decades. We see claims of "Vitamin D Fortified" on multiple packages in the supermarket (although it is customarily a small amount per serving, around 100 IU), so as a society we are well aware of its importance in our diet.

Just think: over 750 million years ago, microscopic organisms called phytoplankton synthesized Vitamin D in response to the same sun that shines (or hides behind clouds) on us today. It is found in oily fishes like salmon and sardines. Yet are we getting enough from those sources to supplement what we do NOT get from the sun in the winter months? The answer, according to many studies, is a resounding "no".

Over a thousand clinical studies have been conducted on Vitamin D's relationship to the big "C": cancer. Evidence strongly suggests that

maintaining sufficient levels in one's system can reduce the incidence and mortality rates of cancer. That's a fairly easy way to fight off one of the nation's biggest killers! It is also good for bone health, and studies are looking into potentially beneficial connections to illnesses like multiple sclerosis and diabetes.

Most natives of the Pacific Northwest



have heard of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), and likely know at least one person suffering from it. Studies have shown that low levels of Vitamin D can be associated with depression, possibly because the hormone's receptors in our brain are found in areas typically related to the disease. According to an article published in the Journal of Internal Medicine, people living in areas consistently deprived of sunshine should ingest

approximately 1,000 IU of Vitamin D daily. The quickest and easiest way to do that is taking a supplement, which are relatively inexpensive.

Spring is here with its potential and promise of warmer weather, longer days, and more of that lovely sunshine. Oregonians have already started busting out the shorts and sandals at the first sign of 60 degree weather. However, we can all presume that we will still get our (more than) fair share of wet gloomy days before summer comes along. Your daily dose of Vitamin D will help you stay healthy until the sun kicks those clouds away for yet another gorgeous Oregon summer.

For a complete list of references, please visit our website www.treecitychiropractic.com.